

# INSPECTION REPORT

**OXTON ST SAVIOUR'S C.E. AIDED PRIMARY  
SCHOOL**

Birkenhead

LEA area: Wirral

Unique reference number: 105066

Headteacher: Mrs N J Tabern-Price

Reporting inspector: Mr J J Peacock  
25344

Dates of inspection: 18<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2000

Inspection number: 224082

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

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Postcode: CH43 2HT

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Reverend I A Davenport

Date of previous inspection: May 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr J J Peacock 25344	Registered inspector	Science Geography Physical education Equal opportunities English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught?
Mr G Ellis 19338	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr C Whittington 4350	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Under-fives	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Mr P Tuttle 30590	Team inspector	Information technology History Music	How well is the school led and managed?
Ms J Radford 15678	Team inspector	English Art Special educational needs	Provision for personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Oxton St Saviour's CE Infant and Junior Voluntary Aided School is set in spacious and pleasant grounds. The present building, opened in 1967, replaced a much older one. The school caters for pupils from four to eleven years of age and is about the same size as other primary schools (242 pupils compared with the average size nationally of 226 pupils). There are 125 boys and 117 girls on roll. Numbers have changed little since the time of the previous inspection when there were 252 pupils. Most pupils are taught in single-age group classes but there are two mixed-age classes in the infant department. Almost all pupils come from inside the school's normal zone which closely aligns to the parish boundary of St Saviour's Church. Most of the housing in this residential area is privately owned, and the attainment of the majority of four-year-olds when they start school in September in the Reception classes is broadly average for children of this age.

There are no pupils from homes where English is their second spoken language. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals has increased slightly since the previous inspection and currently accounts for 9.9 per cent of pupils, which is below average. The school has 14 per cent of pupils on its register for pupils with special educational needs, which is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs (0.8 per cent) is below the national average. The total number on the register has increased significantly since the previous inspection but the number of pupils with a statement is the same as it was then. The mobility of pupils is not a problem for the school. Last year only ten pupils were admitted and eleven left during term time.

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

This is an effective school where the strengths far outweigh the weaknesses. This is largely because of the good leadership of the headteacher and the determination of all staff to work as a team to raise standards. Consistently good teaching leads to pupils being well motivated, interested in their work and keen to do well. All pupils show a very good attitude to learning and their behaviour in lessons is of a high standard. This means that almost all are working at or near to their capacity and standards are improving year-on-year, in line with those nationally. When all these factors are considered, along with the slightly below average level of funding and generally average attainment on entry, the school provides good value for money.

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

- Pupils achieve high standards of work in most subjects.
- The attitude and personal development of pupils and relationships within school are all very good. The school's good level of care and keen parental interest are partly responsible for this.
- The consistently good quality of teaching means that pupils learn effectively. All staff are fully committed to raising standards.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall.
- Leadership by the headteacher and key staff is good. As a result, the school's aims and Christian values are very well reflected in its work.

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

- The curriculum for children under five and resources for their physical development.
- The opportunity for all pupils to use computers more in the classrooms.

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

The school has already identified these areas for improvement in its current management plan.

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was previously inspected in May 1996. The three key issues identified at that time have been successfully addressed. The quality of information provided for parents is now very good and the school has developed a stronger partnership with parents and the local community. Management planning includes accurate financial costing and systems are in place to assess the effectiveness of all the aspects identified for improvement. All key staff, particularly those with curriculum responsibilities, now have detailed descriptions of their roles and responsibilities and they monitor standards closely. However, the programme to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of teaching, introduced following the previous inspection, has been temporarily suspended in order to address the monitoring of national initiatives for literacy and numeracy. The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Overall, the pace of improvement has been good. The school has the leadership, commitment, staff and expertise needed to continue to identify weaknesses and improve.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	A*	A	B	D
Mathematics	A	B	B	D
Science	A	B	A	A

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

The consistently good quality of teaching, together with pupils' positive attitudes, are having a marked effect on standards. Inspectors noted much progress by the age of eleven from when pupils start at the school with levels of attainment which are broadly average. The table above shows that in 1999, in comparison to similar schools, overall standards in English and mathematics are below average, but well above average in science. In 1999, in comparison to all schools the proportion of pupils achieving the expected National Curriculum Level 4 or above in English was well above average, and in mathematics it was above average. However, fewer pupils than expected achieved at the higher Level 5. This caused the unfavourable comparison with similar schools above. The school's unpublished results for this year show a significant improvement on 1999. In science, for example, every pupil in Year 6 achieved Level 4 or above and eight out of ten achieved the higher Level 5, almost twice as many as in the previous year. In English and mathematics 50 per cent and 27 per cent respectively achieved the higher level. This is an increase over the previous year of six per cent for mathematics and 32 per cent for English. The successful implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is having a marked effect on standards in English and mathematics. The school has also introduced grouping by ability in English (to improve writing) and in mathematics, in their efforts to further raise standards. Pupils with special educational needs did very well in all subjects and most

achieved the levels expected of them. Inspection evidence shows that by the end of Key Stage 2, standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average. An analysis of results over the past three years show that standards have been improving steadily to match those achieved in 1997. Targets set for next year in English and mathematics are realistically based on a comprehensive assessment of individual pupils' capabilities. In information and communication technology, physical education and geography, standards are in line with those expected by the end of Key Stage 2, but in art, design and technology, history and music they are above those normally seen. Religious education was inspected separately and will be the subject of another report.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are well motivated and interested in lessons. Their positive attitudes are enhanced by enthusiastic and skilful teaching.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are smart, friendly, courteous and considerate. Behaviour in classes is frequently very good. Outdoors, there is some unacceptably boisterous behaviour related in part to the lack of space to run about.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Staff and pupils work together harmoniously, respecting the feelings of others. Very good relationships are a strength. Pupils respond well when given the opportunity to exercise responsibility and independence.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Unauthorised absence is negligible. Pupils invariably arrive on time for school and lessons start punctually.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
64 lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	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.*

The quality of teaching is consistently good. It has improved a great deal since the previous inspection and is an important factor in the improving standards. During this inspection, teaching was unsatisfactory in only one of the 64 lessons observed when the range of activities on offer was considered to be inappropriate for the age of the pupils. The quality of teaching was very good in 23 per cent of lessons compared to 11 per cent in 1996, and virtually all teachers delivered some lessons of this high quality. Good or better teaching was seen in 70 per cent of lessons, compared to 38 per cent previously, which shows a remarkable consistency. In literacy and numeracy lessons, teaching was usually of a very high standard in all classes and the skills pupils gain are well promoted in lessons other than English and mathematics.

The quality of teaching for children under five in the Reception class is satisfactory overall. This judgement reflects the fact that children have only been in school for a very short time.

Very good lesson planning, high expectations and an enthusiastic teaching and non-teaching staff who work well as a team are key features in the high quality of teaching. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported in most lessons. Work for all pupils provides a high level of challenge, particularly for higher achieving pupils in each class. Homework is used well to promote learning for all age groups.

All teachers work hard to establish a very good working atmosphere and promote effective learning. Pupils undoubtedly enjoy lessons, concentrate very well and produce a large amount of neatly presented work. Children under five make a confident start to school and all appear happy and keen to learn.

#### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. All subjects fully meet statutory requirements. Good emphasis is placed on English and mathematics and other subjects are given the necessary time and value. However, in the Foundation Stage, children do not receive a planned curriculum appropriate for their age. Few extra-curricular activities are provided.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. However, targets set are often not clear or specific making progress difficult to assess. In spite of this, most achieve the standards expected of all pupils in the national tests.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. The aims of the school have a clear and specific Christian dimension and this creates a strong sense of community. The concern for pupils' personal development has a very positive impact on the standards achieved. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to express themselves or take responsibility.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There is a culture of care throughout the school and as a result pupils can concentrate fully on their learning in an orderly community. There are good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour, but the response to anti-social behaviour is not clear or consistent. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are good and teachers make good use of the information in their planning. Attendance is monitored satisfactorily.

Effective links are established between the school and parents and this has a significant impact on pupils' learning. The very good quality of information sent home and the welcoming manner of all staff has helped to establish a good home/school partnership. As a result, parents' views of the school are mostly good.

#### **HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher's quality of leadership is clearly the embodiment of the school's published aims and values and largely responsible for the determination to raise standards. Effective delegation allows the acting deputy headteacher and all staff to play a vital role in the development of the school.



How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors provide satisfactory support but they are not sufficiently involved in development planning. Spending is strictly controlled and constantly checked to ensure value and quality in aspects such as services, staffing and standards. Financial planning is good, and good use is made of new technology. All statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The work of the school is very well monitored and evaluated. The commitment to improve and capacity to succeed are both good.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Teachers are deployed effectively. Learning resources, with the exception of computers in classrooms, are used to good effect by teachers. Specific grants are used very well for their intended purpose.

All staff are appropriately qualified and there is a good range of experience, enabling learning to be effectively promoted. The buildings are well maintained. Classrooms are enhanced by interesting displays of pupils' work. The school grounds are attractive and provide a valuable additional resource but the playground is inadequate for the number of pupils. Learning resources are generally good in quality, and sufficient to meet the needs of the curriculum well. Resources for mathematics, science, art, design and technology and history are particularly good. However, the number of computers in classrooms and resources for children under five, particularly for their physical development, are unsatisfactory.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

The school sent out 242 questionnaires and had 72 returned giving a return rate of 29.8 per cent. Approximately 50 parents attended the meeting for parents prior to the inspection

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
Children like school. Children make good progress. Behaviour is good. Teaching is good. Parents are well informed. The headteacher and staff are approachable. The school expects pupils to work hard. The school works closely with parents. The school is helping pupils to become more mature and responsible.	The range of extra-curricular activities. The amount of homework. How the school is led and managed.

Inspectors' judgements wholeheartedly support parents' very positive views about the school. However, the inspection team found the quality of leadership of the headteacher and key staff to be good and so disagree with the small number of parents who expressed dissatisfaction with this aspect. The school provides the right amount of homework and it makes a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, particularly in reading. However, inspectors agree with parental concerns about the provision of extra-curricular activities on offer to pupils. Opportunities for pupils to take part in an interesting range of activities outside of normal lessons are currently unsatisfactory.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Children enter the Reception class in the September after their fourth birthday with levels of attainment which are roughly average for children of this age. None this year have been identified as having special educational needs as assessments are not complete at this early stage in the term. Most appear to be settling into school well. However, the school plans work in line with the subjects of the National Curriculum rather than to the requirements of the Early Learning Goals in the Foundation Stage. In spite of this, the achievement of most children and the progress they make in language and literacy, mathematics and in their personal, social and emotional development is satisfactory overall. For example, children listen well to all adults, they respond to instructions and sit and listen attentively to stories. They answer questions politely, do not call out, and listen to other children's answers in literacy sessions. However, in their knowledge and understanding of the world and their physical and creative development, their progress is unsatisfactory mainly because of the quality of the curriculum with which they are provided. The lack of a suitable outdoor play area and a shortage of large play apparatus and wheeled toys, adversely affects their physical development.
2. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment, taking into account test results in reading, writing and mathematics and pupils' work in most subjects, is generally above the national average. This is an improvement since the previous inspection in May 1996, which judged pupils to be achieving standards which were in line with the national average in English, above average in mathematics and below average in science. The attainment in all other subjects was satisfactory, except in art and music where standards were then described as good. Since the previous inspection, the school has consistently improved standards in reading, writing and mathematics in the national tests for seven-year-olds at the end of Key Stage 1, keeping pace with improvements nationally. Results in the 1999 tests at the end of Key Stage 1 show that, in comparison with all schools, standards in reading are above average and in writing and mathematics, they are well above the national average. However, when the school's performance is compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils' results in reading are broadly in line with the average, in writing they are above average and in mathematics, well above. The results for science, based on teacher assessments, show 97 per cent achieving the expected Level 2 or above which is well above the national average, with 32 per cent achieving the higher Level 3 which is also well above average. The results of the last three years also show that both boys and girls attained equally well in all areas.
3. The performance targets that the school set for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 in the 1999 National Curriculum assessments were realistic and were achieved. Targets set for achievement this academic year are slightly higher following a detailed analysis of all pupils in the year group. The unpublished national test results for the year 2000 show a slight decrease in the proportion achieving Level 2 or above in reading and writing, probably caused by one or two pupils' performance on the day of the tests. In mathematics however, every pupil achieved the level expected and in the teacher assessments in science, again every pupil achieved Level 2 or above.
4. Work seen during the inspection indicates that in English, by the end of Key Stage 1, the standards that pupils attain are in line with the national expectations in speaking

and listening, above in reading and well above in writing. Overall, standards are above average. Pupils' listening skills are generally above average but they are not given sufficient opportunities to express themselves in role-play situations or class discussions and this is having a detrimental effect on their speaking skills. In mathematics, standards of work show attainment to be above average, and well above in science. Pupils also achieve standards which are above those normally seen in art, design and technology and music. In geography, history, information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education standards are in line with those normally seen. Pupils' achievements in religious education are the subject of a separate report.

