

INSPECTION REPORT

**St Ann's CE Primary School
and Nursery Centre**

Orford, Warrington

LEA area: Warrington

Unique reference number: 111298

Headteacher: Mr Paul Fleming

Reporting inspector: Mrs M J Lewis
22787

Dates of inspection: 11th –14th September 2000

Inspection number: 224395

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior and nursery

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Lathom Avenue
Orford
Warrington

Postcode: WA2 8AL

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Reverend S Parish

Date of previous inspection: 1 - 4 July 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Margaret J Lewis 22787	Registered inspector	Science Art and design History Music English as an additional language	What sort of a school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Pat Edwards 10965	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 its parents?
Graham Stephens 30705	Team inspector	English Foundation Stage Design and technology Physical education	
Keith Sanderson 3942	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography Information and communication technology Special educational needs Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Ann's Primary School and Nursery Centre is an average-sized Church of England voluntary aided school with 189 pupils and 26 full-time places in the nursery. At the time of the inspection the youngest children in the nursery and reception classes were attending school under the induction procedures. The school is situated in the Orford ward of Warrington and in the parish of St Ann's. It is about 15 minutes walk from the town centre and serves an area of mixed private and local-authority houses as well as flats. Some pupils come from a minority ethnic background and the number of children speaking English as an additional language is higher than in most primary schools. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the average for primary schools. The number of pupils registered as having special educational need is well above the national average. Two of these pupils have Statements of Special Educational Needs. School numbers have dropped slightly since the previous inspection in July 1996 and some classes have smaller than average numbers. Pupils are taught in classes with others of the same age, except in mathematics at Key Stage 2, where they are set by ability in mixed-aged classes. When children start in the reception class their attainment is below the level expected for their age, especially in language, literacy and mathematical skills.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

As a result of the significant improvements made in recent years the overall effectiveness of the school is good. Pupils learn quickly in the early years and steadily throughout the school. This results in rising standards in mathematics and science by the age of 11, although this has not yet happened in English. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well. Teaching in other subjects is always satisfactory and the majority of the teaching is good. The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. It is led and managed well by the headteacher. It keeps parents very well informed. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher provides strong leadership and manages the school very well.
- The quality of teaching is good overall. The skills of numeracy and literacy are taught well. This is improving pupils' basic skills. Teachers plan their lessons very well.
- The numeracy strategy has been implemented particularly well. This has helped to raise standards in mathematics.
- The school has very good systems for checking how well pupils learn and make progress.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- As a result of consistently good and very good teaching the youngest children in the nursery make a very good start to their education.
- The school makes good provision for pupils' moral and social development and as a result pupils' behaviour and attitudes to school are good and attendance has improved.
- The school provides parents with very good information on their children's education.

What could be improved

- Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 in English, where levels of attainment are below average.
- Standards in information technology where they are below expectations at the end of each key stage.
- The involvement of governors in leading and checking the work of the school.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Key issues raised in the last inspection have been dealt with. The school has raised pupils' standards of attainment overall. Standards in mathematics are now in line with the national expectations for pupils at age seven and 11. Pupils' attainments have improved in English at the age of seven, although not at 11. Standards have improved in information technology, although they are still not high enough. These improvements are due to the overall good quality of teaching. The school has agreed schemes of work in all subjects, which has improved the quality and range of opportunities in the curriculum. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. These pupils make good progress. Procedures for checking how well pupils learn are very good. Pupils' social and moral development is now good. A new main entrance has been added to the school, which provides a good reception area for visitors.

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	D	E	E	D
mathematics	C	D	D	B
science	C	E	E	C

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

When compared with those in similar schools, the school's 1999 Key Stage 2 results were above average in mathematics, average in science and below average in English. In comparison with those in schools nationally, results in mathematics were below average, and well below average in English and science. The number of pupils achieving at the higher level (Level 5) was well below the average found nationally for all subjects. The school's emphasis on mathematics and science is helping to raise standards by the age of 11. Although no national comparisons are available, the most recent figures for the national tests in 2000 indicate that pupils have done significantly better this year in mathematics and science than in 1999, although there is evidence of less improvement in English. The number of pupils attaining at the higher level has risen in mathematics and science but not in English. By the age of 11 pupils do not achieve the level typical of their age in information technology. The school has set achievable targets at Key Stage 2 for mathematics, and science and challenging targets for English. Many children start the nursery with low levels in speaking, listening and number. They make good progress in the nursery and reception class but have not reached the level expected for their age in English and mathematics by the end of the reception class. Pupils in Key Stage 1 learn well in mathematics and English. In 1999, pupils aged seven attained at the national average for English and mathematics.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy school and talk about their work enthusiastically. They concentrate and listen well.
Behaviour in and out of classrooms	Good. Behaviour in lessons is usually good. A small proportion of older boys show immature behaviour when working independently. Behaviour in assemblies is very good.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils willingly accept responsibility. Relationships between pupils and adults are good. Relationships between pupils are good.
Attendance	Levels of attendance are slightly above the national average and most pupils arrive on time for school.

Pupils have good attitudes to their work and behaviour. This contributes to their learning and allows lessons to move at a good pace. This is as a result of high expectations of pupils' behaviour and a positive approach by teachers and staff. Playtimes and lunchtimes are pleasant social occasions when pupils play well together.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	good	satisfactory	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.

Fifty-four lessons were seen. All lessons were at least satisfactory and a substantial amount of lessons were good or very good. There is some very good teaching in each of the key stages. The teaching of English and mathematics is satisfactory and often good. More than half of these lessons are good or better. There is a significant amount of good and very good teaching in the nursery and reception classes. This results in good progress. Although the teaching of literacy is satisfactory and often good, there is insufficient challenge for pupils at Key Stage 2 in their reading and writing tasks. The school meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs very well. They are well supported and taught effectively.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum offers a good range of opportunities. It includes a wide range of educational visits and visitors to school. There is a sufficient range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs helping them to make good progress. All adults who assist them work well together to support pupils.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils' progress in language acquisition is checked regularly. They have good specialist individual support.

Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. There is well-planned development of pupils' personal and social skills. The provision for pupils' social and moral development is good. Spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides good support and cares well for its pupils. Procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare are fully in place.

The school works very well with its parents and provides them with good-quality information. It keeps them very well informed of their children's progress. The school works hard to involve parents in their children's learning. It does all it can to involve them in the daily life of the school, but most parents are reluctant to commit themselves on a regular basis. The school holds regular meetings and provides courses and workshops for parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides good leadership and manages the school well. He is supported well on a day-to-day basis by other key members of staff. Subject co-ordinators are starting to develop the roles and responsibilities they need to fulfil.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are generally supportive, but they are not sufficiently involved in shaping the direction of the school and monitoring its work. They rely too heavily on the leadership of the headteacher.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very well done by the headteacher, but not done with sufficient depth and rigour by governors.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Positive management by the headteacher has led to staff training for mathematics and information technology. Other adults and resources are used well. Accommodation is used efficiently.

Since his appointment the headteacher has led school improvements well. The appropriate qualifications, experience of staff and the good use of accommodation allows all subjects to be taught. Resources are adequate although there is a narrow range in some areas such as history, music and the library.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • The teaching is good. • The children are making good progress in school. • The children are expected to work hard and achieve their best. • The school is well led and managed. • They feel comfortable to approach the school with questions or problems. • They are kept well informed about how their children are getting on at school. • Behaviour is good. • The school helps their children to become mature and responsible. • The school works closely with parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons. • A small number of parents thought that their children did not get the right amount of work. • A small number thought that the school does not work closely with parents. • A small number thought that the school does not help their children become mature.

Inspectors agree with parents' positive comments and views of the school but disagree with their criticisms. Children have the right amount of work to do and the school makes strong efforts to work closely with parents and involve them in their children's learning. It encourages pupils to take responsibilities and become mature. The range of activities outside lessons is satisfactory and is expanding. Children take part in musical and sports activities.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Children learn well and show good achievement in the nursery and reception classes. This is due to: the good teaching, support and liaison between the classes, the careful assessment of children's learning, and a well-organised curriculum matched to the needs of children of this age and development. Children enter the nursery classes with skills in speaking and listening, mathematical, personal, social and emotional development that are well below those usually found children of a similar age. By the time they begin the reception class they have improved their skills and made good headway in these areas. They continue to achieve well in their learning through the reception class. Many children have limited speech and language skills, which slows down the pace of their learning. They make good progress in their personal, social, emotional and physical development, and most reach the recommended levels in these areas. In language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, and creative development the majority of children do not reach the expected level by the time they reach the end of the reception year.
2. The previous inspection findings in July 1996 indicated that, at the end of both key stages, pupils' attainment was below the national average for English and mathematics. Attainment in science was in line with the national average. Since then the school has worked hard and successfully to raise levels of attainment for pupils in these subjects and has improved the levels of pupils' achievements by the age of 11. This improvement is most evident in mathematics and science, where more pupils attain at the higher level (Level 5) in mathematics and science by the age of 11.
3. School results at the age of 11 over the past four years show that, in comparison with national averages, standards in English, mathematics and science have risen broadly in line with the national trend. After a dip in results for 1998 due the prior teaching and learning difficulties attributed to this cohort, results in mathematics and science have recovered more than in English. However, since 1996 there has been a considerable increase overall in the number of pupils achieving the expected level in English, although few pupils achieve at the higher levels. In comparison with those in similar schools, test results in 1999 show pupils' achievements to be below the average for English, above the average for mathematics and in line with the average for science. Although no national comparisons are yet available, the latest figures for 2000 indicate an improvement on these results. In mathematics and science more pupils than in previous years have achieved at the higher levels (Level 5), although in English this is not the case.
4. The results for pupils in Key Stage 1 over the past four years show a steady improvement in reading, writing and mathematics. In 1999, compared with those in schools nationally, pupils' achievements were average in reading and writing but below average in mathematics. Compared with those in similar schools, pupils' results were well above the average in reading and writing, and in line with the average for mathematics. The latest figures for 2000, for which no national comparisons are yet available, indicate that pupils' results for reading have fallen slightly. It appears that the standard has been maintained in writing and has risen in mathematics and science. An analysis by the local authority suggests that this brings the school's results at Key Stage 1 into the top quarter of schools in the authority.

