

INSPECTION REPORT

WILLASTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Nantwich

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111076

Headteacher: Mr C Bentley

Reporting inspector: Colin Smith
25211

Dates of inspection: 4th – 6th December 2000

Inspection number: 224477

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School Address:	Derwent Close Willaston Nantwich Cheshire
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr. M. Freeman
Date of previous inspection:	4 th - 7 th June 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Colin Smith OIN 25211	Registered inspector	Science Religious education Music	What sort of school it is The school's results and pupils' achievements How well pupils are taught
Roger Hart OIN 9511	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well the school cares its pupils How well the school works in partnership with parents
Jozepha O'Hare OIN 8316	Team inspector	English Art and design Geography Equal opportunities	How good the curricular and other opportunities offered to other pupils are
Valerie Hobson OIN 22545	Team inspector	Mathematics History Physical education Special educational needs	
Mike Wehrmeyer OIN 15015	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology The Foundation Stage	How well the school is led and managed

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Inspection Quality Division
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Willaston Primary School is of average size, with 213 pupils on roll: 100 boys and 113 girls. Many pupils are from privileged backgrounds and the number of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below average. Almost all of the pupils are white and English speaking and their attainment on entry into the school is above average. None of the pupils have a statement of special educational needs, and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is well below average. There are 30 children under the age of six of which 22 are in the reception class. Recently the number of pupils has been increasing as new houses are built in the area.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school with many good features. Standards in English and mathematics are above average and match those in schools with a similar intake of pupils. Standards are also high in five other subjects. However, standards in science are lower than in similar schools because too few pupils reach the higher levels. Teaching is good in most classes and pupils make good progress, particularly at Key Stage 1, but progress slows towards the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils are very well cared for and this benefits all pupils, particularly those with special educational needs. Most pupils' have positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour is very good. The headteacher, along with governors and subject coordinators provides good leadership and clear direction for the work of the school. A programme of monitoring and evaluating the work of the school has begun, but not all of the weaknesses have been remedied. Overall, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils reach high standards in many subjects by the age of eleven and achieve particularly well in the reception class, and in Years 1, 2 and 5.
- Pupils are keen to learn and they behave very well in lessons and around school.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for and they make very good progress.
- Teaching is good in most classes and learning support assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.
- The headteacher, governors and coordinators together provide good leadership.
- The curriculum is well planned and offers a good range of extra curricular activities.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal and social development.

What could be improved

- Higher achieving pupils are not challenged sufficiently to enable them to reach the very high standards of which they are capable, particularly in Year 6.
- Standards in science are lower than they are in similar schools by the age of eleven.
- The assessment of pupils' progress is a weakness in a number of subjects.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning is not rigorous enough to remedy all of the weaknesses.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory improvements since the last inspection in June 1996. High standards have been maintained in English and history, and standards have improved in mathematics, music, art and design, geography and physical education; but not in science. The quality of teaching, good at the time of the last inspection, has improved further. However, the use of assessment to identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses has not improved enough. As a result, higher achieving pupils do not always reach their potential. The curriculum has improved because teachers now have guidelines from which to plan their lessons. Parents now receive regular and better quality information about their children's progress than at the time of the last inspection. The school is well placed to continue its improvements.

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
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	C	B	B	C
Mathematics	B	B	A	C
Science	D	B	C	E

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

Most children enter school with good levels of attainment. They make good progress and by the end of their reception year their attainment is higher than average in their personal and social development, in language and literacy, numeracy, creative and physical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Pupils continue to make good progress at Key Stage 1. By the age of seven they reach high standards in reading, writing, mathematics, science and in a number of other subjects. Pupils make at least satisfactory progress through Key Stage 2 and often good progress in Years 3,4 and 5. However, progress slows in Year 6 because the level of work provided is not high enough. Higher targets have been set and booster classes are helping to drive up standards. By the age of eleven, standards in English and mathematics are above average and match those in similar schools. Standards are also high in geography, music and physical education and very high in art and design. Standards in information and communication technology, religious education and design and technology are typical for pupils of primary school age. Standards in science by the age of eleven are below those in similar schools. This is because fewer pupils reach higher levels than in English or mathematics. In this respect, higher achieving pupils are not fulfilling their full potential. However, almost all pupils reach the standards expected, including some pupils with special educational needs. These pupils make very good progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good: pupils are interested in their work, they concentrate well and are keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good: pupils are polite, friendly and helpful. They behave very well in and out of the classroom and show high levels of self discipline.
Personal development and relationships	Very good: pupils work together very well even when not directly supervised. They take initiative, accept responsibility and show respect for others.
Attendance	Good: pupils enjoy school, attend regularly and arrive on time.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs, are keen to take part and answer questions. Their good attitudes reflect the effort put in by teachers to make lessons interesting.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 6 years	Aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Satisfactory

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.

Teaching is good at Key Stage 1 and in almost all Key Stage 2 classes. Of the lessons seen, 14 per cent were satisfactory, 43 per cent were good, a further 30 per cent were very good and seven per cent were excellent. However, three of the lessons seen (five per cent) were unsatisfactory in Year 6. This is because the level of work provided is not challenging enough and the learning of the higher achieving pupils is not sufficiently extended. Almost at the last hurdle in Year 6, pupils' motivation to achieve well falters and this prevents standards from being as high as they are at Key Stage 1. The teaching of information and communication technology and religious education is satisfactory but teaching is good in English and mathematics and in almost all other subjects. Pupils are well managed and relationships are good throughout the school. Basic skills in literacy and numeracy are taught well and teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to apply these skills in other subjects. This gives pupils the tools to find out for themselves and the confidence to explain their ideas to others. The teaching of children in the Foundation Stage is good and the teaching of pupils with special educational needs is also of good quality. These factors ensure that pupils work hard, at a good pace and acquire new skills. However, in science, and occasionally other subjects, teachers expect too little of what higher achieving pupils are capable of achieving.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum offered is good. Schemes of work have been developed in almost all subjects since the last inspection, which helps teachers to know what they should teach. Pupils have good opportunities to find out for themselves through visits and project work.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. These pupils are identified quickly and accurately. Activities are provided which interest and challenge them. They are given good support from teachers and assistants to enable them to acquire the basic skills.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good in all areas apart from spiritual development which is good. Teachers are quick to seize opportunities to help pupils to appreciate the wonder of life and to understand and respect the beliefs of others. Visits and visitors make a valuable contribution to pupils' understanding of themselves, others and the world around them.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory; pupils are cared for and supported in their learning. However, assessment of their progress in several subjects is weak and this hinders their learning.

The school keeps parents well informed about their children's learning and school events. The headteacher and staff are successful in involving parents in their children's learning and in the life of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and staff team provide positive leadership and are driving up standards. Recent measures to monitor and evaluate the work of the school have been introduced but, as yet, these are insufficient to remedy the all of the weaknesses in teaching and learning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are well informed and fulfil their statutory duties effectively. They offer good support to the school and are increasingly involved in the drive to raise standards.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Senior staff makes good use of data to judge the quality of the school's provision and evaluate standards. Test results are analysed to identify weaker areas, but targets are not set for pupils in all classes to help them to know how they can improve.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Recent improvements are taking effect, particularly the careful selection of new teachers. Governors look for cost effectiveness in their decision making, and use financial resources wisely to target improvements. The administration of the school is efficient and unobtrusive.

Teachers are well qualified and sufficiently experienced to match the needs of pupils and the curriculum. There are a good number of well trained assistants to support pupils' social and academic needs. The accommodation is good and the school has a good supply of learning resources in most subjects.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good information about children's progress • The teaching is good • The school is well led and managed • Children are making good progress • Behaviour is good • The school works closely with parents • The school is welcoming and approachable • Children are expected to try their best • The school helps children to become mature and responsible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework • Extra curricular activities

There was a good response to the questionnaires. Most parents have a high regard for the school. Inspectors largely agree with parents' positive views of the school. Parents' concerns about the lack of regular homework are justified, particularly in Year 6. However, inspectors do not feel that parents' reservations about the range of extra curricular activities are justified. The school provides far more activities than is the case in many other schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

- 1 Pupils enter school with above average attainment. They respond enthusiastically to the high level of challenge provided in reception and at Key Stage 1. This helps them to achieve well and reach very high standards in reading and writing and mathematics and high standards in science by the age of seven. Current standards are similar to teachers' assessments and the results of the national tests for seven year olds in 2000 in reading, writing and science. Standards in most subjects have remained higher than in similar schools until last year when they fell below in mathematics. However, there are now two small Year 2 groups and pupils receive much more attention. In addition, the new deputy head teacher is a skilled mathematics teacher. She is having a strong influence on pupils' progress and standards in mathematics are now as high as they are in reading and writing.
- 2 Standards are above the national average in English and mathematics by the time that pupils reach the age of eleven. This was broadly the picture presented in the national tests taken in 2000 except that in mathematics the results were well above average. In English, mathematics and science, almost all pupils reach the standards expected. Standards in English and mathematics match those obtained in schools with a similar intake of pupils. However, standards in science are too low. Although results are close to the national average they are well below those in similar schools. This is because fewer pupils reach the higher levels than is usually the case. The lower standards in science partly reflect the inconsistent teaching of the skills of investigation. As a result, pupils are not sufficiently well equipped to work out the answers to scientific problems. However, pupils' achievement in science noticeably slips in Year 6. Here, the level of work provided is too easy and does enable potentially higher achieving pupils to wrestle with more complex ideas, such as pollination and the effects of different forces.
- 3 Assessments made of children entering the reception class show that most children have a good understanding of letters, words and numbers. The very good teaching and provision for learning in reception help children to settle quickly and learn at a quick pace. Children soon pick up everyday routines, behave well and make good progress in all areas of learning. They make good progress when they are working with the teacher or nursery assistant on group activities and when they are free to explore their own interests. This is because during the direct teaching sessions, children have good opportunities to talk, listen and learn. When they choose their own activities, teachers intervene, encourage them to talk and help them to grasp new ideas. They are on course to reach levels higher than the standards expected in all areas of learning including literacy, mathematics and in their personal and social development.
- 4 Standards in information and communication technology meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. Teachers make maximum use of the limited number of computers to enable pupils to make steady progress. The development of the computer suite is anticipated eagerly. Pupils are adept in handling and communicating information. They understand how to access the Internet and make effective use of information and communication technology to enhance their learning in other subjects. Standards in religious education meet the requirements set out in the syllabus for Cheshire schools. Pupils make satisfactory progress in learning the three religions specified, Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Pupils also learn to reflect on their own belief in the light of understand different religions.
- 5 During a busy period of following national initiatives to raise standards in literacy and numeracy, the school has not let standards in other subjects slip. A notable strength of the school is the way teachers have continued to raise standards in the non-core subjects. As result, pupils achieve well and standards in geography, history, music and physical education are all higher than average. In art and design, standards are very high. Pupils use their good skills in painting and modelling to capture the styles used by famous artists. In geography they interpret maps very effectively while in