5. The above average standards that pupils attain at the end of Key Stage 1 are a reflection of how well they are taught, their very good behaviour and extremely positive attitude towards their learning. Almost all parents who returned the questionnaire believe that their children are making good progress. Virtually all (94 per cent) agree that the school expects children to work hard and achieve their best.
6. Pupils continue to make good progress in the Key Stage 2 classes. Inspection findings indicate that by the time they are ready to leave the school at the end of Year 6, attainment in English, mathematics and science is well above the level expected for pupils of this age. The results of National Curriculum tests for 11-year-olds in 1999 showed that the results pupils achieved were above the national average in English and mathematics, and well above in science. When these results are compared with those of pupils from similar backgrounds, they are below average in English and mathematics, but well above in science. A detailed analysis by the school following the publication of these results was undertaken and areas for improvement identified. It was noted that the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 was close to the national average in both subjects, rather than above. Grouping by ability was re-instated for English and mathematics with pupils of similar abilities being taught in groups in Years 5 and 6. Pupils were also provided with more time to write in all subjects. The impact of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies was also evaluated in detail. In the unpublished results for this year, there has been a significant improvement with half of all pupils achieving Level 5 in English compared to 18 per cent last year. In mathematics the improvement is from 22 per cent to 27 per cent. The trend for the past three years has been one of improvement with more and more pupils achieving the higher Level 5 each year. Until this year, improvements have kept pace with improvements nationally. In science however, pupils at the school appear to be doing particularly well with every pupil achieving the expected level for eleven-year-olds and eight out of ten achieving the higher Level 5. Inspection evidence confirms that standards for the current Year 6 pupils are well above average in English, mathematics and science. In most other subjects at Key Stage 2, standards of attainment are above those normally seen, showing good progress from when pupils entered the school with levels of attainment which were roughly average. This applies to art, design and technology, history and music. In geography, ICT and physical education, standards are in line with those normally expected for pupils of this age. The shortage of computers in classrooms and lack of opportunity for pupils to take part in sporting activities on the inadequate playground or after school is adversely affecting standards.
7. The consistently good quality of teaching is an important factor in the good progress most pupils make throughout both key stages. The successful implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has undoubtedly helped to raise standards. Effective daily mental mathematics sessions make a strong contribution to pupils' ability with numbers and calculations. Well-chosen texts and the teachers' skills in drawing pupils' attention to important differences in style, structure and

content improve pupils' reading skills and widens their vocabulary. The partnership between home and school in reading is strong and this also contributes effectively to the good progress of pupils. Lower attaining pupils benefit from the additional support they receive in the classroom from their teachers, but in the mixed-age classes in Key Stage 1, these pupils often waste time waiting for the attention of their busy teacher. Inspection evidence shows that pupils have good opportunities to develop their reading skills. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to put into practice the writing skills acquired in the literacy hour in other subjects of the curriculum. This effectively develops pupils' skills in planning, drafting and editing their writing. In Key Stages 1 and 2, much emphasis is placed on the development of handwriting skills and work in pupils' books is invariably neat and tidy.

8. Standards of attainment in science are well above the national average by the end of both key stages. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection when they were below average at Key Stage 1, and in line with the average at Key Stage 2. The science co-ordinator manages the subject well, giving much advice and support to all teachers. All teachers show confidence when teaching science and are guided effectively by the very good programme of work prepared by the local education authority science specialists. The opportunities provided for pupils to investigate and conduct experiments are very good. Boys and girls both enjoy this practical approach and work hard in lessons to complete their work. As a result there is no difference in the performance of girls and boys.
9. Attainment in ICT is in line with the national expectation by the end of both key stages. Standards remain at the level they were in the previous inspection, when it was noted that pupils brought considerable skills from their home computer experiences. Most pupils have computers at home and this undoubtedly helps with the development of basic skills. Teachers' knowledge is good. The school has grouped most computers in a single area so there are few computers for pupils to use in their classroom. This arrangement restricts opportunities for pupils to use computers in most subjects of the curriculum to effectively support their learning.
10. In the school as a whole, the achievement of pupils is good. High expectations of teachers, good discipline and control in lessons and meticulous lesson planning result in effective learning in a large proportion of lessons. Pupils' learning is further enhanced by their extremely positive attitudes and very good behaviour. This creates a good atmosphere in which to learn for all pupils. As a result, standards in most subjects, with the exception of physical education, geography and ICT have improved since the previous inspection.
11. Pupils with special educational needs benefit greatly in this climate for learning and usually attain the standards which their teachers expect of them with many doing better than expected. For example, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 in reading and writing in the Key Stage 1 National Curriculum tests in 1999 was well above the national average. This represents a positive outcome for pupils with special educational needs. In their lessons, most pupils make good progress overall to reach the levels expected for all pupils by the end of both key stages in English, mathematics and science. However, their progress towards the targets set for them in their individual education plans is difficult to measure as the targets are often not very specific. Gifted and talented pupils are not identified separately and so no judgement about the provision the school makes for them could be made. It was noted however, that higher attaining pupils are given work to do which is suitably demanding and challenging for them. The good quality of teaching affords all pupils every chance to reach their full potential.

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

12. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good and their behaviour is good. They are well motivated towards their work. Their personal development and their relationships are both very good. Parents consider that the school is successful in achieving good standards of behaviour. Attendance is satisfactory.
13. Pupils enjoy school. They are very well motivated, enthusiastic and interested in their work. Their involvement during lessons shows their very good attitudes to learning, with most of them making good progress. Pupils' attitudes are enhanced by the generally good class management skills of teachers, by the high expectations for pupils' work and by the enthusiastic teaching, which makes learning enjoyable in lessons.
14. Pupils concentrate well, pay attention to their teachers and persevere with their work. They are keen to participate, generally respond wholeheartedly and work conscientiously. Most of them readily talk about what they are doing and during lessons join in activities and discussions. They are keen to display their work, which they tackle independently with enjoyment and enthusiasm.
15. The previous inspection report indicated that behaviour was generally good, with pupils showing good attitudes to work. Behaviour continues to be good while relationships and attitudes to work are now very good. The school is an orderly community. Pupils are smart, friendly, courteous and considerate. The staff's reinforcement of a positive atmosphere enhances the school's approach to behaviour and is effective in achieving a good overall standard in and around the school. Behaviour in classes is frequently very good. Although there are instances of inattention in some lessons by a very small minority of pupils, these are handled with firmness and tact by teachers. Class rules are displayed and pupils understand and adhere to them. They are therefore aware of what is expected of them and respond well. For example, on formal occasions such as assemblies they arrive and conduct themselves in an orderly and respectful manner. Pupils move around the school sensibly and lessons are able to start promptly.
16. Standards of behaviour in the playground are generally satisfactory. There is some unacceptably boisterous behaviour, but this is related to the restricted space on the playground, which limits opportunities for more vigorous activities. Parents at the meeting prior to the inspection reported instances of aggressive behaviour but no bullying or aggressive behaviour was observed during the inspection. Boys and girls play well together. There have been no exclusions.
17. Pupils with special educational needs behave well and have positive attitudes to their work and to school life in general. They sustain concentration well and make good progress in both key stages. Most achieve the expected level of attainment by the end of Key Stage 2. In science, for example, every pupil achieved Level 4. Pupils are generally well integrated and work well with others. All make substantial gains in self-confidence as they move through the school.
18. Pupils are proud of their school and are careful with equipment and resources. In class they willingly and politely share, and quickly and efficiently tidy up equipment. They are respectful of property and their classroom environments. For example, in a lesson they moved very carefully and quietly around the lead of an overhead projector.

19. The very good relationships are a major strength of the school. Relationships between pupils and adults are very good. Pupils feel valued by teachers and reciprocate accordingly. Pupils also relate and interact well to each other. They work together harmoniously, assist each other in their activities and frequently provide general help to each other. They collaborate well in group work and learn effectively from each other. They are trustworthy, thoughtful and considerate, respecting the feelings, values and beliefs of others.
20. Pupils respond well to opportunities to exercise responsibility and independence when they are given. They willingly undertake a number of helpful duties in all classes and with developing self-confidence; they demonstrate very good capacities for initiative and personal responsibility. Year 5 and 6 pupils adopt a caring and protective approach to the younger pupils at break and lunchtimes. Pupils also show initiative in response to charities by organising their own activities at fund-raising events.
21. In the previous inspection report, attendance was deemed good. The figures for the last full academic year show that authorised absence was around the national average and attendance is therefore satisfactory. Unauthorised absence is negligible. In the previous year, 1998/99, there was very little absence recorded, but since then the school has noted an increase in the number of pupils going on holiday during the school term. Registers are completed promptly and well in accordance with regulations. Pupils are punctual in their attendance and lessons are able to start on time. There are no significant attendance problems.
22. The attitudes, behaviour and personal development of pupils are major strengths, which contribute to a positive atmosphere for learning, pupils' good progress and the quality of life in the school. Comments from parents, both in the questionnaires and the meeting prior to the inspection, support this view.

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

23. In the previous inspection, the majority of teaching was described as satisfactory or better with six per cent being less than satisfactory. Overall, 38 per cent was good or better and only 11 per cent was found to be very good. The quality of teaching in the school has improved immensely since then and is judged by this inspection team to be good. The very effective planning by teachers and their high expectations of pupils are the key features, which make teaching so good at this school. In addition, all teaching and non-teaching staff are enthusiastic and work very well as a team, showing a strong determination to raise standards.
24. During the inspection, teaching was satisfactory or better in all but one lesson seen, and it was very good in 23 per cent of the lessons. Examples of good and very good teaching were seen in 70 per cent of the lessons, which shows a commendable consistency and confirms that the quality of teaching has vastly improved. It can now be considered as a strength of the school. Very good teaching was seen in nearly all classes throughout both key stages showing strength in depth. Detailed planning which provided challenging activities for all pupils, good knowledge of the subject by teachers and lessons delivered at a good pace were the main features of the very good teaching. In the only unsatisfactory lesson, the teacher did not provide appropriate activities for the age of pupils and they were not given sufficient time to become involved in what they were doing.
25. The quality of teaching in the literacy hours and during numeracy sessions was generally of a high standard throughout both key stages. Teachers use the skills that

pupils have learned in these sessions when teaching other subjects. Pupils in all classes have many planned opportunities to write at length in order to consolidate their literacy skills. However, opportunities to use a computer are limited, as these are located in one special area away from the classrooms.