5. Inspection findings show that standards in mathematics and science are average at the age of seven and 11, but standards in English, although average at the age of seven, are still below average for pupils aged 11. In mathematics the National Numeracy Strategy has been put into place successfully and is helping to raise standards throughout the school, particularly in the development of pupils' skills in mental arithmetic. Improved planning systems and teaching, and the organisation of Key Stage 2 pupils into ability sets, have contributed to these improved standards. In science the careful planning of the curriculum, and good teacher knowledge and confidence, make a good contribution to pupils' improved progress. Since pupils at Key Stage 2 have had less years of good teaching of the National Literacy Strategy, there has been less impact on their progress than at Key Stage 1. Fewer pupils attain at the higher levels in speaking, listening, reading and writing at the age of 11. At Key Stage 2, the more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged in their reading, writing and spelling tasks. In some lessons pupils spend too much time listening to the teacher and writing out what they are to learn in the lesson. This restricts the amount of time for pupils to work independently. The school has identified a need for additional time to be given for pupils to writing at length. Additional writing lessons have just begun but it is too soon to judge their effectiveness. Teachers are due to have increased support for literacy during the coming year. The school missed out on earlier support from a literacy consultant when the literacy hour was first introduced.
6. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 learn at a steady rate overall. Staff have a good understanding of each pupil's individual needs. Pupils who find learning difficult make good progress in all areas of the curriculum. Their overall attainment remains below that expected for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2. Good progress for these pupils is due to the way that teachers, assistants and the special educational needs co-ordinator work closely together and support pupils. They use a well-established programme of assessments and frequently review pupils' progress towards them. Pupils are identified for additional support early and achievable targets are set and reviewed regularly. Pupils who come to the school knowing little English make good progress and receive good support. This enables them to quickly acquire the level of language they need to take a full part in lessons. The school checks their progress and individual language plans carefully. The teacher responsible maintains a school register.
7. Standards of attainment in information technology are improving, although they are still not high enough. They have improved since the last inspection, when they were judged to be poor. Few pupils have access to computers at home, but all classes have frequent and regular access to the new computer suite. Pupils have good attitudes to their lessons, and teachers are developing their own skills and confidence through further training.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Throughout the school all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, have positive attitudes to their learning. This is in line with the findings of the previous report.
9. The children in the nursery and reception classes settle quickly into a routine because of the good induction procedures that are in place and the consistent support provided by staff which encourages their personal and social development. Pupils in both key stages enjoy coming to school and talk about their work with enthusiasm. The majority of pupils respond well and show interest in the activities provided. They sustain good levels of concentration. For instance, in a Year 1 geography lesson

pupils took part in an introduction to the water cycle and were eager to share their ideas. They listened carefully to their teacher. Pupils work hard in lessons and try to do their best. Parents expressed strong agreement with the positive attitudes and values promoted by the school. The overwhelming majority of parents agree that their children like school.

10. During the inspection the pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school was good overall. They listen well to staff and to one another. This contributes to their learning as it allows lessons to move at a good pace. However, on occasions a few older pupils display immature behaviour in lessons, particularly when working as a group. Playtimes and lunchtimes are pleasant social occasions when the pupils play well together. They demonstrate their acceptance of a clear moral code and show care for one another, their belongings and school property. No incidents of bullying were seen during the inspection. Pupils develop personal and social skills well and are clearly motivated by the reward of privilege time. The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Parents are very pleased about this and both they and pupils agree that bullying is not an issue in the school. There have been no exclusions in the last reporting year.
11. Relationships between all members of the school community are good. Overall the majority of pupils know that all the adults want what is best for them. This has a positive impact on the way the pupils treat other people. They willingly accept responsibilities when given the opportunity and enjoy helping with the routines of class and school, such as assisting with setting up for collective worship and running the school tuck shop. Pupils' ability to use their own initiative and take responsibility for their own learning in lessons is limited by the range of opportunities provided.
12. The level of attendance is slightly above the national average and most pupils arrive punctually, allowing sessions to start on time and continue without interruption.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection and this affects the quality of attainment particularly for the children under five and in mathematics. The school has developed a sound policy for teaching and learning and staff have undergone training. There have been several staff changes in Key Stage 2 and the nursery since the last inspection. All teachers have undergone specific training at a local college and improved their computer knowledge and skills. They have all been awarded certificates.
14. Teaching is good overall, with some good features. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. It is good or better in 61 per cent of lessons and satisfactory in 39 per cent of lessons. There is good and very good teaching in each of the three key stages. Good and very good teaching is found consistently in the nursery. This gives the children a very good start to their education.
15. Teachers' subject knowledge is sound overall. It is good in mathematics and science. The quality of teachers' lesson planning is good. They plan their lessons effectively and derive their planning of lessons from the national strategies in English and numeracy and from the detailed school schemes of work in other subjects. They have clear objectives in their lessons for what they want pupils to learn. From the nursery onwards, teachers ensure that pupils know what the focus of the lesson is and what they are expected to learn or find out during the lesson. When pupils come

together at the end of lessons, teachers consistently check what they have understood in their learning. This good practice is evident in almost every lesson. It enables teachers to know individual pupils well and leads to good attitudes and learning by pupils. The ends of lessons are used well by teachers in most subjects to give further explanations and information about what pupils are to do in their next lesson. Teachers of the youngest children communicate very well with them and provide good strategies, such as a glove puppet, *Dizzy the Donkey*, to encourage and help them relate to their work and what they have understood. This motivates the new starters and gives them confidence to speak in front of their group in the first few days of nursery. In another instance during a Year 2 music lesson, the teacher used a good example of a *sandwich* to explain how to build up layers of sounds for composing a piece of music.

16. Teachers are enthusiastic in their introductions to lessons and with their explanations and demonstrations. For instance, in science demonstrations given by teachers in Year 1 on *floating and sinking* and in Year 6 for setting up an investigation into *evaporation*, pupils are enthralled and motivated by their work. Teachers give effective recaps of previous work and use assessment of previous lessons well. When pupils in a Year 5/6 class had difficulty in understanding *division* the teacher adjusted the next lesson accordingly.
17. In the best lessons teachers use resources very effectively. For instance, in the reception class the children's curiosity was aroused in a lesson based on *messy foods* when the teacher used a bag to keep the foods hidden. This succeeded in developing the children's understanding of different foods and their speaking and listening skills and linked well to the learning of a poem by heart. In the absence of appropriate school resources, teachers prepare their own objects to help pupils' understanding. This was seen in a good Year 3 history lesson on the *Victorians*. A weakness in some lessons is that teachers do not balance the use of time effectively to allow the pupils to complete their independent tasks. Teachers sometimes talk for too long and time restrictions for the work that they are to do are not usually made clear to pupils. This results in a slow pace in some lessons and sometimes pupils become restless. Some lessons are planned for long periods in the afternoons and the younger pupils in particular find it difficult to sustain their interest for the length of the lesson.
18. Teachers make good use of support staff. They give clear instructions of their role in the lessons. Support staff make a valuable contribution to the learning of the pupils with whom they work. The school does not benefit as much as other schools from the assistance of parent helpers.
19. Pupils who find learning difficult are taught effectively. The support assistants are well informed. All adults develop good relationships with pupils. They are sensitive to the children's needs and work effectively to develop pupils' skills, confidence and, where needed, self-esteem.
20. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is good overall. The better teaching in literacy is at Key Stage 1 and the better teaching in mathematics is at Key Stage 2. The national strategy has been introduced successfully throughout the school. All teachers have good knowledge and are confident in teaching numeracy. Mental arithmetic sessions in Key Stage 2 proceed at a good pace and work is well matched to the pupils' ability sets. Teachers provide extension activities for the pupils who learn the most quickly. In literacy lessons at both key stages, teachers make good choices of stories to achieve their aims for the lesson. This was seen in a Year 1

lesson when the teacher chose a story with a repetitive and predictable text and used a puppet well to engage the pupils as they focused on the sounds in the words. Many independent tasks are well matched to the different abilities of pupils in the literacy lessons. However, some spelling, writing and reading tasks are of insufficient challenge for those who learn quickly. The routine copying-out of the purpose of the lesson takes too long and limits pupils' independent working time. This was seen across several subjects. A recent good feature of English teaching at Key Stage 2 is the additional lessons devoted to the teaching of writing at length. In these lessons story writing is broken down into sections for the pupils in a *scaffolding* approach. This enables them to understand the structure of stories and concentrate on, for instance, the writing of opening paragraphs.