history, they can explain historical changes. Pupils show creative talent and perform to a high standard in both music and physical education. Standards in design and technology are broadly typical and pupils make steady progress, but they use their mathematical skills effectively to ensure a good level of precision in their work.

- 6 Pupils achieve well in reading and reach high standards. At Key Stage 1, pupils become proficient in blending letters to help them read new words. This also improves their spelling and writing. By Year 2, most pupils read fluently and write at length, with good punctuation. Regular practice at school and at home helps the reading along. Pupils achieve well in Years 3, 4 and 5 in reading and writing. They learn to read expressively and with good comprehension. They can skim over a passage quickly to gain an impression of what it is about and scan efficiently for specific details. At Key Stage 2, pupils make steady progress in writing. Handwriting is good but pupils are slow to learn to write in ink because they are only encouraged to use pen at a very late stage. Pupils begin to evaluate and improve their own writing by adding detailed descriptions and more interesting words. As reading, writing, listening and speaking skills are acquired, pupils use them well in other subjects. Most pupils are confident speakers and relish opportunities to explain their ideas to the whole class. Younger pupils have a good concentration span and listen intently for long periods. Most teachers have good knowledge of the subject, enjoy teaching English and have implemented the literacy hour effectively. These factors are enabling pupils to achieve well and are leading to improvements in standards. However, in Year 6 assessment is not used well enough to identify what pupils need to do to improve further, and, as a result, tasks are sometimes not sufficiently challenging and progress slows.
- 7 Pupils achieve well in mathematics at Key Stage 1. Teachers are successful in enabling pupils to handle numbers confidently, and in Year 2, pupils make rapid progress in learning to solve mathematical problems. Pupils make steady progress through Key Stage 2, but higher achieving pupils could achieve more in Years 3 and 4 if they did not have to complete work they are already competent in before moving on to more demanding tasks. Pupils achieve very well in Year 5 because the teacher constantly asks them to explain how they have worked the answer out. Methods are compared and pupils develop a wide range of approaches to solving problems. Progress slows in Year 6 because the work provided is sometimes too easy, particularly for higher achieving pupils but the standards remain above average, due to the impact of the earlier good teaching. Numeracy skills are developed effectively in subjects such as science and information and communication technology when pupils handle data.
- 8 Pupils at Key Stage 1 achieve well in science and by the age of seven they are beginning to understand how to investigate a scientific problem and apply a fair test. Through practical work, such as investigating how things move or change, pupils develop a good knowledge of plants, materials and forces. Pupils achieve steadily in Year 3 and 4 but there are too few opportunities for pupils to plan and carry out their own experiments. Pupils achieve well in Year 5. Experimental work features strongly and pupils learn to use the scientific method of enquiry. The pace of learning slows in Year 6. Although useful revision is done prior to the end of key stage tests, pupils do not use their enquiry skills and the level of work provided does not enable higher achieving pupils to reach the standards of which they are capable. Consequently, standards at the age of eleven are too low.
- 9 Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. Teachers show concern for both their academic and their social development. Their learning needs are carefully assessed and plans are devised to help them to improve. The school has increased the number of learning support assistants. This has proved to be a successful move and has greatly benefited pupils who struggle with learning. Over recent years, boys have attained higher results than girls. This is the converse of the national pattern. There is no evidence to suggest that boys receive more attention than girls but the school provides a stimulating curriculum, rich in practical experiences, in which boys appear to flourish particularly well. Higher achieving pupils are moving ahead at Key Stage 1. The high level of challenge is an important factor but teachers are ambitious for the pupils and this urges them on. At Key Stage 2, higher achieving pupils make satisfactory progress but the level of challenge is sometimes not high enough, particularly towards the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils are now assessed at the end of each school year in the core subjects. The results are increasingly

being used to set more challenging targets. In recent years, the targets have been reached and suitably high targets have been set for the next school year. The school has raised standards in English and mathematics in response to the previous inspection issue. Standards in geography, physical education and music have also been raised since the last inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 10 Pupil's attitudes to learning are a strength of the school. This is recognised by parents, and pupils' positive attitudes to learning were commended at the time of the last inspection. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance and punctuality are good. They show care and consideration towards staff and each other and have an enthusiasm for learning. They are attentive in lessons and they listen to and respect each other's opinions. They are always ready to help each other in their group work in class. On a number of occasions during the inspection, pupils were helping those with special educational needs with reading or using the computer. Pupils show maturity in their learning. Even when they make errors, they discuss and analyse the alternatives and learn from their mistakes. They evaluate each other's work sensitively and at the same time listen to one another's criticisms constructively. This is often a response to lively and interesting teaching. They enjoy the challenge of learning.
- 11 There have been no exclusions. Discipline and behaviour are very good and pupils show a good level of self control. Children in the reception class are very well behaved. They mix well and show confidence in expressing their ideas. Pupils throughout the school are very polite and courteous towards each other and raised voices by staff or pupils are very rare. Pupils respect each other's property. There is no litter in the playground, the school building is free of graffiti and the school is tidy. Pupils respect the property of others and the school environment. There is a very good social atmosphere within the school at all times. Even when pupils have to stay inside the building because of bad weather, they sit and chat and play indoor games quietly and sensibly. Pupils' very good behaviour makes a positive contribution to their learning.
- 12 Relationships between pupils are very good with no evidence of discrimination regarding gender or ethnic origins. They work well as individuals or in groups, sharing equipment and ideas, quietly asking for the teacher's help should they need it. Pupils act responsibly when they are given authoritative roles such as monitors. For example, they put out equipment efficiently and ensure that bells are rung on time to start the next lesson. They carry out these duties unprompted and without the need for supervision. Pupils show initiative. They organise their own charity collections and they often complete home projects based on learning in school. Relationships with teaching and support staff and visitors are very good. Pupils are welcoming and talk freely and knowledgeably about activities in and out of school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 13 Teaching and learning are good in almost all classes as they were at the time of the last inspection. During this inspection, seven per cent of the teaching was excellent, 30 per cent was very good, 43 per cent was good, 14 per cent was satisfactory and five per cent was unsatisfactory. Teaching is best in the Foundation Stage, in Year 2 and in Year 5 where it is often very good. Teaching is occasionally excellent in reception, Year 2 and in Year 4. Teaching in other classes is generally good, apart from Year 6 where there is a lack of challenge. Teaching is good in English, geography, history, music and physical education throughout the school, and teaching is very good in art and design. Teaching in mathematics and science is satisfactory at Key Stage 2, but good at Key Stage 1. Teaching of information and communication technology, religious education and design and technology is satisfactory at both key stages.
- 14 Teaching in the Foundation Stage of learning is very strong. The reception class teacher and the nursery nurse provide a first class partnership. They know the children well and have a clear understanding of the Early Learning Goals. Lessons are planned in detail with a pronounced emphasis on developing children's spoken and written language and number skills. As a result

most children have begun to read independently, to express their own ideas and to calculate accurately by the time they move on to Year 1. The work provided stretches the children, but they respond positively and make good gains in their learning. Lessons are lively and interesting. This helps children to enjoy learning and enables them to concentrate for long periods. Children's social and personal development is also well catered for. Children are encouraged to explore and learn for themselves and they soon acquire confidence and independence. Children's learning is thoroughly assessed. New learning is always built on what they already know. These factors result in rapid progress being made by all children, including those with special educational needs and the high achievers.