26. All teachers work hard to establish a good working atmosphere and promote effective learning. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are now a strong feature of most lessons, whereas previously too many tasks were given which were undemanding for pupils. The pace of learning has also improved and is good in almost all lessons, with little time wasted. Once pupils have finished the tasks set for them, teachers have additional activities planned and these sufficiently challenge pupils, particularly those of higher attainment. All teachers have effective strategies to maintain good behaviour and ensure that pupils keep working. As a result, noise levels are low and pupils of all ages concentrate very well on the tasks set for them. Pupils behave very well in lessons and have a very good attitude towards their learning. This results in a highly productive working atmosphere in most classes with all pupils making good progress. This is in sharp contrast to the previous inspection when the management of pupils and the establishment of order were found to be unsatisfactory.
27. There is good use of ongoing assessment to guide teachers in planning work that gives adequate challenge to pupils of all abilities. All pupils' work is marked thoroughly and helpful comments give further guidance to them on how to improve. No pupils were identified to inspectors as gifted or talented, but it was noted that pupils of all abilities were given appropriately challenging work. Planning is a strength in almost all lessons as teachers clearly set specific learning objectives. As a result, lessons in virtually all classes build effectively on pupils' previous knowledge. Teachers are well prepared for their lessons with resources readily available for pupils. In most lessons, the variety of resources gives pupils the opportunity to use their initiative and choose suitable materials to use in their studies. The absence of computers in most classes means that pupils are unable to use modern technology to support their learning.
28. The quality of teaching was found to be very good in science and good in most other subjects, except design and technology where it was not possible to make a judgement at Key Stage 2 as no lessons were seen. As a direct result, standards in most subjects are better than those normally seen by the end of Key Stage 2. The exceptions are in physical education and geography, where standards are in line with those expected and teaching is satisfactory. In English, mathematics and science, standards are well above average, reflecting the quality of teaching. All pupils respond positively to their lessons, showing much interest, behaving very well and sustaining high levels of concentration. As a direct result, effective learning occurs in virtually all lessons.
29. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning for children under the age of five is satisfactory. The planning of lessons is currently unsatisfactory as little reference is made to some areas of the curriculum for the under-fives. This adversely affects teachers' expectations and the methods they employ, which are both unsatisfactory. Teachers manage the children well in a firm but friendly manner and as a result there are no difficulties with behaviour. The range of learning opportunities, for children under the age of five, is satisfactory overall.
30. The teaching of literacy skills is good. In the literacy hour teachers use whole-class or group teaching sessions well to develop pupils' skills in reading, writing and spelling.

Most teachers use large-print books effectively and all pupils read the text well. Teachers' expectations of pupils are high in literacy sessions. During individual work on letter sounds, spellings and the use of words in sentences, pupils are set tight time targets to complete work. They have to concentrate and work hard to complete them successfully. Most teachers provide worksheets for pupils to complete, and pupils write neatly on these. The teaching of basic literacy skills through other subjects of the curriculum is good throughout both key stages with many opportunities provided for pupils to write freely and at length. In the junior classes, pupils often record the results of investigations in science for example, and write down the similarities and differences that they find between contrasting locations in geography. Pupils' technical knowledge, their use of full stops and other punctuation is generally accurate. Overall, work in other subjects of the curriculum contributes effectively to the development and application of literacy skills.

31. The teaching of numeracy is good in all classes. Oral, mental mathematics sessions at the beginning of the daily numeracy hour are helping to give pupils of all ages more confidence with numbers. These sessions are conducted at a good pace, which helps to focus pupils' attention. Pupils enjoy the challenge and most try hard to be the first to answer. Pupils' extremely positive attitudes, and the work provided by teachers which is well matched to individual pupils' capabilities ensure that most pupils make good progress in developing their numeracy skills.
32. Pupils with special educational needs are generally well taught. Where teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of their pupils' needs and tailor their teaching styles and learning materials to meet these needs, pupils learn with confidence and make good progress. However, the targets set for pupils in many individual education plans are not specific or clear, making progress difficult to measure. This serves to slow the rate of progress for pupils in specific areas of weakness. Teaching is usually good when pupils receive separate tuition in small groups because of high expectations and teachers' expertise. The very good relationship which exists between teachers and pupils with special needs has a positive impact on pupils' learning. However the level of support in the Years 1 and 2 mixed-age class is too low and as a result, the Year 2 pupils with special educational needs often have to wait for individual help, particularly with spelling.
33. Some parents at the pre-inspection meeting were unhappy with the amount of homework their children were expected to do. Inspection findings do not support parents' views expressed at the meeting, or those who responded negatively on this aspect in the questionnaire. The quality and amount of homework are both good. The school has a clear home-school partnership policy and details about homework are included. Pupils are regularly given homework, and overall it makes a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, particularly in reading.

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

34. The school meets most statutory requirements and takes account of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. The exception lies in the Foundation Stage, where children do not receive a planned curriculum appropriate for their age. Good use is made of resources within the community but there are too few extra-curricular activities provided to extend pupils' learning. Although there are insufficient opportunities provided for pupils to take responsibility within the school, all pupils work well together and they understand the difference between right and wrong.



35. The overall quality and range of opportunities and the breadth, balance and relevance of the whole curriculum offered to the pupils are good in Key Stages 1 and 2. There are strengths within the curriculum, particularly in mathematics, science, art, design and technology, history and music. It is obvious that standards overall within the school are rising. However, all elements of the Foundation Stage curriculum are not planned to fully take account of statutory requirements and the lack of suitable resources for outdoor play limits children's physical development. There are effective policies and programmes of work for all subjects and planning for lessons is firmly based on these. Statutory requirements such as those for sex and drugs education are met within the good provision the school makes for pupils' personal, social and health education. Following the previous inspection, there were no key issues associated with any aspect of the curriculum.
36. The teaching of literacy is good, with many lessons at both key stages being very good. The planning is specific and lessons are purposeful. As a result, pupils' progress is often good. The numeracy strategy is implemented to a high standard throughout the school and this has a direct influence on the quality of learning in mathematics.
37. The range of extra-curricular activities offered to enhance the quality of education is unsatisfactory. At present there is a choir and clubs for cuisine and art and craft, although there are plans to widen this range. However, there are no sporting opportunities in the extra-curricular programme.
38. Pupils have good equality of access to the curriculum, although pupils attending some peripatetic music lessons miss the same lessons each week.
39. The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Staff know their pupils well and give them the encouragement and the confidence every day. All subjects of the curriculum are available to all pupils on the special needs register and pupils often tackle the same work as the rest of the class, with close support from their teachers. Individual education plans are in place for all pupils on the special needs register. However, the short-term targets for improvement in basic skills are often not clear or specific enough to fully inform class teachers or let parents know precisely how they can help with their child's teaching programme. Moreover, at the end of each term, it is difficult to assess pupils' progress against these targets.
40. The community makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. There is a good programme of visitors to the school and links with the local church are very good. The pupils take part in the Wirral Civic Award Scheme, entertain residents of local homes and collect for charities. All pupils have the opportunity to visit local places of interest and Year 6 pupils participate in residential visits. There are good links on a variety of levels with local schools.

### **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

41. The school offers very good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and this provision is a strength of the school as it was at the time of the previous inspection. Parents are pleased with the attitudes and values which the school promotes.
42. The provision for spiritual development is very good. Pupils of all ages in this Church of England school are able to grow in the understanding of the Christian way of life through the presentations in the morning assemblies and the pattern of prayer

throughout the school day. Pupils also benefit greatly from the strong links with St. Saviour's parish church, where they take an active part in services throughout the year, and from the spiritual guidance of the vicar who is a well-known figure around the school. He often leads or simply attends school assemblies, as do the other parish clergy. Subjects of the curriculum, especially religious education, also play an important role in helping pupils to develop their spiritual awareness. In their English lessons, for example, pupils are encouraged to explore the significance of personal experiences in poems, stories and in their own original writing, while art and music lessons provide pupils with good opportunities not only to reflect on what they see and hear, but also to create their own interpretations of beauty and diversity. Carefully planned experiences, such as the millennium visit to Chester Cathedral, make an excellent contribution to the development of pupils' spiritual awareness.

43. The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral development. It gives pupils a very firm understanding of right and wrong. In assemblies, as well as in special lessons called 'circle time' where pupils discuss moral issues, and in normal lessons, pupils have very good opportunities to discuss things such as acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, ways of looking after the environment and the importance of fair play. Classroom codes give clear guidance on behaviour in and around the school, and staff set very good examples of positive attitudes and concern for the welfare of all members of the school's family. Pupils are encouraged to attain high standards in work and behaviour through the incentive of awards and praise. Their achievement in all areas of school life is celebrated in the eye-catching displays around the school.
44. Opportunities for the social development of the pupils are good. Pupils of all ages take part in presentations when the school meets together for assemblies, and they represent the school in public events. Both inside and outside the classroom, pupils are encouraged to work together co-operatively, as in project work, musical and sporting activities and dramatic performances. Homework is well used to promote independent learning. Pupils become monitors and librarians, and take their turn in doing practical tasks such as holding doors open during changes of lesson and clearing away after assemblies and classroom activities. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to express themselves in lessons, give their view or opinion about school routines or take responsibility as leaders of the school.
45. Pupils have very good opportunities to develop a sense of citizenship through the Wirral Civic Award scheme as well as through many varied activities within the community. For example, they arrange a programme of entertainment for a summer tea party for a 'housebound' group; go carol singing at homes around the parish and support local and national charities. Pupils with special educational needs also have good opportunities for their personal development. They develop self-confidence through activities, which are designed to improve their social skills, such as taking part in drama, art and music.
46. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils' cultural development. Pupils are taught to appreciate their own and other cultural traditions. Visits to churches, museums and art galleries, and presentations by professionals such as the Treasure Trove Puppet Company, give pupils a clear understanding of their local and national heritage of religious customs, history, art and drama. In their music lessons the pupils benefit from listening to the music of a wide range of composers and the school choir takes part in the local music festival. There is a comprehensive programme of outdoor pursuits, and the pupils visit country parks and activity centres in the locality and further afield. Pupils become aware of the richness of other cultures when, in religious education lessons, they find out about the traditions of the

major world faiths. In their work on the Egyptian and Aztec civilisations in history and art, they develop an understanding about different lifestyles and this helps them to appreciate the customs and cultural backgrounds of people who live in Britain and in faraway lands.

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

47. The school provides a caring working environment, which is well supervised and results in good welfare provision. The staff have a good knowledge of pupils and give them good educational support and guidance. The previous inspection report stated that there was a caring atmosphere and this remains as a strong feature. Procedures for developing pupils' personal and social skills and improving behaviour are good.
48. There is good, comprehensive pastoral care provided by all staff who know individual pupils well. The school places a high priority on welfare and support as a vital element in pupils' learning. The good personal support and guidance provided by the headteacher, class teachers and support staff is well matched to the needs of pupils, and this is acknowledged and valued by parents.
49. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. They are supported well and integrated in all areas of the school. External agencies are used well and regularly to the benefit of the pupils. The school provides good support and guidance, which assist pupils' progress and their confidence. The school's well-established links with its partner institutions enables pupils with special educational needs to make a smooth transition from one phase of their school life to another. There is also a very effective liaison with the local education authority personnel such as the school welfare officer.
50. The arrangements for child protection are good. There is a designated staff co-ordinator who has received the appropriate training and all teaching staff are aware of the relevant procedures to be followed. However, the school does not have its own child protection policy, although it does conform to area guidance and procedures.
51. The school has adopted an appropriate health and safety policy and internal responsibilities are understood well by all. There is regular monitoring of health and safety requirements including inspections by members of the governing body and the school receives professional advice from the local authority. Records show that risk assessments have been carried conscientiously.
52. There are good arrangements for the care and support of pupils who are taken ill at school and the school has accurate accident records. The school provides a safe and healthy environment, but the absence of handrails for the steps between the main school building and the playground, present a potential hazard in wet or icy weather. There are good arrangements for the supervision of pupils at break times and lunch periods. However, except for a short period at lunchtime, older pupils are not permitted to engage in more vigorous games because the playground is inadequate for the number of pupils. This causes resentment and some boys occupy themselves by involving themselves in unacceptably boisterous behaviour.
53. The school has a written policy for behaviour in school and it sets out rewards and sanctions. These are conscientiously applied by staff. There are good procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour. The staff are good role models and the positive direction they provide successfully motivates the majority of pupils to act responsibly. This is demonstrated by the generally good behaviour of pupils in and around the school. Some parents and some older pupils expressed

concern with what they considered to be the unsatisfactory handling of cases of bullying or aggressive behaviour. Whilst individual instances are well handled and recorded by the headteacher, there is no separate policy to deal clearly or consistently with anti-social behaviour or bullying.