21. In the best lessons, teachers give pupils opportunities to work together in pairs or small groups as well as working independently. This makes a good contribution to pupils' social and personal development. However, often lessons and activities are so closely directed by teachers that pupils do not have enough opportunity to acquire an independent approach to their learning, including, for instance, the choice and use of tools and resources.
22. Teachers mark pupils' work carefully and consistently. The quality of marking is satisfactory overall. The best marking is good and encourages pupils to do their best. Teachers discuss pupils' work with them on a regular basis at the end of lessons. They use praise constructively and this helps them to improve. Very careful assessments of pupils' work are recorded and teachers use this to inform their planning of lessons. The school has a homework policy and all parents and children are aware of this. At both key stages teachers give homework on a regular basis, although not all pupils carry this out or return their homework to school. In these cases pupils in Key Stage 2 are encouraged and given the opportunity to complete their homework in school under teacher supervision outside of lesson time.

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

23. The curriculum is broad and balanced and the quality and range of opportunities for learning are good throughout the school. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when the range of imaginative and creative opportunities given to pupils was less. All pupils have equal access to a curriculum that is well planned and appropriately relevant for their age. This makes a considerable contribution to their intellectual, physical and personal development as they move through school, and effectively prepares them for subsequent stages of education. Provision for personal, social and health education is good. Sex education is taught through themes linked to science and is suitable for the age and maturity of the pupils. Appropriate use is made of the expertise of the school nurse. Provision for awareness of the misuse of drugs is sound. Personal and social education is developed through collective worship, religious education activities and *circle time*, (when children all sit round quietly and discuss things that are important to them with the teacher).
24. Since the previous inspection, schemes of work and policies for all subjects have been produced and many have been updated to reflect the requirements of the most recent guidelines for *Curriculum 2000*. This is a big improvement. School curriculum planning is very good. Clear guidance is provided over time for teachers to plan units of work for pupils of all abilities. Plans clearly specify what pupils are intended to learn in lessons. Teachers set a clear focus on what they want pupils to learn so that

pupils systematically develop their knowledge, skills and understanding as they move through the school. Teachers plan together in teams for their key stage. They consult with each other closely between the three key stages. The school is developing useful links between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 in the secondary school. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 receive tuition from high-school staff in their computer suite. The methods used for teaching literacy are sound and those for numeracy are good. The curriculum is beginning to include opportunities for pupils who learn the most quickly to be challenged through music, sport and literacy. For example, a new literacy group is scheduled to meet for one hour per week.

25. A range of extra-curricular activities enhances the curriculum. These include football, netball, choir, guitar, board games and homework clubs. At present these are mostly for pupils in Key Stage 2. Good use is made of resources outside school to provide educational and social experiences for pupils. These include theatre trips, poetry and art workshops at the museum, visits to *Ironbridge and Jorvik museums* and a three-day residential visit to the *Menai Centre at Conway*. Many areas of the curriculum benefit from visitors into the school. These include artists in residence, staff from Warrington Museum, local music ensembles, and Warrington Wolves for rugby coaching. Representatives of many charities and churches are visitors to collective worship.
26. The overall provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good, but with some differences between them.
27. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Teachers receive and value pupils' ideas and encourage in them a positive self-image. In subjects such as music, geography, science and art opportunities are sometimes given for pupils to develop a sense of wonder at the beauty and mystery of creation. In a Year 2 geography lesson the teacher was emphasising the beauty to be found in the world, and she quickly found support for her view. One boy instantly agreed, "*Yes the world is beautiful because it has got caterpillars in it!*"
28. Provision for moral development is good. The behaviour policy is clear and well understood, and the system of rewards and sanctions promotes a positive approach. All children are taught the difference between right and wrong, and all staff, including support staff and mid-day supervisors, encourage pupils to discuss incidents and in so doing try to foster values of honesty, fairness and respect for others. Parents feel that the school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on pupils.
29. Provision for social development through the daily life of the school is good. Teachers provide good role models in their relationships with pupils. Playground games are effective in encouraging pupils to share and co-operate with each other. A play worker employed by the school ably assists them in this. Pupils are encouraged and helped to think of others; for example, when children who have little English are paired with English-speaking children to help their language development and social activities. The school is developing a school council, or Parliament, where pupils from Year 3 upwards go as a representative of their class to discuss such issues as behaviour, or to consider ideas for the development of the school grounds. The annual residential visit for older pupils gives them an effective experience of living and working with others in a different setting.
30. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. The school places appropriate emphasis on local culture and this aspect is explored well, with, for example, visits to museums, town trails and local mills. Opportunities for wider cultural experiences

through visits to places of interest, and to see and listen to performances, are satisfactory. There are close links with a range of churches and charitable organisations. Opportunities to look at and value other cultures are being developed.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

31. The school has maintained its effective care of pupils reported at the time of the previous inspection. It provides a caring Christian environment where teachers know their children well and value them as individuals. Most parents are happy with the care and guidance offered to their children. They feel their children are happy in school and able to concentrate on their work, as teachers are fully aware of their needs. Teachers carefully check on the progress of pupils with special educational needs. Those who have English as an additional language and are in the early stages of language acquisition have well prepared individual language plans.
32. Procedures for monitoring and promoting positive behaviour are good. There is an effective behaviour policy that is applied consistently by all staff. Pupils and parents are aware of the school rules, which are supported through the home-school agreement. Issues relating to bullying and unacceptable behaviour are monitored carefully through activities such as *circle time*. Staff deal with any reported incidents swiftly and effectively. Lunchtime supervisors meet regularly with the headteacher to discuss any areas of concern and to make any suggestions.
33. Procedures for checking and improving attendance are good. Registers are called at the beginning of every session. Parents are made aware of their responsibility to inform the school of the reason for any absence in the school prospectus and regular newsletters. The education welfare officer works closely and effectively with the school where problems with attendance have been noted.
34. Procedures for monitoring and assessing pupils' academic progress and personal development are good. Procedures for assessing pupils' academic performance in the main subjects of English, mathematics and science are very good. There is a comprehensive programme of assessment, term by term, which is well known and well used by staff. The school builds informative collections of each pupil's attainments, social profiles and progress towards targets. The school uses test results to track the progress of all pupils and consequently has a reliable means of judging the effects of curriculum planning on pupils' achievements. As a result, it is also able to identify the areas of the curriculum for a focus to raise standards overall. For example, in mathematics the school now intends to concentrate on providing opportunities for mathematics across all subjects of the curriculum. Because planning is regularly monitored, and teachers routinely identify exactly what they expect pupils to learn in lessons, they are able to monitor the effects of their teaching and the extent of pupils' learning.
35. The school has an appropriate child protection policy. Procedures comply with those of the area child-protection committee and all staff are fully aware of these procedures. Appropriate training is regularly undertaken. There is a comprehensive health and safety policy and regular risk assessment is carried out. All the necessary checks on fire appliances are up to date. However, the checks on all electrical equipment used in the school have not yet been carried out. The school is aware of this omission and is seeking estimates in order to carry out these checks. The arrangements for first aid, including the recording of accidents and informing parents, are good. There are four members of staff trained in first aid, and first-aid boxes are

fully stocked and sited in the school medical room. Lessons on sex education and drug awareness form part of the school's programme for personal, social and health education, which is well supported by the police, dental service and school nurse.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

36. The effective relationship with parents reported at the time of the previous inspection has been maintained. The vast majority of parents are proud of the school and indicate that they are pleased with what the school provides and achieves. The quality of information provided by the school is very good. Parents feel that the school's regular newsletter keeps them well informed about developments. Consultation meetings for parents are held each term. Parents feel that they are given a clear picture of what is happening in the school and how their children are progressing. Parents were able to attend meetings explaining the literacy and numeracy initiatives. Meetings are held every year to discuss the National Curriculum tests for pupils. Courses for parents have also been organised on *Coping with kids*, *First aid for parents* and *Family literacy*. The pupils' annual progress reports are clear and informative about their achievements and highlight areas for improvement. The school prospectus is detailed. However, the national test results were omitted from the current publication. This has now been rectified for next year's prospectus. The impact of the parents' involvement on the work of the school is limited. The school does all it can to encourage parents to help in school, but many are reluctant to commit themselves on a regular basis. Some parents attend the special assemblies and volunteer to help on trips. This contribution is much appreciated by the school. Despite receiving regular details of topics to be covered and of the homework expected from class teachers, support given by parents to their children at home is inconsistent. Those children who are supported well by their parents make the best progress; for instance, when they are heard reading regularly. The parent-teacher association is open to all and recently raised funds to provide a school football kit.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

37. The headteacher provides strong and very effective leadership in the school. He has been in post for almost three years and has been the driving force behind most of the significant improvements that have taken place since the last inspection. The close monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance and of the quality of teaching in the school have given him a clear and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. He is well supported in this by the school-effectiveness team in the local authority. A number of staff appointments and changes have taken place which have resulted in the improvement in the quality of teaching and led to increased pupils' learning. The headteacher has guided the good developments in the Foundation Stage very well and the development of the whole-school curriculum, ensuring that schemes of work and the planning of the curriculum are now fully in place and relevant to the pupils. As an aided Church of England school, the school fulfils its mission statement successfully. It succeeds in providing a stable place where pupils feel secure and cared for within a Christian community. They trust their teachers and all are well supported in their learning. The school promotes high levels of behaviour and encourages good levels of achievement. It meets the needs of all pupils equally. It makes very good provision for all pupils with special educational needs. These pupils have appropriate individual plans in several areas of the curriculum, such as mathematics, literacy and personal development. The school

has a well-kept register and records for pupils who come from homes where English is not the first language, and has recently begun to keep similar records for the pupils who learn more quickly.