- 15 Teaching at Key Stage 1 is almost always good and often very good. This results in pupils reaching very high standards by the age of seven. Teachers have a good understanding of how to teach almost all subjects. Basic skills such as learning to blend letters to make new words, and calculating numbers mentally, are taught very effectively. As a result, pupils become good readers, confident writers and competent with numbers. Lesson planning is good, the aims for learning are always clearly explained and pupils know what they are expected to learn. Teachers and pupils enjoy good relationships but within this caring atmosphere: there is a strong emphasis on achieving well. Pupils are encouraged to concentrate hard and work at a brisk pace. In literacy, for example, many Year 1 pupils write half a page or more in fluent style within fifteen minutes. Pupils respond well to the high level of challenge because their work is usually adjusted to match their different learning needs. This means that all pupils make good progress. Pupils are proud of their achievements and are keen to learn more. Teachers keep pupils' interests alive by varying the activities. They look for opportunities to provide 'real experiences,' such as making butter and weaving with wool. Resources are introduced imaginatively to draw on pupils' curiosity. For example, in history, teachers use photographs of previous educational visits to help pupils to recall the important ideas. These approaches help pupils to understand how times have changed and how places are similar or different according to their features.
- 16 There is much good teaching in Years 3 and 4 and teaching in Year 5 is often very good. However, there are weaknesses in teaching in Year 6. Teachers have good expertise in most subjects but it is only satisfactory in mathematics, science and religious education. In mathematics, for example, teachers do not always encourage pupils to explain how they have worked out the answers. Opportunities are therefore missed to widen pupils' approaches to solving problems. In science, investigation skills are taught well in Years 3 and 5. However, they are not taught frequently enough in all classes to enable pupils to achieve confidence in planning their own investigations. In religious education, the writing and drawing tasks set have too little variety. Over time, this narrow approach becomes predictable and pupils' interest wanes. In other areas, teachers have expertise in abundance. For example, information and communication technology and music are very well taught in Year 3. The teaching of art and dance is outstanding in Year 4 and several subjects are taught with flair in Year 5. Basic skills, such as reading comprehension, mapping in geography, and enquiry skills in history, are taught well. This enables pupils to develop competency in finding information for themselves: interpreting maps, planning designs, searching for evidence and finding different ways to present their findings. Regular 'show and tell' opportunities help pupils to gain confidence in speaking to an audience. English and mathematics are of central importance, but a strong feature of the school is the quality of teaching in many of the other subjects. In almost all classes and subjects, lessons are planned carefully to include activities designed to capture pupils' imagination. For example, music is played to inspire pupils' artwork and lists of clues are provided to enable pupils to be detectives in history. These methods not only help pupils to become hooked on learning, they result in high standards in many of the non-core subjects.
- 17 Learning support assistants offer very good service in many lessons at both key stages. They sometimes work with higher achieving pupils in promoting more advanced learning but more often help pupils with special educational needs. In all cases, they never jump in too quickly without giving the pupils time to think for themselves. Pupils with special needs make very good progress because the work they receive is tailored to their learning needs. The provision for higher achieving pupils is satisfactory but inconsistent. This is largely because assessment is not used sufficiently to find out what pupils know and understand and move them on. In this area, the school has made only minimal progress since the last inspection.

- 18 In English, tasks are usually well matched to pupils' different needs and this helps all pupils to make at least steady gains in their learning. In mathematics, this is usually the case, but higher achieving pupils sometimes only tackle the more difficult tasks after they have completed the ones set for the whole class. This holds them back unnecessarily. In written tasks, in subjects such as science, history, geography and religious education, some teachers expect more of the higher achieving pupils than others. At Key Stage 1, for example, the more fluent writers make a flying start writing their own versions of an experience or a story. Those who need support are provided with worksheets to help them to complete short sentences. Occasionally the same level of work is set for all pupils irrespective of their different learning needs, particularly in Year 6. Although pupils are well managed in Year 6, and lessons are well controlled and organised, as is the case in all classes, the level of work given to the pupils is often too easy. This restricts the learning of higher achieving pupils, particularly. Additional booster classes compensate to some extent but valuable time is lost in some lessons such as mathematics and science. The same pattern occurs in the setting of homework. At Key Stage 1 and in Years 3, 4 and 5, homework builds up gradually, but in Year 6 less is given. This aspect of homework is a concern expressed by parents. In this respect, Year 6 pupils are not adequately prepared for transition to secondary school at the age of eleven. The loss of pace and lower expectations in Year 6, prevents more pupils from reaching the very high levels of which they are capable.

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

- 19 The school's curriculum is good. It has improved since the last inspection because subject coordinators have worked hard to provide written guidance about what pupils should learn in each year group. Teachers are able to draw on these schemes of work in planning their lessons. This ensures that a wide range of worthwhile learning opportunities is provided. The school has made a determined effort to maintain good quality provision in all subjects, despite the concentration on literacy and numeracy. To this end, there are numerous and well planned educational visits which teachers use to enhance pupils' learning across all subjects. Consequently, the curriculum is rich and engages pupils' interests. It makes learning exciting for them.
- 20 There is equal access to all aspects of school life. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Learning objectives are simplified or additional learning support is provided to meet their individual needs. This removes any barriers to their full participation in the whole curriculum. These factors enable them to make very good progress and most of these pupils reach the levels expected in the national tests. Booster classes have been arranged to enable pupils who are on the borderline between two levels to achieve the higher one. This is helping to raise standards. However, in some lessons, such as science, higher achieving pupils are not always provided with sufficiently challenging work to help them to reach their full potential. A number of parents made this point at the pre-inspection and the inspection findings support this view. The level of challenge is sometimes too low, particularly in Year 6. The school has not fully addressed this issue since the previous inspection.
- 21 Both the quality and range of activities provided for children in the Foundation Stage of learning are good and reflect the high quality of teaching in the reception class. The curriculum covers all of the six areas of learning recommended nationally. Activities are carefully planned through a series of 'stepping stones' that enable children to achieve and often exceed the learning goals for children of this age. Good links with local playgroups ensure that children are sensitively welcomed into the reception class.
- 22 The curriculum is designed to enable pupils to acquire the important basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills are good, and implemented effectively. There are good policies and schemes of work for most subjects. These give effective guidance to teachers to plan the next step for their pupils' learning. However, there are no policies for science or for religious education. As a result, teachers are not guided in knowing how to teach

the skills of scientific investigation. Some opportunities are provided for pupils to understand how to investigate, but these are insufficient to ensure that all pupils are able to plan and carry out their own experiments by the age of eleven. In religious education, there is little to advise teachers on how to teach the subject. Consequently, the tasks set in lessons are often restricted to writing and drawing pictures. These factors limit the progress pupils can make.

- 23 Provision for pupils in personal, social and health education is very good. Through it, pupils are provided with opportunities to research their own ideas, work unsupervised, and achieve some independence in their learning. Discussions about school and wider issues are common. Through these, pupils develop very good understanding of themselves and of the needs of others. Citizenship is well developed throughout the school. As a result, the pupils learn to live with each other harmoniously. Pupils also have opportunities to raise funds for good causes, such as the Harvest Festival when pupils think of the needs of the senior citizens in the community. Teaching about sex education and learning about the harmful effects of drugs, both take place regularly. The school ensures that parents and the governors are fully informed of these programmes.
- 24 Very productive links are established with the community. Teachers, doctors, the local police, all share their skills with the pupils and, therefore, make very good contributions to pupils' learning. Pupils' curricular opportunities are enhanced further through access to the Internet, residential visits to York, and visits to museum and galleries. These all provide pupils with first hand experiences that enrich their learning. Pupils' smooth transfer to secondary school is ensured through the school's very good links. Provision for extra curricular activities are good, particularly in sport and music, although younger children are not able to participate, as some parents would like.
- 25 The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good which is an improvement since the previous inspection. Despite the lack of formal policies the staff work hard to ensure that opportunities are taken across the curriculum to awaken pupils' spiritual awareness. For example in science, new life in spring is discussed, the appreciation of beauty in art is very pronounced, and, in geography, teachers often ask what makes a place attractive. Collective worship is a meaningful experience and pupils recognise the sense of occasion in assemblies and demonstrate this by their good behaviour. The worship is of good quality with well planned themes that have significance for all pupils.
- 26 Provision for pupils' moral development is very good and many opportunities are taken to develop moral themes across the subjects. In religious education, moral dilemmas are discussed, such as occasions when pupils feel that they might let someone down. Moral discussions take place in literacy through the study of Scrooge's character. Honesty is positively encouraged and the youngest children are trusted to use real money in their counting activities.
- 27 Pupils' social development is very good and supported well throughout the school and across all aspects of the curriculum. Pupils are often asked to work in groups and to share equipment and ideas. Physical education makes a very strong contribution to the pupils' social development, encouraging a sense of fair play and teamwork. The very good social skills promoted by the curriculum are also evident at lunchtime. Pupils respond well to the expectations that they will play and chat quietly together during wet break times with minimal supervision. Self discipline is strongly encouraged and staff work consistently to promote pupils' positive self image. As a result the pupils' confidence grows rapidly enabling them to play a full part in the school community.
- 28 Provision for the pupils' cultural development is very good. This is promoted throughout the curriculum. Pupils are helped to appreciate their own culture through the study of history and geography, music, literacy and religious education and art. Visiting artists make a valuable contribution to the curriculum and enable pupils to influence their own locality through the design and making of a tiled wall. However, the curriculum also includes the studies of other cultures and pupils are encouraged to appreciate the diversity, similarities and differences of other cultures through their studies of art and music. In geography the study of Kenya is in depth and gives the pupils real insight into the country and its peoples.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 29 The school has a happy and caring atmosphere as it was judged to have at the time of the last inspection. Teachers look after pupils well and encourage them to give of their best. Pupils are treated as individuals and creative talents are nurtured but pupils are also encouraged to be part of, and contribute towards, the school community. Parents appreciate the way their children are cared for and looked after.
- 30 Pupils' welfare is taken very seriously. Teachers frequently ask pupils who have returned after absences if they are feeling better and need any help. In assembly for example, the headteacher welcomed a pupil back after injury and explained the care needed to help him to fully recover. This was done to raise other pupils' awareness of the need to help to look after him in the playground. Such examples are typical of the caring ethos of the school. The headteacher oversees child protection conscientiously. The education welfare officer makes courtesy calls but is very seldom needed to deal with serious concerns.
- 31 There is clear guidance to prevent accidents and to respond promptly and correctly, should the need arise. First aid cover is adequate and additional staff are undergoing training to provide extra cover for educational visits. Supervision in the playground at lunchtime is adequate but the reception class outdoor play area, whilst supervised when in use, does not have a fence to separate it from the car park.
- 32 Good behaviour is very effectively promoted. All members of staff are consistent in their response to pupils' behaviour and pupils know where they stand. The reward system operates well and work and good deeds are both commended. In some classes, pupils help to set the rules. There are sanctions to control inappropriate behaviour, but these are seldom needed because there is so little aggressive behaviour, bullying or disruptive behaviour of any kind. Teachers often arrange discussion sessions to provide opportunities for pupils to share their feelings. These sessions are valuable in that any anxieties are brought out into the open. Attendance and punctuality are well monitored, registers are kept up to date, completed correctly and there are clear procedures for reporting and checking up on absences.
- 33 The use of assessment is unsatisfactory. Small improvements have been made since the last inspection but these are insufficient to ensure pupils' strengths and weaknesses are accurately identified in all subjects. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress at regular intervals are adequate to inform teachers as to which pupils are achieving or underachieving in English, mathematics and science. However, the data collected from the regular testing from Year 2 to Year 6 is not analysed sufficiently to set targets for individual pupils who could achieve more, nor to question why pupils may not have achieved as expected. There are no procedures for assessing pupils' skills development in design technology, history, religious education and physical education. In information and communication technology, the use of assessment is inconsistent although there are good examples in Year 3 and 4. Assessment in geography and art is satisfactory.
- 34 Pupils with special educational needs are assessed carefully and their learning needs are identified quickly. Targets are set to help them to improve and these are shared with parents and the pupils themselves. Good support is provided to help these pupils to reach their targets.
- 35 Assessment opportunities are built into class teachers' medium term plans but it is not clear how these are used to adapt the curriculum, as there are no agreed guidelines for transferring the information into the next stage of planning. However, assessment is used well by teachers in the Foundation Stage, Year 2 and Year 5. In these classes, regular monitoring of pupils' progress enables teachers to adjust the curriculum and pupils receive work that is always well matched to their learning needs. Therefore, they make good, and often very good, progress. Where there is no clear assessment, such as in Year 6, pupils are insufficiently challenged. Target setting is used effectively in Year 3 and Year 4 and targets are reviewed half termly. Pupils then assess their own progress towards them. However, there is a lack of rigorous and consistent recording of pupils' achievements. Consequently, teachers are still not able to identify accurately, individual pupils'