54. There is satisfactory promotion and monitoring of attendance and there is effective liaison with the education welfare service.
55. There is good thorough monitoring of pupils' academic progress by teaching staff. The individual records maintained by class teachers provide systematic, comprehensive records for all pupils, reinforcing incisive observation throughout the year. The good pastoral arrangements, guidance and support for pupils emphasise the development of their improving confidence and social skills. All pupils are generally well prepared for the next stage of their education.
56. Pupils are provided with some opportunities to exercise responsibility. There are regular duties in each class, and pupils are involved in drawing up class rules. In addition, older pupils have a number of routine duties. For example, looking after animals, getting the hall ready for assemblies and acting as telephone monitors. They also help to look after the younger pupils and assist at meetings for parents. However, they are not routinely provided with effective opportunities to develop greater responsibility and independence. Teachers tend to over-direct pupils rather than allowing them the freedom to choose for themselves. In a physical education lesson, for example, the teacher gave each pupil a ball from the basket, rather than allowing them to get their own. The school's arrangements for the welfare of pupils are a major strength and ensure a caring and protective environment.
57. The previous inspection identified the need for day-to-day assessment and recording to be more consistent across the school. This has been developed well and much progress has been made. The school now has a clear assessment policy. Assessment tests are used effectively to determine pupils' abilities as soon as possible after they enter the Reception classes. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress as they move up through the school are good. Pupils are formally assessed in areas of English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 1, and again at the end of Key Stage 2. The school also uses optional National Curriculum tests to track pupils' progress and identify any weaknesses.
58. The systems for identifying pupils in need of extra help and the arrangements for reviewing the progress of pupils' special educational needs are good. The monitoring and assessment of pupils' progress in the small groups taught separately, often outside of the classroom, is very good. However, pupils experiencing difficulties in the classroom have to rely solely on the class teacher for help as the school has few non-teaching assistants, relying on parent volunteers or students from the local colleges. In the mixed-age classes in particular, some pupils would benefit from additional support by a classroom assistant rather than having to wait for the attention of the busy teachers.
59. All National Curriculum test results are analysed for any weaknesses and these are analysed in depth. The school decided, for example, to re-introduce setting arrangements for English and mathematics, teaching pupils of similar ability in groups, when fewer pupils than expected achieved the National Curriculum Level 5 in writing or mathematics in the 1999 end of Key Stage 2 tests. The unpublished results from this year's National Curriculum tests, at the end of Key Stage 2, indicate that levels of achievement in this area of English and in mathematics have risen as a result.

60. Assessments of all pupils' standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are made half-termly. Records are based on levels of achievement taken from National Curriculum criteria. These records are used to set realistic targets for groups of pupils as well as to plan teaching to the needs of the pupils. At the end of each school year these detailed records are passed on to the next teacher so that they can build effectively on pupils' previous learning. There is a clear school marking policy. However, it was noted in the sample of work provided for the inspection team that the frequency of useful comments at the end of pupils completed work varied from class-to-class. The school needs to ensure a consistent approach in line with policy guidelines.

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

61. Overall, the links with parents are good. Parents give good support to the school and value what it provides for their children. The school places great importance on its partnership with parents and has good relationships with them. The quality of information provided to parents is very good. The involvement of parents in the school, and their contribution to their children's learning, is good.
62. The provision of more information for parents was a key issue in the previous inspection report. This has been successfully resolved by the school and there is now frequent communication with parents. There is, for example, a well-produced governing body's annual report to parents and an informative prospectus, albeit in a rather formal style. In addition, there are regular newsletters about termly events. Each term an informative 'learning links' curriculum information sheet is issued for each year group and there is also an opportunity for parents to meet teachers in the autumn term. Regular contact is maintained between class teachers and parents throughout the year to report on children's progress.
63. The school generally has a satisfactory partnership with parents of pupils with special educational needs. However, many parents are unsure about the targets set for their children and this means that they are unable to be fully involved in helping them to meet those targets. Parents are kept informed about annual reviews and invited to attend.
64. The annual reports to parents about pupils' progress are satisfactory. They provide information on all subjects and useful comments on pupils' personal development. However, there are few references to National Curriculum levels and some reports do not always provide parents with a clear picture of what pupils know, understand and can do. However, good information on attainment and areas for future development are contained in most reports, especially in Key Stage 1. There are three opportunities for formal consultation during the year, including one following the issuing of pupils' annual reports. These are very well supported by parents. Recently parents have been consulted on the home/school agreement, and given an opportunity to comment and contribute to the final document.
65. There are good arrangements for pupils to regularly take their reading books home and this helps to involve parents in their children's education. However, there are inadequate opportunities for parents' involvement in extra-curricular activities.
66. Parents' perceptions of the school are good and they are appreciative of the educational direction and support for pupils. Most parents feel that they are welcome in school and that the staff are approachable. However, some parents have concerns with the thoroughness of the school's handling of aggressive behaviour.

67. There is good direct parental involvement in school with a significant number of parents assisting with activities such as science and artwork. Parents give good support to school activities and there is a very active Parent/Teacher Association which provides valuable financial support to the school.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

68. The experienced and dedicated headteacher provides good leadership and sound management for the school. She is ably supported in her work by the extremely hard working acting deputy headteacher and teaching staff. The headteacher is fully committed to raising standards and is aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. All issues raised by the inspection team, for example, are already identified for attention in the school development plan for this year. The headteacher has a very good working relationship with all staff, pupils and governors. Following the previous inspection, the school produced a clear action plan, which has ensured that the key issues have been successfully addressed.
69. The school has clear aims, underpinned by a strong Christian climate for learning. The good standards in learning, resulting from good teaching, coupled with pupils' very good attitudes to school and their good behaviour, bears testament to the strong sense of purpose at the school. Results of the National Curriculum tests are analysed thoroughly and targets are set to raise standards further. In 1999, for example, the school identified the need to improve the level of pupils' achievements in writing at Key Stage 2. By taking decisive action and re-introducing grouping by ability for Years 5 and 6 in English, pupils' performance in the end of key stage national tests in 2000 had improved significantly.
70. The responsibility for the management of the daily work of the school and for the development of the curriculum is effectively delegated to subject co-ordinators and teaching staff. The subject co-ordinators have made significant contributions to the development of their subjects in both planning and teaching. Co-ordinators work closely with the headteacher, to determine priorities for the school development plan. Standards of pupil achievement in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are monitored through regular assessments and results are used to set targets. However, further work is needed to monitor, assess and record pupils' achievements in the other subjects of the National Curriculum. Following the previous inspection, monitoring of teaching in most subjects was implemented; this ran for about two years. The school then focused on monitoring literacy and numeracy teaching. The quality of teaching is at present monitored by examining pupils' work and teachers' planning. There are plans to re-introduce more formal monitoring by visiting classrooms during lessons to observe teaching. This coincides with the introduction of the latest initiatives in performance management which all schools are implementing.
71. The governing body has undergone much change over the past twelve months, with half of the governing body being replaced with people new to the job. The governors fulfil their statutory duties in a satisfactory manner and give good pastoral support to the school. Governors pay regular visits to the school, the chair of governors visiting the school weekly to meet with the headteacher to discuss progress on areas identified for improvement. There is a strong commitment by the governors to attend training sessions and there is an equally strong capacity to succeed. A sound committee structure gives adequate support and advice on areas such as the curriculum, buildings and finances to the full governing body. However, strategies for the governing body to evaluate the work of the school are in the early stages of

development. At present, the governing body is not sufficiently active in working with the senior management team to determine the priorities for the school's development plan, or in the evaluation of progress towards identified priorities.

72. Financial planning is good with detailed long-term forecasts covering the next three years. The school's clear and effective action planning, following the previous inspection findings, has resulted in an improvement in this area of financial management. Good use is made of additional funds and grants, to ensure that they provide the support for which they were originally intended. Money raised by the parents has made it possible to provide 13 computers for the new computer area in the school. Through the diligent work of the school secretary and the school's bursar, monitoring of the school's spending, against allocations made in the School Financial Plan, are effectively tracked. Good use is made of new technology to administer the accounts at the school; a development since the previous inspection. The school carried forward two small deficits from 1998 and 1999 but as a result of effective financial decisions there is now a small surplus in funds. A recent audit of the school's finances and procedures by the local education authority's officers pointed to a few minor areas for attention. Action has already been taken to rectify these minor faults.
73. The school has a sufficient number of suitably qualified, experienced and interested teachers to teach the National Curriculum effectively. All teachers co-ordinate a subject area, or carry other specific school responsibilities. Sharing of subject responsibilities is proving an effective strategy, co-ordinators from both key stages working closely together. Job descriptions are well matched to the roles and responsibilities of the staff. Good provision for staff training has enabled the school to successfully develop areas of weakness. Regular training in the skills and teaching of information and communication technology is having a positive effect on curriculum coverage and standards. Classroom support staff are few and the numbers are low when compared with other schools. However, the school generally makes good use of parent volunteers and students to give added support to teachers. The co-ordinator for special educational needs gives good leadership and direction and ensures that the arrangements for monitoring and assessment of pupils' progress are carried out efficiently. Resources, especially in the small tuition groups, are good and enable the curriculum to be taught effectively. Statutory requirements in respect of pupils with statements of special educational need are met.
74. In light of the current initiative for all schools to develop procedures for performance management, the school is reviewing its strategies for the appraisal of teachers. However, the headteacher has monitored classroom teaching, and staff are now fully aware of the concept of performance management. Governors are attending training in performance management with a view to setting targets for the headteacher. Good systems are in place to support newly qualified teachers. The school is used on a regular basis for the initial training of teachers.
75. Overall the accommodation is satisfactory for the school's needs. The main school buildings are spacious, well maintained with attractive displays and good internal decoration. There are good library facilities on both floors and a separate computer area. Classrooms are large enough to provide good accommodation for the number of pupils and there are a number of good resource areas. However, there are a number of stairs on the ground floor, which might result in difficulties for disabled pupils. There is an adequately sized playing field, but it is reportedly under-utilised because of poor drainage. The playground is in good condition, but is too small for the number of pupils. This severely restricts the opportunities for pupils to run about

or take part in team games such as football. There is no outside play area for the under-fives.

76. Learning resources are generally good in range, quality and quantity to support the curriculum for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2, and are readily accessible for use by pupils and adults. Resources for mathematics, science, art, design and technology and history are particularly good. However, they are unsatisfactory in information and communication technology. While the situation has improved recently with the addition of more new computers, the number of CD Rom's remains inadequate. There are limited links to the internet and there are insufficient computers in the classrooms. Resources for the under-fives are unsatisfactory as there is an insufficient variety of books, an inadequate supply of mathematics equipment and few large toys for children to share in the classroom or outdoors.
77. The cost per pupil is slightly below the national average. Considering the high standards of attainment achieved by pupils when they leave school compared with standards on entry, the good quality of teaching, the very good attitudes of pupils and their good behaviour, together with the quality of leadership, this school gives good value for money. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection.

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

The governors, headteacher and staff should include the following key issues in their post inspection action plan:-

- Develop the curriculum provision for children under five by:
  - ensuring that all Areas of Learning and Early Learning Goals for the Foundation Stage are included in teachers' planning;
  - providing better outdoor play facilities;
  - improving the level of resources, particularly those to support children's physical development.  
(Paragraphs 1,29,34,35,75,76,78-89,156)
- Provide better access to computers in the classroom to enable pupils to use them regularly in all their lessons.  
(Paragraphs 6,9,27,76,100,113,116,121,128,130,136-141)

The school has already identified the above areas for improvement in its current school development plan.