38. The headteacher has assembled an effective and supportive management team with members from each key stage. The key stage managers are both experienced and effective classroom teachers. They share the headteacher's vision for the school and support him well. They are only just beginning to train and develop as managers. They have clear job descriptions to support their role. They hold regular key-stage meetings, support staff in new initiatives and manage consumable resources in the school, as well as liaising with parents and supporting pupils. The system works satisfactorily on a day-to-day basis. Key stage managers and staff make contributions to the school development plan prepared by the headteacher. This is a very good working document. It plans and shows projections for three years, building on the developments that have already been achieved. It clearly plans tasks to be accomplished, the action to be taken over a specific time scale and how the success is to be measured, the persons responsible and the resources and support available to them, as well as how the monitoring and evaluation are to be carried out. The headteacher manages the budget carefully, and funds are used efficiently.
39. The headteacher and the mathematics and literacy co-ordinators are beginning to undertake monitoring of teaching and pupils' learning. Other subject co-ordinators monitor planning and pupils' work, but monitoring of teaching across all subject areas is not fully established.
40. Governors are supportive to the school. They have an awareness of what the school does well but are less certain of how they would like the school to continue to develop. They have recently undertaken two governor-training sessions. The governing body has re-formed its committees, including finance, staffing, personnel and curriculum. An effective curriculum committee has been formed, and those who are able to, work and visit the school on a regular basis, providing good support for staff and pupils, but they have not developed a monitoring role of the curriculum. Parent governors in particular are keen to become involved with decisions and discussions that will shape the school's future. Some members, however, rarely attend meetings and play no part in the running of the school. The governing body meets most of its statutory requirements. However, the consideration of some new government initiatives has been delayed over the past year. Appraisal of the headteacher has been put into place and targets have now been set. Together with the headteacher and in consultation with the local education authority targets have been set for the school.
41. The governing body relies too heavily on the headteacher to set the education and financial direction of the school, and to monitor its performance. Very few governors, including the chair and vice chair of governors, make a contribution to the school development plan, although given the opportunity to do so. They merely discuss the document after it is written. They prefer to leave it to the *educators* and do not ask sufficiently searching questions or hold the school accountable for its performance. There are no established procedures involving governors in critically evaluating the success criteria of the development plan or the work of all the staff by reviewing and analysing their performance.
42. The budget is planned and managed carefully on a year-to-year basis by the headteacher although the chair of finance plays a limited part in this. After being in a surplus situation at the time of the previous inspection expenditure has exceeded income year on year. This year it has gone into a small deficit. Governors are

unconcerned that there is no contingency amount available for spending and have no plans of their own for recovery. Although they were aware of this at the time of the last inspection, no action has been taken by governors to run the budget within its limitations and keep a contingency amount available. The governors consider the small classes in the school of paramount importance. However, they have no plans beyond the current year for budgeting for this.

43. The strategic spending of budget resources has been well managed by the headteacher and is linked well to the school's priorities. For instance, the training of teachers is linked to the priorities in the school development plan such as *CLAIT* courses for teachers to raise standards in information technology and non-contact time for the special educational needs co-ordinator to prepare staff in-service training. The specific grant for standards funding is used well for literacy support and classroom and playground assistance to develop pupils' creative and practical activities, which was a key issue in the previous inspection. School spending takes into account the principles of best value. For instance, art in-service training is organised and held in St Ann's for a group of nearby schools. This contributes well to the school's own costs for training and provides additional consumable resources. The new administrative assistant plays an important part in the smooth day-to-day running of the school and in financial work. She has taken on the role of staff governor. The school has recently had an audit, and recommendations are in the process of being completed.
44. There are suitably qualified staff and experienced teachers to allow the curriculum to be taught effectively. There has been little in the way of staff turnover in the recent past, although staff absence through illness and maternity leave caused some instability in Key Stage 2 last year. A successful programme to support teachers' professional development has been instituted. A policy for the induction of newly qualified teachers and staff is not yet in place. All support staff contribute well to the quality and extent of pupils' learning. The site manager, and cleaning and lunchtime support staff work conscientiously and effectively to assist in the smooth running of the school. They are an integral part of the school team.
45. The accommodation has improved significantly since the last inspection and all issues have been addressed. The site manager in particular, in conjunction with the headteacher and governors, has made important improvements to areas of the building and more are planned. Rooms into which groups and individuals can be withdrawn are well used and the new computer suite is very accessible. The grounds are spacious and the separate nursery accommodation is well fenced and secure. Some areas have flaking paint and are in need of redecoration.
46. Learning resources are adequate overall. Resources are good for literacy lessons, but there is a lack of audiotapes for listening to stories. In information and communication technology the provision of hardware is good. However, there is not a wide enough range of software. In music there are insufficient tuned percussion instruments and few historical objects are available for history lessons. The accessibility of the library is good, but the quantity of books is low and the quality and range of books are poor.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

47. To improve the quality of education in the school, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

1. Improve pupils' progress and raise attainment in English by the age of 11, by:

- providing more challenging reading and writing tasks, particularly for more-able pupils in Key Stage 2;
- placing a greater emphasis on the development of pupils' independent writing at length in English lessons, and across other curriculum areas in Key Stage 2;
- increasing activities to develop pupils' skills in speaking and listening across the school; for instance, in role-play, drama and taped listening activities.

(The school has already identified the area of non-fiction and extended writing as an area of priority for development in the school development plan for the present year.)

(Paragraph references 69, 70, 72, 73, 74 & 75)

2. Improve pupils' progress and raise attainment in information technology by the ages of seven and 11 and build on the recent good developments by:

- making sure that information technology is used to support and extend learning in other subjects;
- monitoring and reviewing the teaching arrangements for pupils' in the classrooms and in the computer suite carefully so ensuring that pupils progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding to become confident and familiar with computers and programs;
- extending the use of the scheme of work to ensure that all areas of the information technology curriculum are taught.

(The school has already identified information technology as an area of priority in the school development plan and has a long-term development plan in place.)

(Paragraph references 74, 79, 85, 105 & 106)

3. Improve the role of governors in strategic planning and decision-making, and ensure that they have sufficient awareness of the work of the school to provide effective support to the management by:

- reviewing the roles and responsibilities of the governing body;
- establishing procedures involving them in setting agendas for the school's development and for monitoring its performance;
- monitoring and evaluating the curriculum;
- ensuring that long-term financial planning is in place;
- ensuring that all the statutory requirements and health and safety issues reported to the governing body are fulfilled, including the development of a policy for the induction of staff, including newly-qualified teachers.

(Paragraph references, 40, 41 & 42)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

48. In addition to the key issues above, the following less important area should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- Improve the quality and quantity of library resources.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	54
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	50

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	7	54	39	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR-Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	23	189
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	64

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR-Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	86

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	13

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	94.7
National comparative data	94.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6
National comparative data	0.6

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year		Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	12	16	28
National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	7	8	
	Girls	14	15	15	
	Total	22	22	23	
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (81)	79 (90)	82 (81)	
	National	n/a (82)	n/a (83)	n/a (84)	
Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	8	9	
	Girls	14	14	14	
	Total	22	22	23	
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (86)	79 (81)	82 (86)	
	National	n/a (82)	n/a (86)	n/a (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
		2000	12	9	21
National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	9	7	
	Girls	7	8	8	
	Total	13	17	15	
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	62 (55)	81 (69)	71 (66)	
	National	n/a (70)	n/a (68)	n/a (78)	
Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	9	8	
	Girls	8	8	8	
	Total	14	17	16	
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	67 (41)	81(52)	76 (59)	
	National	n/a (68)	n/a (69)	n/a (75)	

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	5
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	199
Any other minority ethnic group	3

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	50

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.0

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	10.5
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

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.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	377,109
Total expenditure	378,214
Expenditure per pupil	1,562
Balance brought forward from previous year	-3,584
Balance carried forward to next year	-1,105

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	200
Number of questionnaires returned	50

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	36	2	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	40	2	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good. 104%	48	46	4	4	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	20	58	8	2	12
The teaching is good.	56	42	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	48	4	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	24	0	4	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	34	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	56	28	8	4	4
The school is well led and managed.	68	26	0	4	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	36	8	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. 104%	36	32	26	4	6