strengths and weaknesses.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 36 Most parents are happy with the provision made for their children and have high expectations of the school and of their children. Information received from parents' questionnaires, meetings and interviews confirms that the most parents are positive about their children's learning, the teaching they receive and the progress they make. However, a significant number of parents have concerns about the level of homework provided and feel that there are not enough extra curricular activities. An appropriate amount of homework is given in Year 3, 4 and 5 and this helps pupils' learning. However, parents are right to express concerns about homework because it is not planned well enough in Year 6 to ensure that pupils are prepared well for their transfer to secondary school. However, parents' concerns about extra curricular activities are not justified. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to become involved in extra curricular pursuits, particularly in music and sport. Most of the parents who disagreed have children who are too young to be involved after school but their chance will come later.
- 37 The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory and has significantly improved since the last inspection. Teachers make a considerable effort to keep the parents informed of their children's progress. There are good induction procedures for children starting school. The reception class teacher and the nursery assistant foster close relationships with parents and keep in touch with local playgroups to find out more about the children. As a result, children make a good start. Informative newsletters pass on important information about school life and forthcoming events with suitable reply slips to show that parents have received the letter and are able to be involved. Parents are formally invited into the school on two occasions in the year to discuss their children's work and progress, but most parents say they feel welcome to call in and enquire about their children at any time. Reports to parents about their children's progress are extensive and detailed, but targets for improvement are not included. However, parents receive their children's end of year test results and this helps parents to know how they are progressing. Parents are given information at the beginning of each term of what their children are expected to cover. This is a good feature because it enables parents to provide additional support at home.
- 38 Parents have a considerable impact on the work of the school. Many parents help the school either on a regular basis or occasionally. Some parents with professional knowledge assist by talking to the pupils about safety, health, drugs and sex educational issues. The 'Friends of the School Association' is very active, organising social and fundraising events, which contribute substantial sums to the school funds. Parents and ex-parents are also substantially represented on the school's governing body where their in depth knowledge of how their own children respond to school is of great benefit.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 39 The headteacher, deputy headteacher, governors and subject coordinators together provide good leadership for the work of the school. The good leadership has been maintained since the last inspection. Coordinators are committed to improving standards. They work well together and by giving and taking advice and working alongside other teachers, they have helped to develop and raise standards in almost all subjects. The headteacher is aware of the strengths of the school and is determined to maintain them. For example, he is eager to ensure that subjects, such as art and design and history, are regarded as important, despite the national priority to focus on the basic subjects. The headteacher gives a sound direction to the work of the school. He has established a high morale among staff because he values their contributions to quality of education provided. He is eager to extend and enrich opportunities for pupils to extend their learning. To this end, very good quality teaching and support staff has been recently appointed.
- 40 Governors are articulate, professional, knowledgeable and committed to the pupils' best interests,

and to the future improvement of the school. They play a central part in the decision making, based on a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Some governors visit the school regularly to help in the classrooms, and gain a good insight into the work of the school. Coordinators report to the governors on the progress being made in their subjects. This helps governors to keep well informed, and they are able to base their planning decisions on sound evidence.

- 41 School development planning is generally good: the right priorities are identified, costed out appropriately, and have a clear focus on raising standards. The school has a good ethos, with a collective drive to improve the quality of learning and raise standards. During the inspection the teachers often referred to 'not letting the school, each other or the coordinators, down.' This strong team effort works to the benefit of pupils. The mentoring of newly qualified teaching staff is good, not only because it gives them strong support, but also because it gives them the confidence to achieve their best performance.
- 42 Financial planning is prudent, and the school achieves value for money in purchasing resources. The regular audit of the school's financial procedures found a consistently thorough handling of all aspects of the administration. Direct grants are used effectively. The funding, for example, for pupils who have special educational needs, for staff training and the development of computer facilities, is used in full. Direct grants are often supplemented from the school's own funds to improve provision in particular cases, for instance, increasing the number of learning support assistants to work with pupils. The day to day work of the staff in the school office is efficient and unobtrusive. Technology is used effectively across the school. It is used to increase the efficiency of registration, to provide a clear and helpful record of pupils' test results and to give up to date information for managing the school's budget effectively. The computer suite is nearing completion and staff and pupils already access the Internet, and use this together with fax machine to communicate with other schools. These are good features.
- 43 The good match of teachers and support staff to the needs of the curriculum results in confident teaching and the promotion of improved standards for pupils. Accommodation is good, particularly the school grounds, the cleanliness and the quality of display. A positive learning environment has been provided where the staff and pupils want to work and thrive. The good level of resources for the majority of subjects, including for special educational needs and the Foundation Stage, means that the teachers have the tools to hand to do a good job. The resources are well used to give pupils valuable hands on experience and benefit from practical activities.
- 44 The headteacher is busy around the school and becomes aware of weaknesses in the course of his observations of the school at work. He knows the teachers well, visits lessons, examines teachers' planning and assessment results, and discusses the pupils' work with them. However, there is no clear policy as to how the monitoring of teaching and learning will take place and this is unsatisfactory. The system is too informal: there is no written feedback to teachers, no objectives set for improvement or any agreed criteria for what constitutes good teaching. A lack of clear guidance prevents coordinators from structuring their evaluations effectively. Although support has been put in place since the previous inspection it has been ineffective in improving the quality of teaching in all classes.
- 45 The system of appraising teachers has lapsed. Although there is no formal policy for staff development, there is a considerable amount of inservice training. However, the school has quickly adopted the new requirements for performance management. A policy has been agreed and plans have been made to monitor teaching and learning from January 2001, according to an agreed approach. The school is generally successful in meeting the academic targets it agrees with the Local Education Authority for the number of pupils expected to achieve given levels in English, mathematics and science. However, the school does not give enough consideration to helping its higher achieving pupils to reach the highest possible standards in all subjects and does not set individual achievement targets for them. As a result the potential of this group of pupils is not fully realised. Conversely, the provision for pupils with special educational needs is very well managed.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

46 The school has many good features including teaching, pupils' attitudes and behaviour, high standards in several subjects and the provision for pupils' personal development and for pupils with special educational needs. However, the assessment of pupils' learning is unsatisfactory, teaching is weak in Year 6 and this is preventing some of the higher achieving pupils from reaching the higher levels, particularly in science. Monitoring of teaching and learning is not sufficiently rigorous to sufficiently improve these weaknesses. In order to remedy these weaknesses, the headteacher, governing body and staff should:

(1) Improve the quality of teaching and learning where it is currently weak by:

- Raising expectations of what pupils can achieve;
- Assessing pupils' learning more effectively and using the results to plan more challenging work, particularly in science.
- Monitoring the quality of teaching more regularly and systematically and acting on the information gained.

Paragraphs (2, 7, 8, 13, 18, 20, 62, 66, 69, 71 and 73)

(2) Improve the use of assessment by;

- Developing manageable procedures to assess pupils' learning in all subjects;
- Setting individual targets for achievement and sharing these with pupils;
- Making more effective use of marking to show pupils, particularly those with higher achievement, what they need to do to improve.

Paragraphs (6, 9, 33, 35, 68, 74, 83, 90, 100 and 104)

When drawing up their action plan governors will have to take account of one minor issue

- Ensure that the level of homework builds gradually and prepares pupils adequately for secondary school.