The following less important weaknesses, not included as key issues for action, should also be considered by the school:-

- Provide pupils with special educational needs with clearly specified targets in their individual education plans to enable parents to contribute effectively to their learning.  
(Paragraphs 11,23,39,63)
- Introduce agreed procedures to deal consistently and clearly with any instances of anti-social behaviour.  
(Paragraphs 16,52,53,66)
- Encourage pupils to develop independence and a sense of responsibility so that they can become mature leaders in the school by the end of Key Stage 2.  
(Paragraphs 34,44,56,93,101)



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	64
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	36

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	23	47	28	2	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 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	242
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	24

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	34

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.0
National comparative data	5.4

#### 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-1998/99.

### 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	19	15	34

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	18	19
	Girls	14	15	15
	Total	32	33	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (89)	97 (91)	100 (98)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	19	18
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	33	34	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (93)	100 (99)	97 (98)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	16	17	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	13	16
	Girls	14	13	17
	Total	28	26	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (76)	79 (62)	100 (71)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	13	14
	Girls	14	13	15
	Total	28	26	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (83)	79 (80)	88 (88)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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	2
White	202
Any other minority ethnic group	3

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

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

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

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	26.9

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

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	9

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: Nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/A
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/A

Total number of education support staff	N/A
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/A

Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/A
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999/00
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	£
Total income	378,873
Total expenditure	385,854
Expenditure per pupil	1,588
Balance brought forward from previous year	-2,260
Balance carried forward to next year	-9,241

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	242
Number of questionnaires returned	72

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	43	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	43	4	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	49	6	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	43	19	6	0
The teaching is good.	46	51	1	1	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	40	46	8	4	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	28	15	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	51	43	4	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	32	51	10	4	3
The school is well led and managed.	38	43	13	6	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	49	6	1	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	13	22	35	24	7

## **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**

78. This inspection took place at the beginning of the school year, when a number of the Reception class children under the age of five had been in school for less than one week. These children attend for mornings only, while the older, full-time children in the Foundation Stage are in a class with a number of Year 1 pupils. These children are taught in the Reception class activity area for much of the day. Most of the children are settling well into the school. However, the overall provision made for children in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory. Although there are good links between the two classes, the school plans children's work in line with subjects within the National Curriculum rather than the required Early Learning Goals of the new Foundation Stage. Because of this, activities are not always appropriately structured to ensure the necessary steps of children's learning and too little account is paid to the specific needs of young children. There is a good policy for the education of the under-fives and the planned programme of work is thorough, but there was little evidence of these being applied. The headteacher and co-ordinator are aware of these shortcomings, and the need for improvements within the Foundation Stage has been identified as an area for improvement in the school development plan.
79. There was no mention of children under the age of five in the previous report, so no comparisons are possible.
80. Children enter the school with standards which are roughly average for those of this age, although there is a very wide spread of ability. This has been the case for the past few years, as shown by the results of the assessment undertaken each Autumn shortly after entry. The assessments for this year's intake were not complete at the time of the inspection, it being so early in the school year. No children have been identified as having special educational needs.
81. Overall, the quality of teaching for all six areas of learning for the under-fives is satisfactory. However, teachers' knowledge and understanding of the curriculum for the under-fives is currently unsatisfactory. This is not related to the changes in September to the six areas of learning which were called the Desirable Learning Outcomes and are now known as the Early Learning Goals in the new Foundation Stage. Samples of last year's work are headed 'English', 'mathematics', 'science', 'design and technology' and 'homework', rather than the areas of learning specified for children of this age. This adversely affects the quality of planning and the teaching methods employed. There is an over-reliance on published work sheets with no adaptation for the school's children. Samples of work are not labelled with dates or comments to illustrate what has been achieved.

### **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

82. Personal and social skills are planned and developed effectively. The children make satisfactory progress and are on target to achieve the expected level by the end of the Foundation Stage. Most children settle happily and confidently to a variety of tasks. There is evident enjoyment. Many children begin to concentrate well, although independence and perseverance with their work and play are not encouraged through activities where the brief time span allowed for each activity is insufficient. Most children are learning to play well together and some are ready to take turns, although many still want to play alone. Most relate well to adults.

Behaviour is good. However, there are too few opportunities to encourage responsibility and there are few opportunities for children to be involved fully in daily routines such as self-registration or to help at drinks time.

### **Communications, Language and Literacy**

83. Children enter the school with a wide spread of ability, although a significant minority has well developed language skills. Some children are articulate and explain themselves well; others distinguish letters from numbers and most will attempt writing at their own emergent level. They make satisfactory progress. Children in both classes listen well in large and small groups without interrupting, although attention wanders towards the end of a longer session. They enjoy stories and poems, and some talk readily about their experiences. Most children can sound some letters, but a few cannot identify them. Progress within language and literacy as a whole is satisfactory. Most children are developing early reading skills, choosing and handling books with care and some talk confidently about the pictures and stories, however, there is an insufficient selection of books. Children enjoy listening to tape-recorded stories. Early writing skills are developing effectively, and most children make satisfactory progress. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and in one activity observed the teacher asked good quality questions to encourage participation. Relationships are satisfactory and there is evident enjoyment from the children. On-going assessment of children's progress takes place and the results are used well to plan future work.

### **Mathematical Development**

84. Children enter the school with mathematical development, which is in line with that of children of a similar age. They make satisfactory progress in mathematical skills, which are promoted effectively through various practical activities. Children sing songs and number rhymes. The more able children count objects reliably to ten, for example they can thread a selection of beads and count them. Some recognise numbers to five, and a few beyond this. A few children understand positional words such as 'behind' and 'next to'. Teaching is unsatisfactory, largely because children are not always given the opportunity to complete their set activity before being moved on to start something new. Although there are insufficient resources for mathematics, there are sufficient opportunities for children to extend their understanding of size and number through role-play. Overall, the quality of teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory.

### **Knowledge and Understanding of the World**

85. Provision for this area of the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Planning is based largely on the National Curriculum; specifying 'science', 'history' and 'geography' rather than the Early Learning Goals of the Foundation Stage. In some lessons, insufficient time is given to each activity. When this is the case, teaching is unsatisfactory, as it does not ensure that the children make satisfactory progress in their learning. On another occasion, however, the teaching was effective. Overall, the quality of teaching was judged to be satisfactory for this area of learning. Topics planned such as 'Myself', 'Autumn', 'Families' and 'Holidays' have the potential to widen children's experiences and understanding when appropriate links with other areas of learning are made. These links are currently underdeveloped due to insufficient detail in planning. Good provision is made for sand- and water-play. A computer is available and children learn the skills of mouse control and how to click and drag clothing to dress Teddy. During one assembly on 'creation', the children were introduced to the school's pet guinea pig and finches, and learned a little about caring for them.

## Physical Development

86. This area of learning is weak as resources are unsatisfactory. As a result, children have few opportunities to use a wide range of suitable equipment for practising balancing or climbing skills. Opportunities for adventurous play are further restricted as there is no safe, enclosed play area and no large toys for children to use. Generally all children make limited progress in their physical development. Teachers' planning does not identify the Early Learning Goals of the Foundation Stage. For example, one area of planning is headed 'gymnastics'. The school hall provides limited opportunities for these children to develop this area of learning as they use it for a lesson on two days each week. Teaching observed during the inspection was satisfactory and adults interacted well with individual children and small groups to develop their skills. For example, children listen to instructions; they stretch and use steps of different sizes. Most are able to run and jump with confidence. Children are becoming aware of space and others, moving with increasing co-ordination and control. They use malleable materials such as dough to good effect, but when sticking paper pieces onto a plate, all the paper was cut ready, limiting the development of appropriate handling of tools for cutting and shaping.

## Creative Development

87. Children make unsatisfactory progress in developing their imaginative and creative skills because there is an inappropriate balance between child-initiated and teacher-directed activities. In one lesson observed, for example, the teacher's introduction was far too long and children's attention wandered. Nevertheless, the quality of teaching observed was satisfactory. During the inspection, no children were observed painting independently, selecting their own paper, colour and paint to paint what they wanted. The class teacher tended to give too much direction, rather than allowing children to develop their own ideas. There are some opportunities for role-play, although during one lesson observed this was part of a series of brief activities, and children were not given sufficient time to become fully involved in what they were doing. During the past year the role-play area has been a vet's, a doctor's and a travel agency. Music is used mainly for songs and rhymes, and children sing with enthusiasm. They also have the opportunity to listen and respond to music and recorded sounds.
88. Relationships within the two classes are satisfactory. Although the indoor environment has the potential to be an effective learning environment, at present it is not sufficiently stimulating for children of this age. There are few bright, imaginative areas around the classroom where children can enjoy learning and no special outdoor area for adventurous play activities. The range of resources is unsatisfactory with no large shared-wheeled toys or other apparatus suitable for outdoor play. A scrutiny of work produced last year shows the over-use of published worksheets. However, within the narrow curriculum provided, the overall quality of learning for children under five is satisfactory and the children are well prepared for entry into Key Stage 1.
89. Teachers' planning is not linked closely to each area of learning and staff lack knowledge of the curriculum requirements for children under five. Short-term plans are insufficiently focused in order that activities have a specific purpose and provide clear criteria for assessment within the Early Learning Goals. These goals are not identified in the planning nor are they used to plan those small steps in learning so that each individual makes good progress. Although the co-ordinator has produced an effective policy and scheme of work for the Foundation Stage, the education of

these children is not monitored adequately and there is insufficient support for day-to-day planning. This forms a part of the school's own action plan for improvement.

## ENGLISH

90. Results of the National Curriculum tests in 1999 show that by the end of Key Stage 1, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading and writing was well above the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining higher grades was above average. Teacher assessments broadly reflected these results. When compared with similar schools, pupils' attainment was broadly average in reading and above average in writing. Results over the three years up to 1999 show that the performance of both boys and girls in reading was close to the national average, whereas in writing it was above. The slight dip in standards achieved by the pupils in 2000 was most probably due to pupils' performance on the day of the tests.
91. Results of the 1999 English tests and teacher assessments show that by the end of Key Stage 2, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 or above was above the national average in comparison with all schools, but below average when compared with similar schools. The proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 or above was close to the national average. Taking the three years from 1997 to 1999 together, the performance of both boys and girls in English was well above average and recent results indicate a further rise in standards.
92. Work seen during the inspection shows that standards are above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and well above average at the end of Key Stage 2, and this represents an improvement on the findings of the last inspection. The drive to raise standards in writing at Key Stage 2 has been successful and the high quality of handwriting at both key stages is a strength of the school.
93. Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is in line with the national average at Key Stage 1. By the age of seven the majority of pupils talk and listen confidently. Most pupils have a good appreciation of rhyme and a keen ear for different sound patterns in words. They are keen to communicate their ideas in whole-class discussions and individual conversations. For example, higher attainers in Year 2 give examples of similarities and differences in stories they read, and lower attainers can retell a favourite story with a reasonable degree of detail. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils attain average standards. Although most pupils respond well as attentive listeners, they do not always have enough opportunities to develop their speaking skills in sustained discussion. Where the opportunities do occur, most pupils contribute their ideas effectively, as in the literacy tuition groups and in some English lessons. For instance, Year 5 pupils conducted a lively and informed discussion on the choice of descriptive words used to portray the main characters in their class-reading book. However, pupils often find it difficult to project their voices successfully when making presentations in the classroom and in larger areas.
94. Most pupils reach above average standards in reading by the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils read fluently and with enjoyment. They borrow books regularly from the school library and they know how to find information from non-fiction books. Higher attainers read with expression, but their individual reading books chosen by the teacher are not always sufficiently challenging. A significant minority of lower achievers in Key Stage 2 have difficulty in reading independently. They use their knowledge of sounds to help them with unfamiliar words but they lack regular practice in reading aloud and books are not changed often enough in the home reading programme. By the end of Key Stage 2, overall standards of reading are well above average. Pupils encounter a wide range of texts, and in their research



work they retrieve information from a variety of different sources. Higher attainers read aloud very expressively, responding accurately to punctuation, and they have a very good understanding of the way in which different writing techniques are used, for instance, to persuade or inform. During the daily literacy hour, when they practice their reading in groups, most pupils are confident in selecting phrases and relevant information from the text to support their views and they use dictionaries and other reference books very efficiently and effectively.

95. By the end of Key Stage 1 the majority of pupils attain well above average standards in writing. Most pupils have a very good understanding of basic writing skills and write in a structured way, choosing interesting descriptive words and using basic punctuation accurately. Familiar words are spelt correctly and handwriting is joined and of a high standard. In their lessons pupils write for a variety of purposes. Their writing encompasses diary entries, poems, descriptions, and factual accounts, and their exercise books contain good examples of sustained writing. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are also well above average. This is because of the high quality of the teaching and the emphasis which the school has placed on improving pupils' writing skills. Most pupils write very effectively for different audiences, usually drafting their work carefully before producing the finished version. Ideas are developed in interesting ways and most pupils write at length, organising their paragraphs efficiently, and using words precisely. The writing of higher attainers is wide-ranging and very confident. Pupils achieve very well in this aspect of English.
96. Teachers have implemented the National Literacy Strategy very effectively and tasks are well matched to pupils' different needs. As pupils move up through the school they make good progress in developing their literacy skills. This is particularly the case at Key Stage 2 in the small tuition groups where the close attention helps pupils to make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs generally make good progress towards the targets set for them, both in the tuition groups and in lessons. However, the lack of consistent support for pupils with special educational needs in Year 2 is slowing their rate of progress in reading.
97. Pupils' attitudes to their work are generally very good and this has a significant impact on the standards they achieve. In discussion pupils are keen to respond when they are given the opportunity and they are very attentive listeners. Most pupils are very well motivated and are capable of getting on with their work without direct supervision. Even very young pupils settle to their tasks promptly and work in a responsible way. Behaviour is good and pupils have very good relationships with each other and with all the adults in the classrooms. They support each other very well, showing their appreciation of good work and respecting each other's views and feelings.
98. The quality of teaching overall is good at both key stages. In the lessons seen, there was no unsatisfactory teaching and in over half the lessons, teaching was very good. The strengths of the teaching are in the good subject knowledge and teaching methods, the methodical long-term planning, and the good relationships within the classroom. In the most effective lessons teachers have well defined aims for the lesson, which are closely linked to National Curriculum levels of attainment. They organise their lessons carefully and use any additional classroom support from parents or students efficiently when it is available. For example, in a Year 1 lesson on spelling and letter formation, the teacher had very high expectations of work and behaviour, and by her calm but purposeful approach created a very good ethos for learning. Questions were carefully directed in the whole-class discussions so that all pupils could respond with confidence, and tasks were very well matched to pupils' attainment levels. The teacher managed the pupils very well, and no time was

wasted as pupils moved from one activity to another. As a result, pupils made very good progress in understanding common spelling patterns, and in developing clear, confident handwriting, and attainment was above average.