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

49. The school nursery offers a morning and an afternoon session with 26 full-time places. The majority of children start in the nursery in September, although a small number of children who have had their third birthday begin in January if places are available. These children benefit from the extra time and make good progress. Nearly all the children from nursery continue through to the school's reception class.
50. A staggered entry in both nursery and reception classes over the first few weeks of the autumn term helps children to settle in quickly and enables teachers to quickly find out what children already know.
51. The inspection took place in the first full week of term when the numbers of children in both nursery and reception classes were reduced.
52. The procedures for starting in the nursery and reception classes are well thought through and are reviewed each year. The low number of children at the beginning of the term means that children benefit from a high amount of adult contact. This results in a calm and settled atmosphere in both classes and ensures a good start for the children.
53. Throughout the Foundation Stage of their learning, teachers make detailed assessments of the children through observation, questioning and listening, and during their early reading activities. The results of these assessments indicate that overall attainment is poor on entry to the nursery. By the time children are assessed at the beginning of the reception class, results indicate that good progress has been made in the nursery. Those children who learn the most quickly reach the average against other local schools. In both classes, teachers use what they know about the children well to prepare activities matched to their abilities and interests.
54. From the nursery onwards, children with specific needs receive a high level of support from teachers, classroom assistants and specialist agencies such as the service for pupils with visual impairment. This also includes the children who start school knowing little English. They receive targeted specialist teaching and support from the beginning, which helps them make good progress in the early stages of their language acquisition.
55. The school works hard to involve parents at this early stage of their children's education and has created an informative and welcoming parents' room. The nursery and reception staff provide regular, well-presented brochures, leaflets and newsletters for parents. They have created links such as the *book-mark scheme* to encourage an understanding of the important part played by parents in their children's learning. Nevertheless, the level of support from parents varies and those children who are supported the most strongly make the best progress in their learning.
56. The quality of teaching for pupils under five is a strength of the school. It is consistently good and often very good in the nursery. Teachers have good knowledge of the needs of children under five. They organise their classrooms and plan sessions well. Teachers' planning is detailed and thorough. This results in lively activities that interest, motivate and involve all the children. Teachers use the able classroom assistants and nursery nurses very well to ensure that good learning

opportunities are created and that children are fully involved. The adults work together well as a team in an atmosphere that promotes good behaviour and hard work. The management and provision of resources are good and plans are in hand to create a new adjoining garden area. The good resources reported in the last inspection have been further improved.

Personal, social and emotional development

57. Personal, social and emotional development is good throughout the Foundation Stage.
58. When the children first start in the nursery, most are friendly, co-operative and keen to explore although some have less well developed social skills and are hesitant to join in with nursery activities. The high ratio of adults to pupils, including voluntary assistance by a governor, ensures a calm, purposeful atmosphere. Children co-operate well with wet sand and plasticine, moulding shapes, stretching and pulling, whilst others work with adults, printing with sponges. They learn to count their prints and describe the colours. They sit on the carpet for a short language session without making a fuss. They quickly develop confidence and older children who have been in the nursery for some time set a good example to the younger children. When asked to clear up they do so sensibly and with enthusiasm. At snack time they sit quietly, and respond well to praise, They learn to say *Thank you*. In an outdoor play session they play spontaneous games such as *Ring a ring a roses*.
59. This good level of personal, social and emotional development continues into the reception class, with good teaching and support from all adults working together with them. Children choose freely from an interesting range of activities when not in a guided group supported by an adult. They share tools, books and the computer well, working together harmoniously and quietly. They learn to be independent for instance when they put away their finished work. They are on target to reach expectations in this area by the end of the reception year.

Communication, language and literature

60. Children make good progress in their communication, language and literacy skills during the Foundation Stage and a small number of children make very good progress. Despite this, by the time children reach the end of the reception year attainment overall is below that usually found. At the age of five one child reads well, accurately and with confidence, but this is the exception. Other children enjoy listening to books being read and handling the books themselves, which they do confidently. Several children have few books at home. They are keen to talk about what they are doing, but their speech, although understandable, is often indistinct. The school is involved as a pilot school for a new programme devised to make children aware of different sounds. This programme is used in both classes and is successful. Children focus well in the nursery class as the teacher links initial sounds to pictures, encouraging the children to repeat and remember them. This good teaching is extended into the reception class, where children work at a higher level, quickly identifying sounds and matching them to pictures. In the reception class children predict rhyming words in the poem, *When Suzie's Eating Custard*. Skilful questioning by the teacher encourages the children to talk about messy and favourite foods. They learn to take turns and listen to others' views and ideas. In the reception class, children who find learning difficult are well supported by either nursery nurses or classroom assistants. They work mostly in small groups within the classroom, with an emphasis on making eye contact with the speaker. In both classes provision

is made for children's imaginative play-acting; for instance, as shopkeepers. Teachers use and encourage the children to use classroom displays for discussion. A good example of this was the use in the nursery of a well-prepared display featuring the colour yellow. Children have good opportunities to develop their pre and early writing skills. They learn to trace over shapes and letters with a variety of papers, pens and pencils. Work from previous Foundation Stage children showed that good progress is made with letter formation and presentation throughout this key stage. Both classes make good use of computer programs, with an emphasis on developing an understanding of initial sounds.

Mathematical development

61. Teachers provide well for children's mathematical development. By the age of five, children's attainment is still below that expected for their age despite good teaching and good progress being made. Every opportunity is taken to introduce aspects of number throughout the Foundation Stage, for example; setting the table for a snack, matching the plates and beakers and counting the number of hula-hoops. With help from the teacher, children count the corners and name the shape of the white board in reception, and count the prints that they have made. Teachers introduce rhymes involving number regularly and children are introduced to the meaning of *One*. From the start teachers use mathematical language well and develop children's understanding of numbers matched to objects. This enables them to quickly learn to recognise one item from a pile of objects. Teachers constantly using words like, *how many? add and count*. In the reception class, children learn to name a variety of simple shapes when they construct a clown with the teacher. Teachers use mathematical displays and activities well to promote children's understanding. They use and refer to these during lessons. For instance, teachers have prepared height charts, number trees, shape pictures, snakes and ladders and numbers from one to ten.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

62. By the end of the reception year, children have made good progress, although their attainment is still below that expected for their age. Every opportunity is taken to explore both the local environment and further afield. For instance, parents and children travel by coach, ferry and train on a day visit to North Wales. This was a new experience for most of the children and introduced them to and developed their understanding of the different ways of travelling, such as by coach, by ferry and by train. Over the past year children watched and recorded the building of the new church adjoining their play area. From photographs and by drawings they were able to record this and learned from observation how buildings are made. They learn to care about living things and in the nursery the children look after a budgerigar, ensuring that it has its water and food regularly. Classroom displays such as 'What A Wonderful World' assist in developing an understanding of new and unfamiliar things. Children develop an understanding of new technology through the use of electronic games and computers. They develop confidence in their use of computers from the nursery onwards. By the time they reach the end of the reception class they are well prepared for the next steps at Key Stage 1. For instance, they develop their skills using the mouse and proudly demonstrate how they move the pointer and click with a mouse when following a talking storybook.

Physical development

63. The school makes good provision for children's physical development and as a result children make good progress and are on target to reach the expected level by the end of the reception year. The outside area is used regularly by all classes and children develop their confidence and skills well by using a wide range of tricycles, scooters slides and a wide variety of small apparatus. Children learn to balance and ride carefully taking care to avoid others. They roll balls to and from adults with increasing accuracy. They learn to throw and catch balls and to play imaginative games. Children in reception were observed throwing and catching a rugby ball and many show well-developed co-ordination. Children develop their manipulative skills well in their activities such as drawing, printing, painting, gluing and spreading in art.

Creative development

64. Teachers make good provision for children's creative development. In the nursery they are encouraged to try things out and have a wide range of experiences. They use wet and dry sand, water, paint, plasticine, *small world toys* which encourages them to use their imagination. In the reception class, children show an increasing dexterity in using tools such as scissors and the way in which they handle materials such as *glue sticks* when gluing the figure of a clown together. They enjoy nursery rhymes and repetition of rhymes, clapping it out when appropriate. Children enjoy a wide range of art activities, although many lack confidence to work by themselves and follow the teacher's instructions. Children make good progress but do not reach the level expected for their age by the time they reach the end of the reception year.

ENGLISH

65. The 1999 test results show that attainment at Key Stage 1 is average in comparison with that in all schools and well above the average for similar schools. This is an improvement since the last inspection. From the most recent figures for 2000, for which national and similar comparisons are not available, it appears that this improvement has been maintained. At Key Stage 2 English results for 1999 were well below average when compared with those in all schools and below the average for similar schools. Figures for 2000 are similar. Only a small proportion of pupils attained at the higher level (Level 5). Although results have improved since the previous inspection, they have not improved as much as the national trend.
66. Inspection findings indicate that overall standards of attainment at Key Stage 1 are average, but that at Key Stage 2 they are below the average. This is an improvement in Key Stage 1 but standards have not risen as quickly for pupils in Key Stage 2. Few pupils attain at the higher levels by the end of Year 6. Reading and writing tasks are not always sufficiently challenging.
67. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented successfully, although the school did not receive the support of a literacy consultant from the local authority. This will be available in the coming year when teachers are due to receive additional training. The school has identified areas for improvement in English in order to raise standards at both key stages. Planned developments in the coming year include a strategy to improve spelling and additional lessons for the teaching of independent writing at length.
68. Speaking and listening skills are in line with expectations at Key Stage 1. This reflects good progress from entry into school. Pupils are able to focus and concentrate in lessons. Teaching is particularly effective when teachers speak clearly and articulate

their words well, as in the Year 2 class when reading the story of *Dogger*, and in Year 1 when pupils respond to changes of tone and repetition in a story. Teachers work hard to enrich the pupils' vocabulary; for example, referring to the word *anxious* in a Year 2 Class where pupils demonstrated that they had retained its meaning from a lesson the day before. Pupils on the register of special educational needs work with classroom assistants on at least two mornings a week and these sessions focus appropriately on developing pupils' skills in speaking and listening.