Paragraphs (18 and 36)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	56
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	37

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
7	30	43	14	5		

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	213
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	17

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.5
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	14	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	14	14
	Girls	15	15	16
	Total	28	29	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (100)	97 (91)	100 (91)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	14	14
	Girls	14	14	15
	Total	27	28	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (100)	93 (91)	97 (86)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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	20	7

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	17	18
	Girls	7	6	7
	Total	23	23	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (81)	85 (78)	93 (85)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	17	18
	Girls	7	6	7
	Total	23	23	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (72)	85 (69)	93 (88)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	181
Any other minority ethnic group	4

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.6
Average class size	26.6

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	60

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

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

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000
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	£
Total income	364,141
Total expenditure	339,562
Expenditure per pupil	1,681
Balance brought forward from previous year	23,720
Balance carried forward to next year	48,299

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	426
Number of questionnaires returned	84

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	31	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	38	1	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	52	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	39	20	7	1
The teaching is good.	60	36	2	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	42	8	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	29	5	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	43	1	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	30	58	7	5	0
The school is well led and managed.	46	37	10	1	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	48	1	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	20	33	15	13	18

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

- 47 The school has maintained its good level of provision for pupils in the reception year since the last inspection. Teaching has improved further and is now very good. This enables children to achieve well during their foundation year. The school has introduced the new nationally recommended Early Learning Goals successfully. Planning is on a very secure footing. The interesting and challenging activities provided, in both the reception class and in the mixed reception/Year 1 class, encourage children to apply themselves well and develop their powers of reasoning. This leads to good progress.
- 48 Children under five are admitted to the reception class in September. The oldest children in the year group, about quarter of the class, join with Year 1 pupils in a separate class. The school has introduced an effective strategy of bringing the whole reception year together during the mornings, for literacy and numeracy. A sensitively planned induction programme allows the children to visit the class before they start officially. This eases them into school and increases their confidence. The school fully achieves its aim to establish good links with home when children start school. Many children benefit from valuable pre-school experience. This enables them to enter school with above average learning skills. Children are assessed as they arrive in the reception class, using the teachers own system and the one provided by the local authority. The results are used well to identify the starting points for learning for different children. The findings are then shared with parents and targets for improvement are set. After a short settling in period, any children found to have learning difficulties are assessed further so that any special educational needs are identified accurately. This works well and pupils with special educational needs make very good progress.
- 49 The lively teaching enables the children to gain confidence and encourages them to make their own decisions and solve their own problems. The sequence of early learning goals prepares the children well for the formal National Curriculum. By the end of the reception year almost all children have already achieved the Early Learning Goals and are working on the first level of the National Curriculum. The good teamwork between class teachers and learning support assistants creates a purposeful learning atmosphere. Children's learning flourishes in the brightly decorated and interesting classroom. As yet, assessments are not repeated at the end of the reception year to measure how much progress children have made, but this is in hand. The school monitors its provision for the early years closely, and the findings are used to guide the arrangements for subsequent years.
- 50 Children's personal, social and emotional development is good and they exceed the standards expected in this area. They socialise well, mix confidently with older pupils and develop a sense of belonging to the school community. For example, a reception child had the confidence to say, 'I disagree with that' when Year 1 pupils decided that there was nothing more slippery than an egg'. The teacher was quick to grasp the opportunity to encourage a debate about the different ways of describing rough and smooth materials. Reception age children are able to sit still and listen, often with rapt attention. Well planned routines train the children in polite behaviour, and require them to tidy up after activities. The younger ones benefit from the model of the older pupils around them. They make good progress in exploring and finding out for themselves. After only a few weeks they behave like 'old hands' when lining up to go to the hall. In assemblies they are indistinguishable from the older pupils in their good behaviour.
- 51 Children achieve well in literacy and their language skills are higher than those expected for their age. Literacy is an exciting time and staff tell stories in a lively manner. Within the fun of nursery rhymes, teachers ensure that basic skills of blending letters to make sounds are well established. Children have 'big books' to look at, discuss and thereby extend their vocabulary. Teachers use resources well, and some of the most effective are the books that the children have made themselves. Very good teaching promotes effective progress. Making a game of learning keeps holds children's attention for long periods. The 'spotty bottom' story had the children in hysterics,

but helped cement the importance of finding details in illustrations.

- 52 Children reach higher standards in mathematics than those prescribed nationally at this stage of their learning. Teachers build in good practical activities to give the children the 'first hand' experience, which is at the heart of the Early Learning Goals. This experience supports children's mathematical development very effectively, for example, where children use apparatus for sorting, ordering and making patterns and counting. Regular practise helps them to learn to count accurately in their heads. Teaching methods are highly stimulating. For example, the teacher pretends to talk to a Father Christmas puppet. During the conversation the puppet says 'the children can't possibly count to 30!' The children then are absolutely determined to prove the teacher wrong. They do not take everything on trust, and children can often be seen checking on their fingers that the teacher is right. The children's ability in number and awareness of space is above average and develops rapidly during the year. A particular strength is the way that the teachers match the tasks provided to children's different levels of attainment.
- 53 Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is also above average and is promoted successfully through a wide range of good quality learning activities designed to stimulate their curiosity and interest. They make good progress working through the practical experiences. They learn about the world in and around the school, making good use of the school's excellent site and further afield, from photographs which teachers have taken for the purpose. They receive good direct teaching on the use of computers, and learn to operate remote control cars to give them the feel of direction and distance. They develop an awareness of past times from events they recall in their family lives. In an excellent lesson about the humble potato, the children studied the process of producing crisps. In it, they extended their knowledge of science in the tasting experiment, and of mathematics by conducting a survey of the favourite flavours. Older pupils take a similarly rigorous approach to classifying the feel of a wide variety of materials.
- 54 Children's physical development takes place through timetabled sessions in the school hall. They display above average balance and control of small apparatus, for example, beanbags. With good tuition and opportunity to practice they make good progress in increasing the distance they can throw and catch under and over arm. The coordinator plans to develop the outdoor play area by providing more large play equipment. Children are agile, alert and enthusiastic. They make good progress in increasingly precise handling skills using scissors and other small tools.
- 55 Children's creative development is above average for their age. Through a well structured curriculum, and with the encouragement of the staff, children develop enthusiasm and confidence to explore their own ideas. A few children take some coaxing to get deeply into paint mixing and 'prickly printing', which means getting green paint up to your elbows. In music, they show the capacity to learn words of songs alongside the infants and juniors. They gain confidence in role play, through an effectively designed pretend shoe shop. This helps them to make good progress in developing social and academic skills. For example, when they pretend to be shopkeepers and customers, they cash cheques, give change with real money and sell some expensive goods.

ENGLISH

- 56 Standards in English, for pupils who are seven are very high. By the age of eleven, standards are above average. These reflect the quality of teaching. Pupils enjoy learning and their positive attitudes contribute greatly to the good progress they make in the subject.
- 57 The results in the national tests in 2000 indicate that the performance of the pupils at the age of seven is well above average in both reading and in writing. Results since 1997 show that they have been consistently high and they continue to rise. Pupils' results in the national tests for eleven year olds in English in 2000 are still above average, but this indicates a slowing rate of progress as the pupils move through Key Stage 2. Inspection findings confirm this picture but show that while pupils continue to achieve well in Years 3, 4 and 5, this rate of progress is not sustained in Year 6.
- 58 Most pupils enter the school with above average attainment in language and literacy. They achieve

well at Key Stage 1 in all elements of English. This is due to the systematic way the teachers analyse the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and take appropriate action. This is exemplified in the increased opportunities for writing; a weakness identified earlier as being in need of more thorough planning. Consequently, pupils' attainment in writing is well above average and the current Year 2 pupils are on course to achieve very high standards again.

- 59 Standards in speaking and listening are well above average. Pupils speak confidently, express their opinions clearly and suggest their own ideas for completing their work in all subjects. For example, in a Year 2 geography lesson, pupils were able to explain clearly the differences between Beeston and Willaston during a discussion about their features. 'Show and tell' sessions, where the pupils are asked to prepare a talk about their special interest also enhance pupils' speaking and listening skills. Pupils show confidence in speaking to the whole class in the full knowledge that both adults and pupils value their contributions. Pupils continue to make good progress in speaking and listening through Key Stage 2 and by Year 6, pupils' standards are above average. They listen with concentration in discussions and ask relevant and pertinent questions in English and in other subjects.
- 60 Standards in reading are very high at Key Stage 1. This is attributable to the effective way that reading is taught and good opportunities to practise their emerging skills. A strong focus on blending letters to make words helps pupils to make good progress in both reading and in spelling. Pupils' learning is supported well by regular reading at home. A reading log for each pupil is kept in each class. These provide a very good dialogue between parents and teachers. By Year 2, almost all pupils read fluently, accurately and with good understanding. They confidently discuss the story line, events in their books and to talk knowledgeably about the characters. Reading standards are above average by the time pupils are eleven. Younger junior age pupils read increasingly difficult and complex texts with fluency and expression. As they progress through the key stage, pupils acquire competency in skimming to gain an overall impression of the text and scanning to locate specific information from their reading. Pupils read with confidence, obvious enthusiasm and for pleasure, a variety of literature, including poetry. They appreciate complex texts such as Shakespeare's Macbeth in Year 5. Through the teachers' enthusiasm for the subject, pupils learn about what is best in English language. Pupils' progress is supported further through well programmed reading and writing activities using information and communication technology and for other subjects, such as history and geography.
- 61 At Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress in acquiring writing skills. Consequently standards are very high for their age. Pupils write for numerous purposes including stories, poems, instructions, and to record visits. In Year 2, for example, pupils write detailed accounts of their visit to Beeston castle. Many pupils organise their work into linking paragraphs. Sentences are often extended and pupils use a good range of punctuation marks correctly, including brackets. Spelling of regular and irregular words is generally accurate and handwriting is legible and fluent, often in joined script. Pupils are becoming more imaginative in the use of words and phrases, to good effect. They are aware of the reader and try to make an impact with the quality of writing.
- 62 Standards in writing are above average at eleven. Handwriting is good throughout Key Stage 2. However, pupils do not write in ink, but generally use a pencil for their work. This does not prepare them well for their work in secondary school. In Year 3, pupils understand the way prose is organised in comparison with play-script writing. They are able to show this by writing their own directions for a scene. In many lessons there is a sense of excitement as pupils experiment with phrases and forms of expression. Through their guided writing, pupils acquire writing skills that are then transferred to other subjects successfully. Good strategies to improve writing further have been put into effect following close analysis of national tests. Precision in the use of terminology and attention to detail are consistently emphasised by teachers. As a result, pupils are learning to improve the quality of their writing. During the inspection pupils made good progress in all lessons, but work sampling indicates that in Year 6 progress slows. This is largely because the assessment of pupils' work is not used sufficiently in the planning of the next lesson. Consequently, pupils are not given sufficiently challenging work and homework is not set regularly enough to extend their learning further. These weaknesses, identified at the previous inspection, have not been sufficiently addressed.