99. Where teaching was satisfactory, it was because the teacher had not provided enough opportunities for pupils to talk about their work, or there was no classroom support when pupils needed it. Occasionally, too much time is spent on one activity, such as the whole-class session when pupils sit together on the carpet, so pupils fidget and lose interest. However, there are many more strengths than weaknesses, and the generally high quality of teaching has a very positive impact on pupils' achievement.
100. Pupils at both key stages use their literacy skills well across the curriculum. In history, for example, they use information effectively when researching facts about the Aztecs, and their writing skills are employed to good effect when they record observations in science and geography. They also describe in detail visits they have made to places such as Chester Cathedral or the local parish church. Work is very attractively presented and older pupils make effective use of computers in their research, which is often done at home using the internet because there are few computers in the classrooms.
101. English makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development through the variety of opportunities available for reflection, original writing, drama work and reading. However, opportunities for social development through discussion and group work are good, but are too limited. The co-ordinator carries out her management role well. There are regular opportunities to monitor standards and teaching in the subject, and, at both key stages, assessment is well used to guide planning. At both key stages homework is well used to develop independent learning. Overall, the improvement in standards in English since the previous inspection has been good.

## **MATHEMATICS**

102. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with levels of attainment which are generally in line with those expected of five-year-olds nationally. By the end of Key Stage 1, their attainment is at above national expectations and well above in number and algebra. By the end of Key Stage 2, it is well above average. This represents an overall improvement from the previous inspection at both key stages. At that time levels of attainment were found to be in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and to be good at the end of Key Stage 2. The national test results for 1999 show pupils' performance at the end of Key Stage 1 to be well above the national average, and at Key Stage 2 it was above average. An analysis of pupils' work from last year confirms this. Results from the 2000 tests show that standards have continued to rise, particularly for those pupils with the potential for higher attainment at Key Stage 2. It is too soon in the year to confirm that these standards will be maintained in 2001, but all the evidence suggests that they will, with girls and boys achieving equally well in the subject.
103. Pupils are confident in using and applying mathematics in a variety of situations. They enjoy learning games and whole-class sessions are particularly effective. Attainment in number and algebra at the end of both key stages is well above the national average, due mainly to the enthusiasm and confidence generated during the lessons. At the time of this inspection, most pupils in Year 2 are already working at National Curriculum Level 2 which is expected by the end of the key stage before they transfer to the junior section of the school. They add, subtract and multiply

money and work with simple fractions. They understand the value of numbers, estimate numbers and compare these with exact calculations. They have worked with a variety of number problems and puzzles. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils calculate averages and percentages using decimals. They multiply and divide using large numbers with confidence. Two lessons were observed with Year 3 and 4 pupils where the whole-class sessions fairly 'buzzed' with excitement, showing that pupils are well on their way to becoming confident mathematicians.

104. Shape, space and measures are covered well in all classes. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils use positional words confidently, they recognise right angles, measure in centimetres and work with litres and grams. They tell the time, some in quarter hours, others in minutes. By the end of Key Stage 2, they work successfully with length, weight and time. They have some understanding of numbers less than zero, particularly when reading temperatures. They know the properties of two-dimensional shapes, they measure perimeters, calculate area and measure angles and bearings. Pupils collect data using tally charts and convert this into graphs.
105. Assessment is used very well to set pupils at Key Stage 2 into ability groups. This ensures that, although much of the work is linked, those pupils with the potential for higher attainment are given tasks which are suitably targeted to their ability. As a result, they make good progress. Pupils are encouraged to check their answers, sometimes using the inverse method or calculators, or by looking at the answer to see if it is 'reasonable'. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well through both key stages and they too make good progress. They are set appropriately planned work which matches their abilities, while linking in with that covered by others in the class, and all feel included in lessons.
106. Pupils work well together, supporting and sharing tasks when appropriate. In most classes, behaviour and relationships (both with adults and other pupils) are good. Pupils are positive, concentrating well and showing enjoyment in their work. These factors have a direct influence on the high quality of learning throughout the school. There are attractive two- and three-dimensional displays in all areas of the school which reinforce learning. Some link with other subjects such as design and technology, where pupils have looked at shapes of buildings, and art where mathematics was used in the design of the millennium tiles. Many involve investigations, for example addition and subtraction problem solving, odds and evens investigation and a 'challenge of the week'. Homework is set regularly from Year 2. Although the overall quality of daily marking is encouraging and supportive, it is insufficiently diagnostic and does not set individual targets for improvement.
107. The National Numeracy Strategy is having a very positive effect, both on pupils' confidence and their enthusiasm for the subject in all classes. The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory. Over half of all lessons seen were good and a fifth very good. The very best lessons are those where planning is specific, work is carefully matched to pupils of all abilities, the pace is brisk and very good questioning encourages participation and makes the pupils think. On occasions, the specific difficulties that pupils experience are used supportively with the whole class to reinforce learning. A strength lies in the priority some teachers give for pupils to explain how they have reached a particular answer. This encourages pupils to think mathematically and some are very confident. Consequently, pupils' attitudes to mathematics are invariably good and most enjoy the subject. In many lessons observed real enthusiasm was engendered and the whole class, pupils and teachers, were caught up in the excitement. At the end of one lesson observed, a number of pupils said how hard they had worked and how much they had enjoyed the lesson.

108. The co-ordination of mathematics is very good. There are two co-ordinators, one from each key stage, and both have a very positive impact on the subject, not least through their enthusiasm. The policy and scheme of work for mathematics are good, being based largely on the National Numeracy Strategy framework. This contributes to the continuing improvement in teaching and learning. Assessment is good and is used consistently to set the pupils and to inform planning, so that work set is suitable for those of all abilities. The school has built up its resources and these are good, readily accessible and used effectively.

## SCIENCE

109. In the previous report, attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 was reported to be in line with the national average, and at Key Stage 2 it was sound but good in some areas. Raising standards in the core subjects of science, English and mathematics has always been a priority for the school and all staff are fully committed to this. Standards have improved markedly since the previous inspection. In the 1999 national tests for seven-year-olds, the results of teacher assessments in science show that 97 per cent achieved the expected Level 2 or above which was well above the national average, and 32 per cent achieved Level 3 which was also well above average. In the unpublished results for this year which have not been compared nationally, there has been a further improvement in pupils' performance in science with figures of 100 per cent and 50 per cent respectively which is another significant improvement. These figures suggest that pupils' performance will again be well above average. This reflects the trend of continuous improvement each year since 1997, with girls and boys doing equally well in the subject.
110. In the 1999 test results for eleven-year-olds, all pupils achieved the expected Level 4 or above which was very high in comparison with the national average and 45 per cent achieved the higher Level 5, which was well above the national average. When the results are compared to those for pupils in similar schools, pupils' performance was also well above average. In this year's tests, 100 per cent of pupils again achieved the expected standard with eight out of ten achieving at the higher Level 5, suggesting that pupils' performance will be within the top five per cent nationally, which is very high. The trend over the past three years for pupils' performance in the national tests for eleven-year-olds has been one of continuous improvement.
111. Inspection evidence indicates that by the end of both Key Stages, standards are well above the national average, with all pupils making very good progress. This represents a significant improvement in standards since the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs do particularly well, mainly because of the very good quality of teaching in science, the practical approach in most lessons and the close attention they receive from their teachers.
112. A detailed scrutiny of pupils' completed work suggests that achievement throughout the school is very good, with pupils of all ages doing particularly well in the subject, and attaining standards which are well above average in all areas. This is mainly because of the very good level of subject knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject shown by all teachers, and the clear subject guidelines provided by the local education authority. In addition, class teachers are supported well by the subject co-ordinator who has much expertise. Following criticism in the previous report about the lack of opportunity for pupils to design and conduct experiments, many opportunities are now given for pupils to investigate and carry out experiments for themselves. As a result, their interest, concentration and level of independence are very good. For example, in Year 6, pupils set up an experiment to measure the effect of exercise on their heart rate. All pupils were encouraged to predict the

outcome and appreciated the need for accuracy when recording results. Pupils showed very good progress in their knowledge of the heart and other internal organs of the body. In Year 5, pupils use sensors to carefully record the temperature at which chocolate, jelly, butter or wax melts. All can define changes to substances which are reversible or non-reversible when the substances are heated or cooled. Pupils recognise and name parts of plants such as petals, stamen, carpel, stigma and ovaries competently. Their knowledge of the reproduction of plants is very good, with most able to define the difference between pollination and fertilization.

113. The knowledge, skills and understanding of pupils in Year 2 is generally well above the level expected as they conduct experiments to find the brightest torch or materials which can best be seen in the dark. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils confidently name the external parts of the body, classify materials by their properties and can describe the best growing conditions for plants or seeds. All know about a healthy diet, and have a secure knowledge about electrical circuits and 'push' or 'pull' forces. Pupils complete worksheets neatly to record their findings, but few use a computer to help them with their work.
114. The quality of teaching seen in lessons at both key stages during the inspection was always good or better. Taking into account teachers' excellent lesson planning, the quality of work produced in all classes and the standards achieved, the quality of teaching overall in science at both key stages is very good. Teachers' high expectations and the good pace of lessons help pupils' rate of progress. Worksheets produced to support pupils' learning in lessons are effective with a good balance between those obtained from the local education authority's website on the internet and those created by class teachers. Pupils approach their tasks conscientiously and try their best to keep within the time targets set by class teachers. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, enjoy the challenges set, particularly in practical sessions, and respond extremely well. For example, in the Year 1 class, all pupils concentrated well on the task of classifying building materials by their properties and recording their results. Their co-operation with each other and their behaviour as they worked independently was very good. Teachers' expertise in science is evident from their very detailed lesson plans, which clearly set out what pupils are to learn by the end of each lesson. Although pupils of exceptional ability were not identified as a separate group, there is a strong element of challenge built into all lessons to extend higher attaining pupils. This successfully answers a criticism highlighted in the previous report. A strong emphasis is also placed on learning scientific skills and how experiments should be carried out. Work completed by pupils on solids, liquids and gases, separating mixtures of materials, electrical circuits, insulation and conductivity show a good attention to detail when recording results following a practical approach to their learning. Pupils' command of English is above average and this is further enhanced by teachers' insistence on using the correct terminology at all times. When describing the function of the heart, for example, pupils know how blood moves in veins and arteries and the components of the human heart.
115. The school's guidelines for the effective teaching of the science curriculum are very good, enabling all pupils to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding at an appropriate level and pace. Very good links are made with other subjects. This was seen in the Year 3 lesson when pupils recorded their findings on appropriate building materials for houses in this country. There was also a good link made with their studies in geography as they describe dwellings in hot countries like India. Pupils' scientific knowledge is also used to good effect in other subjects such as geography when pupils study climate and how it affects the way homes are constructed or the clothes people wear. Teachers very carefully and regularly assess pupils' progress

and use the results very effectively to ensure all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are given work which is sufficiently challenging, but within their capability. By successfully developing a detailed teaching programme and ensuring all teachers are fully aware of its contents, the school has improved standards dramatically since the previous inspection.