69. In Key Stage 2, pupils' listening skills are satisfactory although not all speak confidently and clearly. They generally respond well to teachers' questions in discussions. However, they are given few opportunities to work with each other in a group, or to report back with their own ideas after planned discussions or investigations. Most work is teacher directed with little opportunity for pupils to either put forward arguments or record the outcomes of a discussion. Pupils have few opportunities to take part in drama during their lessons in English or in other subjects of the curriculum. A significant number of pupils at Key Stage 2 are on the register for special educational needs but have few opportunities to take part in focused activities to improve their listening skills.
70. Attainment in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 is in line with national averages. This good progress is not maintained at Key Stage 2, where pupils' progress in reading is slow throughout the key stage and, by the age of 11, standards are below average. In Key Stage 1 pupils clearly enjoy their literacy lessons, which place an emphasis on developing their reading skills. For instance, in a Year 1 class the teacher used a puppet skilfully to encourage pupils to concentrate on the final sounds of words. In the same lesson, a classroom assistant worked successfully with five pupils who find learning hard. She quietly and effectively focused their attention on reading key words before completing a writing task. In a Year 2 class, pupils were learning to read the address of the school and their response demonstrated that teaching the previous day had been effective. During group reading at least 70 per cent of the class join in with the teacher to read *Dogger* and they read well, using expression and an awareness of punctuation. In Key Stage 2, the most effective lessons were where work was well matched to pupils' levels of ability. For instance, in a Year 5 lesson spelling worksheets were carefully structured according to ability for different groups of pupils. At the beginning of this lesson, pupils were motivated by the class teacher's animated and skilful reading and fully involved in the well-led discussion that followed. In an effective lesson in Year 6, the text of *Matilda* was well chosen and shared to encourage group reading as a lead in to a note-taking activity. Lessons are less successful where pupils are expected to listen to the teacher for long periods. They become restless and there is insufficient time for them to complete their independent reading tasks. Learning is hindered when those pupils who learn quickly are given tasks which do not extend their reading skills
71. The co-ordinator and staff have worked hard to develop comprehensive reading records, which are well maintained and useful. They also ensure that pupils take books home to read with parents. Teachers' records show that, as pupils get older, the support they receive at home becomes less consistent. The pupils who are supported well at home make the best progress. The school is aware of this and tries hard to increase the level of support from parents. Very few pupils belong to public libraries and several referred to the fact that they have very few reading books at home.
72. Standards of writing are satisfactory at Key Stage 1 but below average at the end of Key Stage 2. The emphasis on letter formation, phonic understanding and sentence

structure in Key Stage 1 helps all pupils make sound progress. The best learning occurs where the pupils are challenged; for example, in a Year 2 class, where they are asked to make their sentences longer by using words such as *because* and also to begin their sentences in different ways. In a Year 1 class, pupils work successfully on alphabetical order and are reminded of the location of dictionaries before they begin their writing tasks. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are usually given sufficient time to write, but much of this is spent practising skills. Additional lessons to apply these skills have just begun at Key Stage 2 for writing at length, but it is too early to judge how effective they will be. The approach to handwriting at Key Stage 2 is inconsistent, with many pupils printing their letters, even though they have previously demonstrated an ability to join them. In a Year 6 class only half the pupils join their letters when writing. In many classes, pupils routinely write down the focus of the lesson into their books and for some this takes a considerable time. In the most effective lessons pupils are encouraged to use white boards and felt pens to respond quickly in writing to the teacher's questions. This is effective and increases the speed of pupils' thinking and writing.

73. Teaching in both key stages is always at least satisfactory and often good. At the time of the inspection although pupils had been in school for just three days classroom routines were already well established. Teachers have good control and this is evident from most pupils' appropriate responses in literacy sessions. The main characteristic of good teaching is well-planned and organised lessons that proceed at a brisk pace. Teachers use praise effectively and consequently most pupils are well motivated and keen to please, and work hard. Teaching is less successful where tasks are not matched to pupils' levels of ability. For instance, when too-easy spelling tasks are given and insufficient time is allowed for pupils to complete written tasks. Literacy planning at both key stages is good.
74. Teachers use resources well at both key stages. In one instance, a magnetic white board and letters were used effectively with the whole class at the end of the lesson, when pupils were encouraged to form three-lettered consonant/vowel/consonant words, concentrating on initial and final sounds. Good use is made of computer programs for reading and studying text and extracts from the film of *Matilda* to compare characters and events in the text. However, pupils have few opportunities to compose their ideas, and write and edit their work on screen using a word-processing program.
75. Resources are satisfactory. Reading support material, including *Big Books*, for the literacy hour is good and has recently been catalogued, enabling teachers to select appropriate material quickly and efficiently. There are insufficient resources to encourage the development of speaking and listening skills at Key Stage 2. The school library is centrally situated and has easy access for all pupils. The co-ordinator is aware that the book stock needs to be updated, increased in quantity and catalogued in a way that will encourage pupil use. Few pupils use the library and even fewer are aware of the Dewey System and how it operates.

MATHEMATICS

76. 1999 national test results showed that, at the end of both key stages, the percentage of pupils attaining the expected levels, (Level 2 at the end of Key Stage 1 and Level 4 at the end of Key Stage 2) was close to the national average. However, the percentage of pupils attaining the higher levels was below the national average. In comparison with similar schools, pupils' performance was close to the average at

Key Stage 1 and above average at Key Stage 2. For the year 2000, whilst it is not possible to make national comparisons, the school's results show an increased percentage of pupils gaining the expected levels at both key stages. At Key Stage 2 the percentage of pupils gaining both the expected and higher levels has increased considerably. This is a big improvement since the time of the previous inspection and maintains the trend of improving results. Inspection evidence confirms this position.

77. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully introduced and it is evident that it has contributed to the positive attitudes that teachers and pupils have towards mathematics. Improvements in planning, and grouping of pupils into mixed-aged groups set by ability at Key Stage 2, have helped teachers to be more effective in matching activities to the needs of pupils. These factors have had, and are continuing to have, a strong effect on raising standards.
78. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils count forwards and backwards to ten and many are confident with numbers up to 100. Many correctly name three-digit numbers, and use their understanding of subtraction methods and of how to place numbers into hundreds, tens and units. They are able to recognise and name two and three-dimensional shapes and many name their properties. Many pupils understand the difference between odd and even numbers. They understand terms such as 'heavier than' and 'lighter than'. Pupils are able to make reasonable estimations when measuring. For instance, they first estimate then check their results by using standard units of measurement. Pupils gather information using tally charts, and represent their findings using simple graphs.
79. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have built satisfactorily on the knowledge and understanding gained earlier. Mental arithmetic skills develop well with practice and a number of pupils are able to make calculations with speed and precision. However, for some, a lack of fluency with number, especially knowledge of tables, inhibits their learning. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of area and perimeter and calculate the areas of regular and irregular shapes. They work with fractions, and learn to use decimals and percentage. Some pupils, especially those who learn the quickest, are able to change fractions into decimals and percentages confidently. Pupils experience a variety of work in handling data and understand line graphs and pie charts. However, the use of information technology to support this type of work is underdeveloped.
80. Work in mathematics supports other subjects. Whole-class work in mental mathematics develops pupils' listening skills, and targeted questioning develops many situations where pupils have to respond verbally. In one lesson with the oldest pupils on exploring strategies for multiplying, when asked for a method of finding out *five times six times four*, one pupil responded very clearly, *"I would put five times four first because the five times table is well known. Then I would multiply by six because it is easy to multiply those numbers"*. Pupils record observations in science, and measure and record in design and technology, and making and reading maps effectively develop an understanding of co-ordinates.
81. Overall, pupils enjoy mathematics lessons and work with enthusiasm. Attitudes and behaviour in all lessons are always satisfactory, and often good or very good. Pupils work well together and relationships between pupils and their teachers are good overall. This allows lessons to move on at a good pace.
82. The quality of teaching seen was never less than satisfactory, and in a half of lessons it was good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. At both key

stages, teachers' knowledge of the National Numeracy Strategy is good and they show confidence in their teaching. Teachers show good management of pupils. In one lesson looking at the methods of *doubling and near doubling numbers*, a good feature was the interaction between teacher and pupils. With a clear idea of what she wanted the pupils to learn, the teacher's enthusiasm was infectious, and very soon pupils were offering a whole range of strategies and ideas. The teacher valued these responses and the lesson gained great impetus that was deftly controlled. By the end many pupils had learned new ways to help them with mental calculations. Teaching is also characterised by very good planning, and teachers are very clear about what they want pupils to learn. Very good planning is having a noticeable effect on raising standards. Work is well matched to the abilities and previous experience of the pupils. Teachers and classroom assistants give pupils with special educational needs who find learning hard both well-targeted support and encouragement. Teachers are also developing opportunities to challenge the pupils who learn quickly.