- 63 Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in all elements of English. There are very few pupils, by the age of seven, for whom attainment is below average. Their work is suitably modified, but, nevertheless, teachers make demands on them to give of their best. For example they are always included in class discussions. Learning targets are carefully planned in small achievable steps and assessments are recorded carefully and used in setting future targets.
- 64 The quality of teaching is good in almost all classes with more than half of the lessons being very good. Teachers show good subject knowledge and understanding of English and link together the skills of speaking and listening with those of reading and writing. Support staff, students and classroom assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' learning. The management of pupils is very good. In Year 6, this is achieved sensitively. Teachers keep their pupils on tasks through varied and interesting activities and skilful questioning. Teachers use discussions at the end of the lesson to summarise the key learning points and to allow pupils to share their learning with others. Pupils often evaluate each other's work sensitively. This encourages them to reflect on the quality of their own work. Teachers know their pupils well and give prompt feedback in lessons. Planning is based on the National Literacy Strategy. The information gathered is used to plan next stage of pupils' learning. Marking is regular and kept up to date but there are few comments on how the pupils can improve their work.
- 65 The subject is well led. The coordinator is enthusiastic and understands how the subject should be developed throughout the school. Planning for use of literacy skills across all subjects is carefully built into the programmes of work. Pupils learn to appreciate what is best in the English language. For example, through drama, pupils learn to work together, to understand how people feel about situations or how they lived in the past. Pupils gain confidence through these activities.

MATHEMATICS

- 66 Standards by the age of seven are well above average and are higher than the national tests of 2000 showed. More pupils are now reaching the higher level. This has lifted standards from below those of similar schools to above. Pupils are now making good progress because of the effective implementation of the numeracy strategy, the organisation of the pupils into single year group sets for mathematics and the good quality of teaching, particularly in the deputy headteacher's Year 2 group. Standards by the age of eleven are high compared to the national average and match those in similar schools. This is the result of teaching that is never less than satisfactory in Years 3 and 4 and very good teaching in Year 5. Some momentum is lost in Year 6 as the teaching does not always meet the needs of all the pupils, particularly the higher achievers, and this slows their progress. Therefore while pupils achieve well in some classes, progress over time is only average. However, pupils with special needs make very good progress and many achieve the national targets set for them. The school has made satisfactory improvements since the previous inspection.
- 67 The quality of teaching overall is good, but in one out of seven lessons seen the teaching was unsatisfactory. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress. Teachers have a good knowledge of the curriculum and how young children learn. They provide practical lessons giving pupils the opportunities to have a visual understanding of mathematics before moving onto written tasks. Teachers have very high expectations and pupils rise to the challenges set for them, particularly in Year 2 where the teacher confidently leaves the pupils to work out how to measure curved lines having only given them rulers and a ball of string. The pupils excitedly set about solving the problem without a minute to lose, showing a high degree of cooperation and a great deal of enthusiasm for the task. The quality of teaching in Years 3 and 4 is satisfactory. Pupils with differing abilities are not always fully catered for throughout the whole lesson, although higher achieving pupils are provided with additional challenges when they have finished the initial tasks. In Year 5, pupils enjoy very good teaching which has a brisk pace and meets their needs very effectively, encouraging them to develop their own thinking and be independent learners. However, the rate of progress slows in Year 6 where higher achievers are not sufficiently challenged and lessons are too often revision of work previously covered. Opportunities are missed to develop pupils' mathematical understanding. For example, one pupil suggested calculating area by introducing the concept of scale but the

teacher did not pick this up. All teachers manage their pupils well and encourage them to be self disciplined and this is fostered through the very good relationships, which have been established. Pupils usually work hard and present their work well. They are encouraged to have knowledge of their own learning and discussions at the end of lesson are used well to help children understand what they have learned.

- 68 Leadership in the subject is very good. Although the subject coordinator has only recently been appointed, she has quickly identified the weaknesses in the subject and set ambitious targets. One area of concern is assessment where there is no formally agreed system of record keeping that enables teachers to identify pupils' knowledge of concepts taught. As a result pupils are sometimes given the same level of work in lessons. This limits the progress of some of the higher achieving pupils, as there is insufficient challenge. In Years 3 and 4 teachers encourage pupils to try to meet individual targets in mathematics, and both teachers and pupils are involved in the review. However, this very good ongoing assessment is not used consistently throughout the school.

SCIENCE

- 69 Standards in science are above average by the time pupils reach the age of seven but are only average by the time pupils reach the age of eleven. Standards have improved at Key Stage 1 since the last inspection. Standards at Key Stage 2 have not improved and, although they match the national average, they are well below those of schools with a similar intake of pupils. To the school's credit, almost all pupils reach the standard expected by the age of eleven but only a quarter of the pupils reach the higher level, compared to a third in similar schools. This means that many higher achieving pupils are not fulfilling their potential. In Year 6, pupils are not given sufficiently demanding work to help them to reach these levels. The coordinator is not doing enough to drive up standards and leadership of the subject is weak.
- 70 Pupils achieve well at Key Stage 1. Almost all of the work is based on carefully structured practical investigations with many good opportunities to predict what will happen and observe the outcomes. In Year 1, for example, pupils learn to use all of their senses to explore and describe different textures, sounds and appearances. They achieve good skills in drawing accurate diagrams of what they observe, such as the human eye. In Year 2, the teacher makes considerable demands upon pupils' capacity to help to plan their own investigation. For example, they are able to decide how to find out which vehicle rolls down a slope the best. More importantly, they consider how to make the test fair and realise that each vehicle must have the same amount of push. By the age of seven, almost all pupils understand how materials can change when heated. Their correct explanations of events, such as life cycles illustrate the good progress they have made.
- 71 Pupils achieve steadily through Key Stage 2 but progress slows in Year 6. Year 3 pupils are able to classify fruits using sorting diagrams. In Year 4, they study the school environment and develop a secure understanding of habitats and food chains. However, in these classes, pupils' investigation skills are not developing as quickly as they were at Key Stage 1. This is because there are fewer opportunities for pupils to predict, observe and plan their own fair tests. In this respect, teachers do not expect enough of the pupils. In Year 5, the teacher makes a determined effort to promote these skills. For example, pupils are expected to examine soil samples carefully and think hard about how the soil can be separated from a mixture of soil and water. Through discussion and good teaching, pupils are beginning to understand difficult ideas such soil structure. Although pupils in Year 6 have regular science lessons, very few involve scientific investigations. They are not moving on quickly enough in this area. For example, they are unaware of the need to repeat experiments to eliminate the possibility of freak results or to explain unusual patterns of results. These are higher level skills but perfectly within their reach if such demands were made. In Year 6, pupils mainly complete revision exercises. This approach helps to prepare pupils for national tests at the age of eleven but all of the pupils are given the same level of work, irrespective of their different levels of attainment. More pupils could reach higher levels if the work extended them.
- 72 Teaching is good at Key Stage 1 but only satisfactory at Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 1, lessons are

Carefully planned and activities are well designed to make pupils think ahead and observe what happens. This enables pupils to search for answers to their own questions and recognise when important learning has taken place. In Years 1 and 2, teachers constantly question pupils throughout the lesson to make them think. In Year 2, for example, the teacher asked, 'When we try to find out who has made the best butter from cream, how can we be sure that the test was fair?' After careful thought, pupils suggested shaking the jar the same number of times. The teacher showed her delight at the correct answers and reminded pupils to remember to keep the lid on the jar when they carried out the experiment!

- 73 During the inspection, good teaching was seen in both Years 3 and 5. In both lessons, teachers planned a sequence of activities meticulously to help pupils to relate what they discovered to what they had first predicted. This helped pupils in Year 3 to understand the properties of conductors and insulators, and Year 5, pupils to grasp the relationship between exercise, pulse rate and body temperature. In both classes, pupils applied the scientific method, improved their reasoning skills and learnt how to record their findings. In all Key Stage 2 classes, lessons are well managed and organised efficiently, with safety in mind. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. While they are encouraged to decide for themselves how to complete their work, teachers and learning support assistants are vigilant and ready to act when help is needed. Most teachers have secure understanding of how to teach science. However, teaching is unsatisfactory in Year 6. Practical skills are seldom taught and when they are, pupils are given little scope to plan investigations for themselves. In the lesson seen, pupils were given cards that told them what to do. There were no opportunities to predict ahead, consider how to make the test fair or to discuss how to record results. Pupils usually respond well to science and become very involved in their learning. This activity was too easy, it did not challenge the pupils and some showed signs of boredom.
- 74 Pupils' learning is assessed at the end of each school year and results are given to parents. However, pupils are not assessed at the end of each unit of work. Teachers do not know exactly what pupils understand, apart from in Years 2 and 5, where assessment is probing and more regular. Literacy and numeracy skills are developed effectively in science through discussions and calculations. Information and communication technology is used occasionally to word process reports and produce graphs of the data collected.