116. Management of the subject is good overall and statutory requirements in respect of the science curriculum are fully met. The knowledgeable co-ordinator provides very good leadership and there is a very good commitment to maintain the high standards. The headteacher and co-ordinator regularly monitor teachers' planning and offer advice on how to improve any perceived weaknesses. Although the development of teaching in the subject has been very good, the monitoring and evaluation of teaching is currently undertaken by examining pupils' work or teachers' planning rather than visiting classrooms during science lessons. This was a Key Issue for the school to address after the previous inspection and a programme was introduced and followed for two years. However, the programme has been temporarily suspended in order to address the monitoring of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Teachers' use of computers to support pupils' learning in the classroom is unsatisfactory. Most of the school's computers are located in one area away from classrooms and all classes are allocated time to use them. This severely restricts pupils' access to a computer during their lessons not only in science but also in all subjects of the curriculum. As a result, there was little evidence of pupils' work in science being completed on computers. Most of the graphs produced, for example, were drawn by hand and data collected as a result of investigations was usually hand written. Resources, described as good in the previous inspection have been improved and are now very good, enabling pupils to carry out investigative work independently.
117. The curriculum is enhanced by trips to places of interest, such as the Lake District or Wales to study the habitat of different animals, and good use is made of the school grounds to enhance environmental science. A pond and conservation area within the grounds is being developed to provide a valuable added resource. The science curriculum and the standards pupils achieve as a result of very good teaching makes the subject a strength of the school.

## **ART**

118. Art is a strength of the school and standards at both key stages are above those normally expected nationally. Standards at Key Stage 1 have risen since the last inspection when they were judged to be average. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are able to work skillfully and imaginatively with materials and tools. Their finished work, which includes paintings, prints and collages, is crafted competently showing good technique. Higher attainers in Year 1, for example showed very good drawing and colouring skills in their work on the patterns in wood. Pupils of all levels of attainment generally draw and shade with confidence and have a good control of pencils and crayons. Most pupils are able to suggest ways in which their work can be improved, with prompts from their teacher. Progress in the subject is good throughout the key stage.
119. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a well-developed awareness of the use of tone, colour, shape and texture, and their sketchbook studies, such as those of animal bones, are generally well observed and accurately drawn. They produce a wide variety of work, including woven decorative patterns, masks, and observations of the natural and man-made environment. Most pupils have a good understanding of the techniques of shading and can explain what they are aiming to create using the

appropriate technical vocabulary with confidence. Their achievement in art is very good in most classes and evidence of this was seen in the attractive displays around the school.

120. Teaching is good overall and in one lesson seen it was very good. Art is vigorously promoted by the co-ordinator whose expertise is a very good resource for teachers who are not specialists in the subject. Throughout the school, there are high expectations of pupils' achievement and behaviour. Teachers work together well. They have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and an enthusiasm for it. They plan the activities carefully, enabling their pupils to use resources effectively in the practical work. As a result the pupils have very good attitudes towards the subject and achieve well. They generally work purposefully and show a pride in their finished work. They are ready to help each other and they usually behave well, sharing equipment sensibly and looking after it in a responsible way. All teachers have a pleasant relationship with their pupils and manage them well, creating a good working atmosphere in lessons. Staff are able to move around the classroom efficiently, giving individual help to pupils with special educational needs, and showing less confident pupils how to develop their techniques. For example, the pupils in a Year 3 class used their imaginations well to create seascapes in the general style of Van Gogh. Higher attainers were stimulated by the good work of others around them. They worked very confidently and speedily so that by the end of the lesson their paintings are almost complete and the teacher can use them in the final whole-class session to point to the effects gained by a combination of colours. However, in some of the lessons seen, not enough emphasis was placed on evaluation and discussion of what had been achieved in the lesson, and teachers did not set aside sufficient time at the end of the lesson for pupils to study and comment on each other's work. Nevertheless the strengths of the teaching far outweigh any weaknesses.
121. The subject is very well managed and much improvement has been achieved since the previous inspection. The programmes of study ensure a continuous development of skills throughout the two key stages and the use of sketchbooks makes a constructive contribution to this development. The work and achievement of the pupils is regularly monitored and recorded, and a comprehensive portfolio is kept of examples of different kinds of work linked to National Curriculum levels. The vibrant displays of artwork around the school demonstrate the high standards achieved and the 'stained glass' windows in tiles, created on the very successful whole-school millennium visit to Chester cathedral, are particularly impressive. Art plays an important role in the work of other subjects of the curriculum. There is a close link between art and music and the pupils are encouraged to use their artistic skills in their geographical maps, and in illustrating their work in history and English. Resources available for the subject, with the exception of computers and computer programs, are very good. There are few computers in classrooms as they are mostly located in a central area. As a result, there was little evidence of pupils' work being completed using computers. Other activities to promote standards include a craft club, visits to the Walker Art Gallery and exhibitions of pupils' work in the Williamson Gallery. The subject makes a very good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

122. Standards in design and technology, by the end of both key stages, are above those normally expected nationally. Pupils make good progress throughout the school. This represents a significant improvement from the last inspection, where design and technology was found to be satisfactory.

123. There is ample evidence throughout the school to show that all aspects of the subject are covered well. Opportunities are provided for pupils to work in a good range of contexts with a variety of materials. They plan, construct, refine their thinking and in many cases their evaluations are particularly thoughtful. By the end of Key Stage 1 they have designed cereal packets and their contents. All have studied textiles and designed shopping bags. They have also designed and made puppets and moving toys, some of which are fairly sophisticated. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have developed their design and technology skills further with work on hydraulics and pneumatics, gears, safety clothing pulleys and turning mechanisms. They taste biscuits to see what they contain and make pasties. They continue evaluating their work. One pupil, for example, wrote, 'I would change nothing because I like it as it is'. There is an interesting display in Year 2, which illustrates the properties of fruit and vegetables.
124. At Key Stage 1 the quality of teaching is good. Lessons are planned carefully and the activities are structured well to try and make learning effective. Parent helpers are deployed effectively, prepared well and make a very positive contribution to the lessons. Pupils enjoy the subject, are keen and involved in their own learning. No lessons were observed at Key Stage 2.
125. The work of the co-ordinator makes a very effective impact on the quality of learning. The subject is organised very well, with specific boxes of resources for the different topics, a good collection of previous work to illustrate standards and a worthwhile policy and scheme of work. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and rate of progress are currently being revised to give teachers a clearer picture of pupils' achievements and so help them to plan future lessons more effectively. The quality and range of resources are good; they are accessible and used effectively.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

126. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were reported to be in line with the national average at the end of both key stages, with no areas for development identified for the subject. The relaxing of National Curriculum requirements for some subjects in 1998 to allow for the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has meant that there has been a lower emphasis in most schools on the teaching of geography over the past two years. However, at Oxton St Saviour's, geography has been taught on a half-termly basis each term, with a history topic in the other half term. During this inspection, most classes had planned a history topic so a detailed scrutiny of previous work in geography was undertaken. Considering how little time has been devoted to the subject since 1998, it is a noteworthy achievement that standards have been maintained at an appropriate level. By the end of both key stages, standards are in line with those expected nationally.
127. Throughout the school, pupils acquire a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of a range of places. They can compare their own environment with contrasting localities in the United Kingdom and the wider world. For example, in their study of Aztecs in Mexico, Year 5 pupils compare rainfall and temperature figures with their own area and know the reason why volcanoes erupt or the causes of earthquakes. Good links are made with history as they study the lifestyle and customs of the Aztec people and with physical education when they create a dance sequence depicting a battle followed by sacrifices to celebrate the victory. All confidently use correct geographical terms and remember words such as evaporation and condensation when describing the cause of rainfall. By the end of the Key Stage 1, all, including



those with special educational needs, are able to describe features of their local area, decide how they would make it a safer place and recognise land use from a map. Good links are also made with other subjects in the infant classes. In mathematics and science, for example, pupils conduct traffic surveys or evaluate the most suitable materials for building houses to keep out the rain or retain heat.

128. Pupils throughout the school have a good attitude towards their work and their good behaviour was a feature noted in virtually all lessons seen during the inspection. It is one of the main reasons that standards have been maintained since 1998 and all pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in the subject. In the only lesson seen in Year 4, pupils ably described the features of a river system from its source to its mouth, using correct geographical terms such as confluence, tributary and meander. By the end of the key stage, all pupils competently use maps, locate features by using 6- figure grid references and compare lifestyles in India or Egypt with those in England. All know the course of the River's Dee and Mersey and can identify different land use on their banks. Pupils generally make satisfactory progress in the junior classes. They remember facts well mainly because of the emphasis placed on producing neatly presented written work. Assemblies such as the one seen during the inspection to celebrate the collection of 438 pairs of glasses by pupils for the global eye project also help to reinforce geographical facts and an appreciation of conditions in other countries. All pupils use maps and an atlas confidently to locate the places that they are studying. However, the use of computers during lessons is unsatisfactory. Most classrooms do not have a computer, as they are located in a central computer area. This restricts pupils' access to them. There is a satisfactory range of CD Rom programs, and pupils confidently use the internet to assist them in their work, often doing this on their own computer at home.
129. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, as it was found to be in the previous inspection. The quality of teachers' planning is good, with clear objectives set out for each lesson. Good links are made with other subjects whenever possible. Using an Aztec theme for dance sessions is a typical example of this. Lessons are made more interesting with a good range of resources and as a result, all pupils achieve standards matching their level of ability. This includes pupils with special educational needs. Worksheets prepared for lessons are of a good quality and when all pupils are given the same ones to complete, teachers provide good support for those who find them difficult. The good level of discipline in all classes creates a satisfactory climate for learning, enabling pupils of all abilities to concentrate well and produce neat work. In the Year 4 class for example, pupils were keen to answer questions and showed that they had remembered most of the information about rivers from the previous lesson. Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly adding supportive comments and usually indicating to pupils how they can further improve their work.
130. Management and co-ordination of the subject are good. There is a programme of work for geography, which effectively sets out what needs to be taught from one year to the next. This has been modified to cover the work for pupils in mixed-age classes this year. Work is well advanced to incorporate the latest Curriculum 2000 guidelines into this programme of work. Following the previous inspection, good procedures were introduced to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in geography. However, these have been allowed to lapse over the past two years and at present, no time is allocated for the co-ordinator to visit lessons. The standards pupils achieve are regularly evaluated by a close scrutiny of pupils' completed work, and teachers' planning is also thoroughly monitored by the co-ordinator. All teachers assess pupils' progress at the end of each half-term's topic and the results of their assessments are used well to plan future work. Detailed annual reports tell parents about their children's progress. The school has continued to improve resources such as atlases,

maps and globes since the previous inspection and these are now used for all aspects of geography. They are readily accessible in classrooms and are used effectively by pupils. There is a satisfactory range of computer programs but pupils have few opportunities to use them to support their learning because of the shortage of computers in classrooms. Visits to places of interest such as the local shops and parks and residential visits to Wales or the Lake District greatly enhance pupils' learning in geography. The development of the pond and conservation area within the school grounds further adds to pupils' interest and enjoyment of the subject.

## **HISTORY**

131. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards of attainment are in line with those expected nationally. The school has maintained the standard found in the previous inspection. By the end of Key Stage 2 standards are above national expectations, an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection.
132. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have achieved a satisfactory level of knowledge and understanding of history within the areas of their studies and virtually all make satisfactory progress. Most pupils in Year 1 are able to distinguish between the past, present and future. They study pictures and photographs from the Victorian period and demonstrate an awareness of differences between past and present. Pupils in Year 2 learn about famous people from the past when they find out about the lives of Samuel Pepys and Louis Braille, for example. Most pupils show a good understanding of the sequence of change in correctly ordering transport vehicles over the past 70 years.
133. Pupils make good progress throughout Key Stage 2. Year 3 pupils in this key stage learn about the lives of riverboat people and the importance of canals in the past. They develop a good knowledge and understanding of Ancient Egypt. Older pupils in Years 5 and 6 continue to make good progress in acquiring knowledge of ancient civilisations. Pupils in Year 5 for example, study the Aztecs, learning about lifestyles and how children were expected to follow in the footsteps of their parents. They make comparisons with today, making effective use of books, photographs and information obtained from the internet. Most pupils attain above expectation in their work. Written work is of a high standard and presentation is invariably good. All pupils use skills developed in ICT lessons to support their work in this study unit. There is good evidence that they have researched well into Aztecs as part of their set homework. Pupils in Year 6 extend their knowledge of ancient civilisations in their study of Ancient Greece. From evidence taken from previous Year 6 work, most pupils show a good understanding of family life, events, people and changes during this period of history. Pupils compare living in Athens with living in Sparta and write about their own preferences. Present Year 6 pupils make good progress in learning about Britain since the 1930's. All pupils readily identify significant events from a timeline. They can describe with accuracy events and make relevant links with the past.
134. Overall, the teaching of history throughout the school is good and in one lesson seen during the inspection it was very good. Teachers' planning is good and addresses the needs of all pupils. In mixed-age group classes in Key Stage 1, planning is thorough, ensuring full coverage of National Curriculum history for Key Stage 1. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and show enthusiasm and interest in their teaching. They make good use of questioning techniques in ascertaining prior knowledge by analysing responses with a view to effectively taking pupils' learning forward. Good use is made of resources especially in Key Stage 2.