83. The subject manager provides good leadership and management for mathematics and is actively involved in monitoring planning and teaching. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully implemented. The practice of *setting* pupils at Key Stage 2 enables teachers to bring a sharper focus to their work, and a regular programme of homework effectively supports pupils' learning. A very good system of assessment, checking regularly and recording pupils' progress and attainment is also helping to foster improved standards. Teachers use a range of tests to help them check how well pupils make progress. The information gained is used well, for instance to provide more specialised support, targets for individual pupils and an increased emphasis on the identified areas to improve. This has resulted in the teaching of more advanced work on shape, *Brains in Gear* for improving mental maths, and *booster classes*.

SCIENCE

84. Standards of attainment at the ages of seven and 11 are average and have been maintained since the previous inspection. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests for 11 year olds, pupils achieved well below the average for schools across the country, although the results were close to the average for pupils in similar schools. National comparisons are not yet available for the most recent tests taken in 2000. However, it appears that compared with those in similar schools, pupils at Key Stage 2 have at least maintained the standards achieved in 1999. Almost three quarters of pupils who sat the test at the age of 11 achieved at the expected level or above and of these more than a third reached the higher level (Level 5). Teacher assessment results at Key Stage 1 in 1999, show that the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 or above was below the national average overall in all aspects of science, and the percentage of pupils reaching the higher level (Level 3) was very low. Attainment in the study of living things was very high. However, from the most recent figures for 2000, although no national comparisons are available, it is clear that results have improved significantly, with a very high proportion of pupils reaching Level 2 or above. Test results at Key Stage 2 have fluctuated since the previous inspection but have recently shown a steady improvement against national figures since 1998, when there was a dip. The school attributes this to the cohort for that year. Since 1998, the curriculum has been better organised and managed, and the teaching and assessment of pupils' learning have improved. This is due to the appointment of a new co-ordinator who has led the development of the subject well. This improvement is reflected in the better standards reached by older pupils in the classes at the end of Key Stage 2. Work seen during the inspection shows that most pupils have a sound knowledge, and

some pupils a good knowledge, of all areas of science, including living things, physical science and materials. In all classes boys and girls show an interest in their work and perform equally well. Pupils with special educational needs who find learning difficult make satisfactory progress alongside their classmates. At the end of Key Stage 2, science work is challenging and stretches pupils' thinking. Because pupils work together in pairs, or in small groups with support from each other or a classroom assistant, those who find learning difficult make sound progress. Throughout the school, pupils work together well in science supporting and helping each other, for instance, when recording their investigations.

85. This rising trend of attainment is evident in the amount of work completed by pupils at the end of both key stages. Science has a generous amount of curriculum time and the amount of testing and investigations which pupils experience is good. From the beginning of Key Stage 1 they learn to record their work using a variety of charts and methods. By the time pupils reach the end of Key Stage 2 they know how to set out their investigations and record them in tables, graphs and well-presented written accounts. They take a pride in this, although they do not generally record data from their investigations using information technology and sometimes work at a slow pace with their written reports. The older pupils at the start of Year 6 have developed a good understanding of the need for a fair test. They make ongoing observations or measurements and draw conclusions. They indicate this confidently to the teacher when she is setting up a class investigation for evaporation. In the same lesson they display a good understanding of the evaporation process from previous work and are able to make predictions as to what may be left when the liquid has evaporated. Good learning takes place in the same lesson when all children have the opportunity to be practically involved and observe the reversible changes that take place in chocolate when it is melted and then set again in cake making.
86. The teaching of science is satisfactory overall in Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 2, teachers' subject knowledge and confidence are good. They are sound at Key Stage 1. Teachers plan well at both key stages in accordance with the school scheme of work and have high expectations of pupils' attainment and behaviour in lessons. In most lessons they give enthralling demonstrations to motivate and enthuse pupils. For instance, in a Year 5 lesson on forces the teacher provided a wide variety of everyday gadgets such as nutcrackers, gear system whisks, bicycle pumps and other tools to demonstrate how a force acts in a particular direction. Good progress was made in pupils' learning and during the lesson they began to understand how gear wheels are used to move a load. As the lesson progressed, pupils were encouraged to examine and draw the objects, labelling and using words such as *pull*, *push*, *twist* and *turn* to show how forces were applied to work the object. Another good feature of teaching in both key stages is that pupils are consistently given the focus of the work at the beginning of the lesson and told what they are expected to learn. The copying out of this focus impinges upon the time for their independent recording and investigation. The oral emphasis given by the teacher is sufficient to help them to be clear as to what they are to find out in their practical investigations and what they should know or understand by the end of the lesson. In the best lessons explanations are clear and move at a good pace. At times lessons are long, particularly for the younger pupils, and some find it difficult to sustain their interest to the end of the session. Questions, discussions and explanations of what they have found out or learnt, held at the end of lessons are led well by teachers. These sessions contribute well to directing pupils' thinking and confirming new learning.

87. The co-ordinator manages the subject well and understands what needs to be done to further improve standards. He supports teachers well and has produced a good school scheme of work which systematically builds on and consolidates what pupils already know. This includes the nationally-recommended scheme of work but provides more detail and support for teachers. Teachers' planning across the school is regularly checked and regular tasks are set for assessment of what pupils have learnt.

ART AND DESIGN

88. The school has maintained satisfactory standards in art since the previous inspection.
89. Few lessons could be seen during the inspection and there was little evidence in this first week of the term from current displays in classrooms. However, a scrutiny of teachers' planning, photographs of completed work, pupils' sketch books and recent work from last year gave sufficient evidence to indicate that standards of attainment in art are typical of those expected for pupils at the ages of seven and 11. Art contributes well to pupils' cultural development. It helps them appreciate and understand their own local and church environment as well as learn about well-known Western artists and art in the past such as that of ancient Greece and the famous portrait painters of Tudor times.
90. From the beginning pupils have frequent and regular experiences in art, learning at a steady rate through both key stages. They are encouraged to explore different techniques and skills and to develop an awareness of contrasts in textures and colours. They experiment with textiles and printing, drawing, painting and working in three dimensions, using a variety of materials such as dough, clay, wire, wood and re-useable materials. They draw self-portraits and portraits of their friends. As they move through the school, they make more difficult observational drawings of everyday objects such as bicycles, Victorian objects and plants; for instance, an aspidistra.
91. Pupils in Year 1 have studied the painter Monet and produced effective pictures of sunflowers, using a variety of seeds, felt and sponge printing to good effect. They build on this further in their lessons at Year 2. For instance, when working with a professional artist on a *bird's eye view* of the local area, they talk about the collage and painting techniques they are using for the roads and the park, and what will give the best effect. Pupils from the previous year have produced some interesting paper-tearing collage designs in the style of Matisse. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils explore the different *shades of grey* that can be made by using different amounts of black and white paint. They are engrossed in their activity, mixing and painting carefully with single strokes to obtain an effective *shade card*. They discuss sensibly what they are doing and the best way to obtain the effect and colour they want. In the same lesson other groups share tools and coloured shapes well for creating a repeating collage pattern of interwoven geometric shapes. This lesson extends pupils' understanding of different shapes such as rectangles, squares and triangles in mathematics. Older pupils have carefully made figures in clay and studied the patterns of Greek vases in their study of ancient Greece.
92. It was not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching at Key Stage 2. The teaching was good in the Year 2 lesson seen. Good features included thorough planning, good organisation of groups of pupils and resources, and good deployment

of an assistant and a visiting specialist. The class worked with the professional artist sensibly and very carefully in small groups on a class project.

93. The subject is well led and managed. A comprehensive scheme of work covers all areas and ensures that pupils have interesting experiences linked with other areas of the curriculum such as history. It covers each area of art and ensures that pupils build on the techniques and skills sequentially as they progress through the school. As well as meeting visiting artists who come to the school to work alongside them, pupils have opportunities to visit the local museum and take part in art workshops. The school currently has an eye-catching piece of colourful sculpture on display in the museum. Large numbers of pupils made this from re-useable materials at the end of the previous term.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

94. There was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on teaching and learning at Key Stage 1. Inspection findings are similar to those in the previous inspection although no lessons were observed then at Key Stage 2.
95. One Year 6 design and technology lesson was observed during the inspection. In the good lesson observed, pupils' attainment was in line with the expectations for children aged 11. The lesson focussed on food and involved pupils in a discussion with an emphasis on healthy eating. They have a good understanding of what is required in a healthy diet. This work is planned to extend over several weeks. Pupils evaluate salads that they have created and judge how healthy they are against their own criteria. Teaching in the lesson was well focused. Questioning was used well and pupils became well motivated to look forward to the next stage. In previous work pupils have planned designs; for example, for designing a catapult that would fire a ping-pong ball two metres. The scheme of work is a comprehensive and useful document. It is written and planned to provide sound support for teachers and builds upon pupils' previous learning in each year group. Resources stored on a trolley, are satisfactory but have not recently been checked.