ART

- 75 Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress and achieve standards that are well above those expected for their age. This is due to very good teaching and very effective coordination of the subject. Basic skills are developed systematically as pupils move through the school. Since the previous report, the school has improved upon the standards achieved.
- 76 Pupils are given many good opportunities to acquire skills in using a range of media, such as paint, crayon, tissue, computer images and clay. They explore pattern, texture, colour and line and learn to apply these skills in a variety of ways. In Year 1, for example, pupils examined the work of Miro and discussed how pictures could be constructed with lines of different thickness and direction. They used these ideas very effectively in producing their own 'Meg and Mog' pictures in the same style.
- 77 As the pupils move through the school they learn to work in both two and three dimensions, including using materials such as clay. A visiting artist demonstrates how artistic effects can be achieved in various media. Pupils remember what they have learnt and apply the skills in other activities. For example, in Year 4, pupils showed good techniques using fine brushes when they painted their chime bells, prior to glazing. In the art coordinator's class, pupils produce outstanding work in the styles of artists such as Monet and Salvador Dali. The very good progress continues as pupils move through the school. For example, in Year 5, pupils capture the work of Picasso very effectively in their portraiture. The Year 6 teacher uses the mathematical concept of 'The Golden Triangle' to extend pupils' understanding of form and how artists use it in their work. Pupils in this class capture the style of Leonardo da Vinci in their portraits of the Tudor monarchs.

- 78 Teaching is very good and teachers have good expertise. They select stimulating activities to engage pupils' interests that enhance their learning. The Year 3 teacher, for example, uses music that enables pupils to 'create pictures in their minds'. In an excellent lesson undertaken by the coordinator, the pupils were seen to be totally absorbed in their group work, which included batik, pattern-making using a computer program and block-printing. Teachers enhance pupils' learning through aesthetically arranged displays that stimulate and inspire the pupils to produce high quality work.
- 79 Art makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development. The coordinator leads by example and displays pupils' work of a high quality in galleries and in the local library. This creates pride in achievement and ensures that the school's profile is raised within the community.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 80 Standards in design and technology are typical of pupils of primary school age. Progress is better than was found at the time of the last inspection. This is attributable to the enthusiastic leadership offered by the coordinator. She has developed a strong scheme of work and provides valuable guidance for teachers to help them to know what to teach and how to approach their lessons. Pupils in Year 3 make particularly good progress and achieve high standards. Pupils develop a practical approach to solving design problems and their finished work contributes to the bright display around the school.
- 81 Pupils make steady progress through Key Stage 1. They undertake projects that are relevant to other subjects they are studying. In Year 1, pupils learn to interpret the David Hockney 'windows' theme in clay. They can manipulate card effectively to create boxes to illustrate the 'My Cat' story. By Year 2, pupils can use rolled paper tubes to produce structures decorated as scarecrows. Their model buggies show how they have improved in designing ability, at the same time giving them an insight into the problems faced by the builders of Beeston castle in getting their stones up the hill.
- 82 Pupils continue to achieve steadily in Year 3 and make good progress through Years 4 and 5. Pupils in Year 3 set a high standard for quality of finish, for instance in the near perfect mitre joints on their picture frames. Pupils in Year 4 make musical instruments following an African design but fitted to the materials available. They work effectively, but as one pupil said "they do not sound as good as the African ones." This is an important part of the learning about authenticity and fitness for purpose in artefacts. Year 5 pupils develop the theme of boxes by looking at quite complex examples, taken apart to see how they were fitted together in the first place. All pupils set about using their mathematical skills naturally, to measure length, draw angles and convert scales of drawings. Pupils also use and develop literacy skills well as they write their lists of materials needed, sets of instructions, or evaluations of how well the finished model turned out. The evidence for Year 6 is slimmer because most of the work is done at the end of the year, after the national tests. The planning scheme shows that a project on wheeled vehicle is to be undertaken. Pupils have on display a variety of models showing different methods of construction which they study for clues about how they were built.
- 83 Teaching is satisfactory overall. Lessons are interesting and technology is anticipated eagerly. For example, Year 2 pupils take great care with their textile weaving, having practised on a paper prototype first. The therapeutic nature of the activity was so calming that few pupils wanted to go out at playtime. Pupils respond well to teachers' good preparation and set to work quickly to get the maximum benefit of the time available. There were many examples of teachers giving particularly close attention to pupils with special educational needs, enabling them to make good progress. Pupils like to work to a high degree of accuracy. This is because teachers expect good quality from them, for instance Year 5 pupils are expected to work to the nearest millimetre. By teaching alongside other staff, the coordinator has helped teachers to develop confidence in their teaching, and guided them in the selection of topics and the finding of materials. As a result, lessons are well planned and practical. Pupils develop good concentration and the ability to organise themselves. However, there is no system of assessment, like the one used to record

computer skills. This means that teachers cannot always be certain to build on what pupils already know and can do, particularly in the case of the older ones.

GEOGRAPHY

- 84 Standards are higher than usual for pupils of their age. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, learn effectively and make good progress. Since the previous inspection, standards have improved. This is due to the good coordination of the subject, the use of carefully planned activities and to good teaching. Pupils are keen to learn and thoroughly enjoy the subject.
- 85 Pupils achieve well at Key Stage 1 where they acquire many of the skills they will need later. For example, by Year 2 almost all pupils understand that maps can be drawn in different scales and they identify and locate correctly roads, motorways, rivers, railway lines and other features. They become familiar with geographical term, such as 'features', which they explain as 'something that does not move'.
- 86 As pupils move through Key Stage 2 they continue to achieve well and build on the very good foundations laid at Key Stage 1. They extend their geographical knowledge and understanding through studying their own locality and further afield. Through their work on Kenya in Year 4, the pupils learn that climate can affect the way people live. Pupils confidently use terms such as 'export and import' in their discussions. They remember the jobs that people in that country undertake and compare these with those around Nantwich. Investigating aerial photographs, pupils use coordinates to locate different places of work. Through this work, pupils effectively employ their skills in mathematics, information and communication technology and literacy. Discussion with pupils in Year 6 reveals that they can link cause and effect. For example, they talk confidently about pollution and global warming. They have definite views about human effects and the natural environment. Their enquiry skills are being well developed.
- 87 Teaching is good and frequently very good. Almost all teachers set challenging work that makes pupils think. In Year 2, for example, the teacher introduces Ordnance Survey maps and expects pupils to understand the symbols well enough to plot features such as roads and railways. As a result, pupils learn to interpret maps correctly, which is a difficult skill for pupils of this age. Lessons are very well planned, carefully organised and move along at a quick pace. This keeps pupils interested and they often become engrossed in their activities. Teachers select stimulating methods and approaches to fire pupils' enthusiasm. Educational visits, such as those to Beeston, are very beneficial as starting points for learning and provide first hand opportunities to learn from the real world.

HISTORY

- 88 Standards for history are above average for pupils of primary school age as they were at the time of the last inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress. This is the result of enthusiastic teaching throughout the school and the rich curriculum that has been introduced since the previous inspection. As a result pupils of all ages are inquisitive and develop a good understanding of the changes that have occurred in people's lives throughout the ages. However, in Year 6 where the subject is reduced to a copying exercise of timelines and battle dates, pupils make insufficient progress and do not build on their good previous knowledge or understanding.
- 89 The quality of teaching overall is good and sometimes very good, but unsatisfactory in Year 6. The teachers generally have good subject knowledge and use resources well to make the subject live for the pupils. Usually teachers ask searching questions of their pupils to encourage them to think and provide activities, which require pupils to read into text and make direct comparisons with today. In Year 3, pupils write an inventory of their own homes and compare it to an inventory from Tudor times. Using this, they deduce the occupation of the person and whether he was rich or poor based

on their prior knowledge of Tudor homes. Almost all teachers have very high expectations of their pupils' behaviour and work. Pupils work hard and concentrate on interesting and challenging activities, helping each other quietly to complete tasks.

- 90 The school provides a rich curriculum that is unusual in its provision of a residential visit for Year 2 pupils. This is the focus of a great deal of historical research into the buildings and lives of people in the village of Beeston. For older pupils in Year 5, the visit to York is equally beneficial and covers a range of periods of history through art, architecture and artefacts in museums. The quality of work that results from these visits is exceptional. The subject makes a strong contribution to the pupils' social and cultural development. Management of the subject is good but as yet there are no formally agreed assessment procedures to record the pupils' progress in skills development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 91 Standards are in line with those expected for the pupils' ages at the end of both key stages. Standards were judged to have been above average at the time of the last inspection. This does not mean that standards have fallen, more that standards expected of schools have risen rapidly as schools develop their information and communication technology facilities. The school has kept up with the pace of change within the limitation of the classroom computers available. Teachers have been determined to maintain the subject's high profile and make the best possible use of classroom computers. This is attributable to the enthusiastic leadership offered by the coordinator who has provided valuable guidance for teachers. Teachers have grown in confidence with this subject and are now anxious to use the school's new computer suite as soon as it is ready. The subject continues to play an important part in the school curriculum and pupils are developing a good awareness of how useful the computer is in learning about other subjects.
- 92 Pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1. Teachers use a rota system to ensure that all pupils get an equal turn. In Year 1, pupils develop sound keyboard skills while writing simple text on screen. By Year 2, pupils have become proficient at moving the mouse around to enter information into a simple database, and use this to produce bar charts. They write more extended pieces and they can produce vivid pictures using the tools in an art package.
- 93 Pupils achieve well in Year 3, and make steady progress through Years 4, 5 and 6. Standards are high in Year 3. Pupils listen carefully to the teacher's instructions and move from skill to skill within a single lesson. They can find their stored history work, select a graphic which they have previously drawn, insert it into the text, change its size, move it around till they find the best place for it, and then save and print it. In Year 4, pupils learn about repeating patterns in art, and how much easier it is to reproduce them using the computer. By Year 6, pupils can use the technology to help them understand difficult mathematics concepts such as average, mean, median and mode. They are beginning to learn about the Internet and how search engines are used. In this, as in most activities, the pupils use and extend their literacy skills well when they have to interpret program instructions.
- 94 Teaching is sound overall but good in Year 3. Lessons are purposeful and the selection of material is useful to pupils. Teachers give clear instructions and demonstrations so that the pupils feel confident that they know how to proceed. Teachers cope well with the limitations of using one, or occasionally two, computers. Mostly they take care that the pupils are settled comfortably and can see, but at times when pupils are standing too tightly clustered around the monitor, the ones at the back find it difficult to keep their attention on the activity. Pupils respond well to the teachers' careful preparation, and lessons run smoothly. The care, which some teachers take to scan pupils' work at home, in order to have it ready as a file on disk ready for pupils' use, pays off in the awe and wonder shown. Pupils are amazed that their own art work which is now lodged in the computer's memory.
- 95 Teachers value the pupils' efforts and take the trouble to display it effectively, for instance the Year 5 digital class photographs, or the Year 6 data handling project. Pupils respond well by paying