Resources to support teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 are in the process of being reviewed to meet the needs of pupils in the mixed-age classes.

135. The co-ordinator, appointed 12 months ago, has worked hard to produce a programme of work to meet the differing needs of pupils in each key stage. She has made good use of outside agencies to support history studies, and visits to Croxteth Park and a Victorian kitchen have given added support to teaching and pupils' learning in Key Stage 1. Assessment, monitoring and recording of pupils' progress is being developed. At present the quality of teaching is only monitored by sampling pupils' completed work, and examining teachers' planning. However, the programme of evaluating teaching as it happens in the classroom is set to resume this year.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

136. In the previous report, pupils' standards of attainment in information and communication technology were found to be satisfactory in both key stages, with some areas in Key Stage 2 being good. Evidence from lesson observations, teachers' planning records, and a scrutiny of pupils' work shows that standards have been maintained and are in line with those expected nationally by the end of both key stages. Many pupils bring a substantial level of skill from their experiences in using computers at home. The school is generally under-resourced with one computer for every 30 pupils. In most schools of this type, the more normal ratio is half this, with a computer for every 15 pupils. Most of the computers have been located in a central area, with few left in classrooms. This severely restricts pupils' access to a computer during lessons and is largely responsible for the lack of improvement in standards since the previous inspection.
137. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils show they have good keyboard knowledge and can effectively use the mouse to activate appropriate responses. Pupils develop word processing skills and are able to change font size, use upper- and lower-case letters correctly and amend text if necessary. This was seen in a Year 2 lesson, when most pupils recorded sentences as text, and made good use of the space bar as well as backspacing to modify their work. Pupils extend their knowledge in saving, retrieving and loading information as well as using painting tools, graphic starters and begin to learn to use modelling software. Pupils make satisfactory progress in the work they do.
138. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils have extended their knowledge and furthered their ICT skills in word processing, and can use appropriate programs to include graphics in designing posters and brochures. Year 3 and 4 pupils in this key stage are able to plan and give instructions to effect the movement of a floor turtle to follow a predestined journey. These pupils are introduced to the use of databases in recording and retrieving information. Year 5 and 6 pupils in the key stage use spreadsheets effectively and extend their knowledge of databases. They use their established word processing skills to support other areas of the curriculum as seen in a Year 5 lesson where pupils use ICT to support their study of the Aztecs in history.
139. Pupils make satisfactory progress but are not given sufficient opportunities to learn about modelling and to extend their knowledge and understanding of the use of monitoring and control in ICT. With only one computer linked to the internet, pupils do not have enough opportunity to access, share or exchange information. These are areas for the school to address. However, the main area of concern in the provision of ICT at the school is that pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to practise their acquired skills on computers in the classroom. The school is fully aware of the deficit

and have identified resources as a priority in the current school development plan. It is an urgent issue for the school to address.

140. Teaching in all the lessons seen was never less than satisfactory and in two out of five lessons it was good. In the more effective lessons, teachers have a good knowledge of ICT and have the necessary skills to take pupils' learning forward. In the other lessons, teachers cover appropriate skills for the lesson well. However, it was noted that some teachers lacked the knowledge to sort out any problems and this meant that pupils were unable to complete their task.
141. The co-ordination of ICT is shared between two teachers, one from each key stage. They work enthusiastically and ICT training has been given a high priority in the school's current action plan. A good scheme of work is in place and the school has adopted their local authority's assessment scheme to plot achievement and progress in pupils' learning. Awards are given to pupils as they build up knowledge and understanding and acquire skills in ICT. Teachers' planning is carefully checked each half-term by the subject co-ordinator, and advice or support is readily available for all teachers. The programme to evaluate the quality of teaching, which was introduced after the previous inspection, is to be resumed this year.

## **MUSIC**

142. Only two lessons were seen during the inspection. However, further evidence obtained from talking to pupils in both key stages, as well as discussing teaching and learning with teachers and visiting specialists, indicates that standards of attainment in music throughout the school are above national expectations. This is an improvement on the previous inspection when they were described as 'satisfactory' at Key Stage 1 and 'good' at Key Stage 2.
143. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils have developed good listening and appraising skills in music. They have, for example, been given the opportunity to listen and appraise the music of a visiting ensemble of string musicians. Pupils develop an understanding of pitch and texture and use their knowledge in performances. An example of this was when Year 2 pupils performed Peter and The Wolf at an assembly for parents. Progress in all classes in the infant department is good. Pupils sing and accompany the music using percussion instruments with enthusiasm. In a Year 1 lesson, for example, all pupils made good progress in understanding pitch by using their fingers to denote rising and falling as the musical notes go higher or lower. These pupils used percussion instruments confidently to learn about dynamics and to practise different tempos. They also used animal cards well as symbols to represent sounds and understand moods created by music.
144. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils have made good progress in music. At least one in four of the Year 5 and 6 pupils play instruments with tuition from a visiting teacher and reach high standards in music. Pupils are given the opportunity to learn from a choice of string, brass, woodwind and percussion instruments following aptitude tests. Many of these older pupils are members of the school choir. Performances at the area Schools Musical Festival indicate that pupils are attaining a good standard. The composing component of music in Key Stage 2 is an area for further development and recognised so by the school.
145. There is insufficient evidence from lesson observations to form a judgement about the quality of teaching in music. However, in one lesson seen, the teacher's knowledge and enthusiasm, coupled with a good singing voice motivated all pupils to learn and good progress was made. All teachers show an interest in music and all

are prepared to teach it. Their enthusiasm is having a positive impact on pupils' learning and the standards achieved.

146. Assessment procedures for music are under review and monitoring of teaching has been on hold since 1998 when all schools were given time to implement the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Both these areas are in need of attention to ensure the quality of the music provision is maintained for all pupils.
147. Music makes a major contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are able to express feelings about the mood of a piece of music and achieve a sense of satisfaction in performing. They learn to respect and care for the musical instruments they play. They take pride in representing their school in festivals, concerts and performances, and learn respect for other performers. Pupils learn about songs and hymns from different celebrations around the world.
148. The co-ordinator is well qualified and experienced and gives a good lead to other teachers. She has reviewed the music policy and updated it this year to meet National Curriculum 2000 requirements. Arrangements are in hand for teacher training in composition, identified by the co-ordinator as an area for development. The school has adopted a new music scheme 'Sounds Musical and Sounds Topical'. This is felt to be more relevant to the needs of the pupils in the younger age group, especially when planning for classes with mixed-age groups. Resources to support the teaching and learning of music are good.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

149. Standards by the end of both key stages are in line with those normally expected of pupils of a similar age nationally. This was also the judgement reported in the previous inspection in 1996. The quality of teachers' planning, better equipment levels and training for teachers, particularly in teaching dance, are the main areas of improvement. However, limitations imposed by the lack of space on the single playground and few opportunities to take part in extra-curricular sporting activities adversely affects standards for all pupils. As a result, their achievements in the subject are not as high as they could be. However, in all the lessons observed, pupils were enthusiastic and keen to compete. At the same time, they were considerate of others and worked well individually, in pairs or in small groups.
150. At Key Stages 1 and 2, all the lessons observed during the inspection took place indoors with pupils being taught dance, games and gymnastic skills. In Years 1 and 2, for example, pupils showed satisfactory control when practising to throw and catch a ball with a partner. All showed the ability to respond imaginatively, changing their speed, level and direction to match some music. Children in the Reception class listened well to instructions and warmed up conscientiously to the Grand Old Duke of York song on tape. Most pupils in the infant classes show satisfactory levels of balance and control and respond well to instructions.
151. In Key Stage 2, pupils in Year 4 demonstrate good agility as they practice and refine different balance positions. All know the effects of exercise on their body and sustain energetic activity well. In Year 5 dance sessions, good links are made with history as pupils perform Aztec dance sequences in groups. By the time pupils are in Year 6, they have a good awareness of the need to practice hard with a partner to develop gymnastic sequences requiring balance and rapid changes of speed, height and direction. Pupils of all ages realise the importance of warming up before strenuous activity and how to relax their bodies at the end of lessons. They show confidence when demonstrating for the whole class and sensibly evaluate one another's performance. Pupils display similar standards during playground activities at break

times when running, dodging or competing in playground games. However, the overcrowding on the single playground restricts opportunities for many pupils to move freely or take part in competitive team games.

152. The provision for swimming is good with pupils getting ten lessons at a local indoor pool in Years 3, 4 and 5. Any pupils in Year 6 who need more practice are included again in the swimming sessions. The school reports that every year, all pupils achieve the expected standards in swimming by the end of Key Stage 2. A scrutiny of teachers' planning shows that statutory requirements for all elements of the National Curriculum are met throughout the year.
153. The quality of teaching is satisfactory throughout the school. Teachers plan their lessons very well to include a degree of challenge for pupils. This answers a criticism in the previous report about repetitive activities, which failed to sufficiently challenge pupils. Before and during lessons teachers give clear instructions to pupils, which means that all know exactly what is expected of them. Tasks are sufficiently demanding in their content and their pace to keep all pupils interested and active. Consequently, behaviour is invariably good in lessons. All teachers pay strict attention to pupils' safety, and discipline during lessons is always effective. Any inattention or silliness caused by over-excitement is dealt with quickly so that the lesson is not interrupted for all pupils. Demonstrations by pupils are used effectively to illustrate skills and encourage pupils to improve their own performance. As a result, the quality of learning in all the lessons overall was satisfactory. Pupils' attitudes to physical education lessons are good. They change quickly and quietly and listen well to instructions. All sensibly obey rules to safeguard their own and others' safety. Behaviour is good, which means that little time is lost during lessons waiting for pupils' attention. Pupils of all ages and abilities are motivated, hardworking and keen to be involved. There was no shortage of volunteers to demonstrate skills in the infants' games lesson, for example, and all were very keen to perform their dance sequence in Year 5. Pupils with special educational needs are fully involved and compete equally well in lessons as class teachers provide a good level of support for them in all activities. All pupils show a good sense of responsibility and fair play. For example, pupils wait patiently for their turn on apparatus and work well together in small groups during lessons.
154. The breadth and balance of the curriculum provides a satisfactory range of activities for all pupils. The school uses a variety of commercial schemes to guide teachers in their planning from year-to-year and the co-ordinator is currently adding the latest 'Curriculum 2000' guidelines into these. This ensures that all teachers have clear guidance to help them plan work that builds progressively on pupils' previous learning. Satisfactory procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are in place and teachers use the results well to plan future learning for their pupils.
155. Few opportunities are currently provided for pupils to take part in extra-curricular sporting activities. Parents at the meeting before the inspection expressed concern that pupils do not play football or other team games on a regular basis. An analysis of the questionnaires returned by parents also showed a high level of dissatisfaction over this subject. The inadequate playground and poorly drained field serve to further restrict the opportunities for pupils to develop a sense of fair play or improve their games skills.
156. The subject is managed in a satisfactory way by the subject co-ordinator. However, few opportunities are provided for the co-ordinator to monitor or evaluate standards or the quality of teaching, but the co-ordinator regularly and carefully checks teachers' planning. Using the expertise of subject co-ordinators was one of the main weaknesses highlighted in the previous inspection report and a more developed role

for subject co-ordinators was introduced. At present, however, insufficient emphasis is placed on monitoring teaching with a view to improving the quality of lessons for pupils. The accommodation is good with a large hall, adequate playing field and hard play area. The school does not have an enclosed outdoor play area specifically for the under-fives and this restricts opportunities for children of this age to develop important skills such as balance and coordination. The level of resources is good for all other aspects of the physical education curriculum.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

157. This subject was inspected separately and the findings will be reported to parents in another report.