GEOGRAPHY

96. Standards at the end of both key stages are broadly in line with those usually found. Satisfactory progress is made throughout the school. This is a similar position to that at the time of the previous inspection.
97. At Key Stage 1 pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of their local area and have an appropriate knowledge of the environment around school. By the end of the key stage they are able to follow a map and find out what can be seen in each road. They use map symbols appropriately. They are aware of different types of housing and can identify *detached*, *semi-detached* and *terraced* houses. They are able to gather information and make simple statements about 'What I think about Orford?'. They are aware of the changes in seasons and the effect of the weather on their lives. At Key Stage 2, pupils develop an awareness of the world beyond their locality and are beginning to be able to compare and contrast other localities with their own. Pupils visit Llandudno and explore the differences between the ways of life of people living there and in Warrington. Older pupils studying Greece demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of people and places by identifying features of physical geography and of the environment that would appeal to tourists. By the end of the key

stage pupils make sound progress in mapping skills, and show an understanding of various aspects of rivers, settlements and the environment. They learn to obtain information from a variety of sources and to communicate their findings effectively. In looking at *Change* pupils gather *points for* and *points against* when considering whether a new *Tesco* store should be built in an area. Pupils who learn the most readily present conclusions based on available evidence. Genuine enthusiasm for the subject, carefully selected areas of study and appropriate levels of support help all pupils make sound progress.

98. Pupils' attitudes are good. They are attentive, show interest and co-operate well. Pupils at both key stages enjoy the numerous practical activities and *field trips* organised as part of the geography curriculum.
99. Teaching is always satisfactory and in half the lessons it is good. Teachers display good subject knowledge and this together with enthusiasm, good management of pupils and well-planned lessons contributes well to the quality of learning in the classroom. There is little use of information technology to promote pupils' learning, although the development of this is planned.
100. The subject is well managed and pupils enjoy the field trips used to underpin and stimulate classroom learning. These include trips to *Manchester Airport, Styall Mill, Warrington Town Trail, Sankey Valley Park and Wigan Pier*. The subject manager has a clear vision of future priorities, which include updating resources, developing the use of information technology in geography; for instance by the use of e-mail to other countries, and adjusting to the new curriculum requirements.

HISTORY

101. Only a few lessons were seen during the inspection, but there was sufficient evidence available to indicate that standards in history are satisfactory and have been maintained overall since the previous inspection. The sound scheme of work supports teachers well and gives details for each year group, ensuring that learning takes place across a broad range of topics.
102. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils learn to understand the past and the people that lived in the past. They learn about famous people such as *Neil Armstrong*, and how they made history. They compare their lives with those of others in the past, such as comparing their own school days with those of children in Victorian times. The study of significant events and individuals is built on in Year 3. In a good lesson pupils' understanding of chronology was developed well by the teacher. Pupils were able to make a human time line selecting the dates of events that took place during the reign of *Queen Victoria*. They were keen to take part and to use or dress in the props provided by the teacher. The lesson was well planned and teaching had good pace. Pupils were given good reminders and encouraged positively to take part during the lesson. In all lessons seen at Key Stage 2 teaching was at least satisfactory. Planned educational visits to places of interest both near to the school and further afield increase the meaning of the history curriculum and make it relevant to the pupils. From Key Stage 1 onwards pupils visit museums such as *Ellesmere Boat Museum* and *Wigan Pier, Ironbridge, Burtonwood* and the *Viking Jorvik* museum in York. The school uses the local environment well for the teaching of history. During the inspection week pupils in Year 4 were preparing for a visit to Warrington town centre as part of a local study. With support from the teacher, who had very good local knowledge of the area, the pupils talked about their ideas and gave their opinions

on why their town was good to live in. A good display of old photographs of the area illustrated well how changes have taken place.

103. Resources for history are limited. There are sufficient books but few objects to illustrate the topics included in the curriculum. This results in teachers using and hunting for their own resources at home and amongst their friends. The co-ordinator is aware of this and has a small budget to make a future school collection of historical resources.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

104. Overall, standards are below those that would be expected at the end of both key stages. Pupils enter school with very little experience of using computers and few have access to them at home. However, due to recent initiatives, standards of attainment are beginning to rise. They are higher than at the time of the previous inspection. The school has developed a basic scheme of work, using the nationally recommended scheme of work, and following input and advice from a local college of further education and from the local secondary school. Staff expertise and confidence have been raised through national and local training initiatives. The school has also created a new computer suite and embarked on a program of more direct teaching. This provision is an improvement since the time of the previous inspection.
105. By the age of 11 most pupils are able to start up the computers and locate the appropriate programs. They access and save their work and are able to use computer-based simulations to make predictions about the consequences of decisions. For example, a Year 5 class used an art-based program effectively after a lot of instruction and close support. Skills with the keyboard and mouse are still developing for most pupils, apart from those who use computers at home. Some pupils in a Year 4 class, with close support, were able to demonstrate basic word-processing skills, entering a few lines of text they had previously written, and could then underline titles and highlight sections in *bold*, developing basic presentation techniques. However, many pupils are limited in their ability to use information technology to organise and present ideas. They have not learnt to develop ideas and make things happen or check and respond to events with the use of information technology.
106. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. The direct teaching of classes and groups is clear and most teachers now have the knowledge and confidence to guide pupils effectively. Teachers try to offer a level of challenge together with time for pupils to find out for themselves what programmes can do, and to develop skills on the keyboard and mouse. The new computer suite has increased the amount of direct teaching and is contributing to the rising standards. However, where pupils have to share computers, this can restrict the learning that takes place. The school has yet to ensure that the benefits of the suite, compared to having computers in the classrooms, are closely monitored and reviewed; that teaching arrangements provide the best circumstances in which to develop pupils' confidence and familiarity with computers. Arrangements for the older pupils to visit the high school regularly to receive tuition in the computer suites there are proving beneficial.

MUSIC

107. Music lessons were seen in every class in the school during the inspection. All teachers have confidence in teaching music, and teachers' knowledge is always satisfactory and for some teachers at and towards the end of each key stage it is good. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' attainment in music is typical for pupils at the ages of seven and 11. Pupils sing enthusiastically and tunefully in assemblies. They learn and memorise words and actions to their songs and hymns and develop a broad repertoire. All pupils join in and sing songs with choruses and some adult hymns with difficult melody lines. Pupils in Year 3 are able to sing a *round* in three parts and are pleased with the result.
108. In Key Stage 1 pupils explore the concept of *texture* in music. They learn through exploration with their teachers to use untuned percussion instruments and voices and body sounds to build up and create a texture. Teachers explain musical concepts well and communicate them with the use of such comparisons as a *layered sandwich cake*. They add sounds to a poem to create a sound story. As a result of good teaching, pupils describe the sounds they are using. They show that they are able to discriminate well between high and low sounds and match sounds to words such as *rustling*. This develops their understanding of new words well and is a good contribution to literacy. They learn through working together that clapping makes a louder sound than clicking and demonstrate that they can vary both these sounds by playing carefully and with concentration. They develop playing on the beat and have opportunities to listen to and express their feelings on music by well known composers such as *Hall of the Mountain King* by Grieg. In Key Stage 2, pupils develop and add rhythm to their work. Teachers make good links between *rhythm* and *tempo*, reminding pupils of what they have learnt previously. Towards the end of the key stage pupils have great fun in a very good lesson improvising, and developing rhythms and melodies for *hand jives*. The oldest pupils work together very well composing and performing a selection of different *raps*. In both classes pupils work on their activities in groups and perform their compositions to each other. In these classes both teachers have their own good musical expertise and plan the development of the lessons well. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are equally involved in their work. Pupils help each other with their learning in their groups, and relationships between them are good.
109. Resources for music have improved since the previous inspection and there is an adequate supply of untuned percussion, although less tuned percussion is available. The music co-ordinator has produced a useful scheme of work for teachers and has her own expertise. She takes the school choir and acts as a good support to teachers herself. The school has received good support from the local authority's music advisor. Pupils have regular and frequent opportunities to perform for parents and grandparents in concerts and plays at festival times such as Christmas and Easter. Visitors to school such as a music ensemble add to the music curriculum. Pupils have the opportunity to learn the recorder and guitar in clubs run by school staff.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

110. At the time of the previous inspection physical education was a strength of the school. Due to the school's focus on English and mathematics this is no longer the case. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards of physical education are as expected and teaching at this stage is sound. Pupils respond well in lessons and most listen well to instructions. In a Year 2 lesson the teacher explains the importance of the warm-up session. This is very effective, with the pupils feeling how fast their hearts are

beating. Pupils work well together in pairs and good changes of mood are introduced through the effective use of lights and music. Teachers make good links with other subject areas during lessons such as literacy. For instance, pupils listen and respond to a tape of the '*The Bear Hunt*'. The tape is paused appropriately to allow teaching points to be made. This encourages pupils well and the quality of pupils' movements improves as they gain in confidence.

111. At Key Stage 2, too few lessons were observed to judge the overall quality of teaching. Attainment at the end of the key stage is typical for pupils of this age. Lessons are well structured and have a good pace. This gives pupils opportunities to practise and refine their skills; for instance, throwing skills and attacking and defending in a small-sided fast game. Teachers give clear instructions and encourage a healthy life style. Pupils are enthusiastic and mostly attentive, and clearly enjoyed their experiences.
112. Physical education has a main focus in the school development plan. Extra resources, mats and a trolley, small apparatus and Quik Cricket have recently been purchased. Existing links with Everton Football Club and Warrington Wolves are being developed. The scheme of work is a useful, relevant document and has been recently reviewed. All areas of the curriculum are taught, including swimming. This enables most pupils to swim 25 metres by the time they reach Year 6.