attention in lessons. This is because all pupils know that they will get a fair turn. Pupils who have special educational needs receive the help they need to learn skills and understand difficult ideas. This helps them to make very good progress. Teachers share a sense of fun, and are not above having their own mouse control skill denigrated.

- 96 The coordinator provides good leadership and by working alongside them, has helped other teachers to develop confidence in their teaching. As a result, lessons are well planned and relevant. She encourages teachers to set challenging tasks and expect good results, and is beginning to look at the matching of tasks to pupils' current ability. This will become a crucial feature when the computer suite is operating and the effect of the advanced skills of pupils who work on computers at home becomes fully apparent. The simple, effective system of recording pupils' developing skills shows a widening gap in pupils' ability already. This assessment procedure is strong because it involves the pupils in understanding their own learning. It is operating well in Years 3 and 4, and as suggested in the previous inspection report, at Key Stage 1. It is unfortunately not consistently used with older pupils. As yet, computers are not used for the design part of construction technology, and older pupils are not encouraged sufficiently to select which computer applications best fit the work they do in other subjects.

MUSIC

- 97 Standards in music are high, particularly at Key Stage 1 and older pupils in the percussion band achieve very high standards. Standards are higher than at the time of the last inspection. This is attributable to the enthusiastic leadership offered by the coordinator. She has provided valuable guidance for teachers to help them to know what to teach and how to approach their lessons. The subject plays an important part in the life of the school and pupils are developing a love of music.
- 98 Pupils achieve well at Key Stage 1. The coordinator takes all of the infant classes and ensures that pupils acquire a good understanding of how music can be created, using voices and instruments. In Year 1, pupils develop good listening skills. They pick up new rhythms very quickly and invent and play their own interesting musical patterns. By Year 2, pupils begin to write down simple compositions using coloured dots so that their pieces can be played again later.
- 99 Pupils continue to achieve well in Year 3, and make at least steady progress through Years 4, 5 and 6. Standards are high in Year 3. Pupils listen carefully to different pieces of music, detect the mood and describe their impressions vividly. For example, after hearing an excerpt from a composition by Wagner, one pupil very appropriately pictured a funeral procession. In Year 4, pupils make their own musical instruments and begin to use conventional symbols to record their African style music. Recorder groups enhance the good singing in school assemblies. The large percussion band performs to a high level and pupils learn to play their parts just as they would in an orchestra. By Year 6 pupils use musical terms such as pitch and tempo comfortably and talk knowledgeably about composers and their work.
- 100 Teaching is good. Lessons are lively, music is fun and the selection of material is appealing to pupils. For example, Year 3 pupils take great delight in performing their own version of a hand jive. Pupils respond well to teachers' enthusiasm and often comment on how much they enjoy music. This is partly because all pupils are given instruments to play, which keeps them involved. Pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to join in and teachers value their contributions. This helps them to make good progress. The coordinator has helped other teachers to develop confidence in their teaching. As a result, lessons are well planned and purposeful. Pupils are proud of their achievements. They know their work is of good quality. This is because teachers set challenging tasks and expect good results. In Year 2, for example, the teacher asked pupils to hold their part whilst the other half of the class played a different rhythm; a difficult skill for this age of pupil. Music is central to the life of the school and is frequently used to create the atmosphere for special occasions. The only weakness is the lack of assessment. Teachers do not have a method of assessing and recording the progress pupils make. This means that teachers cannot always be certain to build on what pupils already know and can do.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 101 Standards have improved since the previous inspection when they were judged to be average. Standards for physical education are above average for pupils at the age of seven years old and eleven years old. Pupils, including those with special educational needs make good progress in their development of creative and physical skills. This is because of the well-planned curriculum that incorporates dance, gymnastics, and games, and enthusiastic teaching. Pupils attend swimming lessons in Years 3 and 4, and almost all meet national requirements at the end of this time.
- 102 The quality of teaching is good overall, and was very good or excellent in two out of five lessons seen. The headteacher provides a very good example for class teachers in the teaching of skills and provides very good support in lessons. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge overall, and in a Year 4 lesson the teacher provided expert coaching in the development of creative dance. Pupils are encouraged to assess their own performance and observe each other, making sensitive but critical suggestions on how to improve performance. As a result of the good use of demonstrations, they make good progress during lessons and refine their movements.
- 103 The leadership of the subject is strong and the enthusiasm of the coordinator has enabled the school to make very good use of external specialists to coach football and cricket. There is a wide range of extra curricular sport that is supported well by pupils, staff and parents. The school accommodation is good and used at weekends for parents' football and coaching sessions, and it is supplemented by community facilities such as the indoor cricket facilities at the local college. The subject makes a very positive impact on the pupils' social development as they learn a sense of fair play, team culture and the enjoyment of taking part. This is reflected in the good behaviour and attitudes observed in all the lessons.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 104 By the ages of seven and eleven pupils reach the standards outlined in the religious education syllabus provided for Cheshire schools. This was the picture at the time of the last inspection. Standards have remained at the same level because teachers have to plan their lessons from the Cheshire Agreed Syllabus that is provided for all schools. It is too general and does not spell out what pupils should learn in each year group. The coordinator has been recently appointed and has not yet had time to make improvements. However, she has made a bright start in planning what each year group will learn. She is also trying to remedy the lack of assessment so that teachers will be able to measure how much progress pupils are making. Additionally, she is trying to improve the level of resources because there are barely enough to go round.
- 105 Pupils make steady progress through the school but achievement is different depending on the class pupils are in. In Year 1, for example, pupils achieve well. Work from last year shows an impressive range of topics covered and the amount of good quality written work is very creditable for pupils for this age. As a result, Year 1 pupils have a good knowledge of bible stories from both the old and the new testaments. There is less evidence of pupils' written work covered in Year 2 and 3 but in Year 4 pupils make visits to the Jewish and museum and invite clergy from local churches to visit the school and talk about their work. These experiences are valuable and help pupils to gain a clear understanding of Christianity and Judaism. Pupils are beginning to achieve well in Year 5. In this class, there is strong focus on learning from religion. Pupils often debate moral issues drawn from religious events, such as letting down a friend in the way that some of Jesus' disciples betrayed and denied him. In Year 6, pupils acquire a good knowledge of Islam. By the age of eleven they can identify correctly, the names of religious leaders, places of worship, sacred books and the major beliefs surrounding Christianity, Judaism and Islam.
- 106 Teaching is satisfactory overall, but good in Year 5. The introductory part of lessons is often good. Teachers use imaginative approaches to capture pupils' interests and help them to understand important ideas. For example, in Year 2, the teacher persuaded one pupil, who had been recently

baptised, to answer questions posed by other pupils. This was very fruitful because most pupils thought that being baptised meant making the sign of a cross on a baby's head with holy water. They were fascinated to hear that older children and adults are sometimes immersed in a baptism pool. Lessons are well prepared and resources are often used effectively. In Year 4, the teacher used photographs of her own family's special journey to Northumberland to illustrate the meaning of a pilgrimage. In both lessons, pupils were asked to think about their own experiences of baptism or journeys at home and bring evidence into school. This is worthwhile homework. Teachers are very interested in what pupils say and encourage them to ask questions and make their own observations. For example, after hearing about Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem, a Year 4 pupil said, 'Mary should not have made such a gruelling journey in her condition' and asked whether it could have harmed the baby. Such opportunities are a very good feature of the work of the school. They help pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, to speak confidently, to justify their opinions and considerably extend their spiritual awareness.

- 107 Teachers have more difficulty in setting suitable tasks to follow up their whole class discussions. These sessions are not as successful for two reasons. Firstly, the range of tasks is too narrow and too often depends on writing or colouring pictures. Pupils enjoy the discussions and generally have good attitudes to learning but find writing for its own sake tedious and their concentration and enthusiasm slip. Secondly, the tasks set are sometimes undemanding. For example, in one lesson pupils were asked to colour a picture of a candle. This did little to extend their learning, particularly the learning of the higher achieving pupils. By contrast, in Year 5 pupils were asked to discuss and explain their views about what it means to be a good friend. They were absorbed. They discovered that other people hold very serious views that may well differ from their own. Such experiences make a valuable contribution to helping pupils to understand what it means to have faith and to acquire a respect for the beliefs of others.