

## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **PIREHILL FIRST SCHOOL**

Stone, Staffordshire

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124164

Headteacher: Mrs. M. Griffin

Reporting inspector: Mrs. B. Iles  
12000

Dates of inspection: 4/12/00 – 7/12/00

Inspection number: 225181  
Inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Pirehill First School Tilling Drive Walton Stone Staffordshire
Postcode:	ST15 0AA
Telephone number:	01785 354041
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr S Felthouse
Date of previous inspection:	13/05/96

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs. B. Iles 12000	Registered inspector	Areas of learning for children under five	What sort of school is it?
		English	Standards: the school's results and pupils' achievements.
		Art	How well are pupils taught?
		Design and Technology	How well is the school led and managed?
Mr. K. Greateox A09545	Lay inspector		Attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
Mr. B. Aldridge 17454	Team inspector	Special educational needs	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
		Music	
		Religious Education	
		Mathematics	
Mrs. M. Debrou 27206	Team inspector	Equal opportunities	
		English as an additional language	
		Science	
		Geography	
		History	
		Physical education	

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Inspection Quality Division  
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Pirehill First School serves the local community of Walton in Stone, Staffordshire. It is about the same size as most primary phase schools. Two hundred and twenty six pupils attend the school aged from four to nine. Sixty-four children were under the age of six at the time of the inspection. Just over 5 per cent of pupils have free school meals. Seven pupils come from backgrounds beyond Europe and have English as an additional language. Sixteen pupils are on the register of special educational needs, which is below average. Four pupils have statements at the current time.

The pupils are admitted to the reception class at the start of the year in which they become five. There is a range of attainment on entry, but overall it is similar to the local average. The majority of pupils live in the surrounding area although a growing number comes from outside the reserved area as the school grows in popularity. Most families live in privately owned homes with a small and increasing proportion living in rented housing. The proportion of parents who have higher qualifications is about average.

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

This is a very effective school with more strengths than weaknesses. Standards are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics at the ages of seven and nine. Standards in science are above average overall. The more able pupils are well challenged. The teaching is very good in the infants and the Year 4 class, which enables the pupils to make very good progress. The school is very well managed by the headteacher, and governors give very good support. The strong community links and the school's commitment to improvement enable the pupils to develop a love of learning and awareness of citizenship. The school provides a very good quality of education and very good value for money.

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

- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are well above average by the ages of seven and nine.
- The pupils are well challenged and the proportion achieving the higher levels is well above most schools by the age of seven.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership and a clear direction for the school's work.
- The school's provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is of the highest standard.
- The nurturing of a sense of citizenship and links between the school and community are significant strengths

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

- Standards in information and communication technology.
- The small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching in the juniors.
- There is no safe outdoor play provision for pupils in the foundation stage.

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

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

The school was last inspected in May 1996. Since then, the quality of teaching has improved in the infants and Year 4 and consequently good progress has been made in raising standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Assessments are used well to monitor progress and in the planning of subsequent teaching and learning. The issue regarding the challenging of more able pupils, which was raised in the last inspection report, has been addressed effectively and a higher proportion of pupils now achieves the higher levels by the ages of seven and nine. A lack of curriculum planning was a weakness identified in the last report. The planning and monitoring arrangements are now detailed, thorough and a strength of the school. Very good progress has been made to improve the provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and these aspects are now significant strengths. Opportunities for the pupils to develop awareness of the importance of citizenship and to

take responsibility are now of the highest standard. Good partnership with the parents supports the pupils' learning well. The capacity of the school to continue to improve is excellent.

### STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
Reading	A*	B	A	A
Writing	A	A	A	A
Mathematics	A	A	B	C

**Key**

well above average    A

above average        B

average                C

below average        D

well below average    E

Trends over the last four years show standards are consistently above average. More pupils than average attain the higher levels. Variations in standards are due to differences in the nature of pupils' special needs within cohorts. When compared to similar schools, pupils' performance is well above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. The most recent teacher assessments in science show attainment is above average and results show improvement from the previous year. Well over a third of the pupils attained the higher levels in these subjects in the 2000 tests. The teacher assessments also show the proportions of pupils who achieve the expected levels are very high in reading and aspects of science. Achievements exceeded the targets set by the school, which were based on prior attainment.

The inspection evidence shows that the standards attained by seven and nine year olds are well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science. The level of achievement in mathematics is higher in the current Year 2 than in the previous cohort. In religious education, the pupils' achievements exceed the age-related expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Standards in information and communication technology are below average; the weaknesses are due to the lack of direct teaching of the subject and the inadequacy of the organisation of provision currently available to support teaching and learning. Attainment in art, design and technology and music exceed the age-related expectations. In history and geography, the standards match the age-related expectations. Standards in physical education could not be judged due to adverse weather conditions, which caused extensive damage to the facilities. The children in the foundation stage make very good progress and by the end of the reception year their achievements exceed the expectations of the Early Learning Goals. The pupils continue to make good progress in the infants, satisfactory progress in Year 3 and very good progress in Year 4. The progress of the higher attaining pupils is a strong feature. By the ages of seven and nine, the pupils' achievements show good improvement when measured against their prior attainment. Expectations in the infants and Year 4 class are high and the quality of the teaching of literacy and numeracy is very good in these classes.

### PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils love coming to school and enjoy their lessons and playtimes
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The behaviour of the pupils in lessons and in the playground is of a very high standard.
Personal development and relationships	The relationships between staff and pupils are very strong and promote trust, confidence and self-esteem.

Attendance	Attendance is above average.
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The care shown to pupils is very good. The pupils' strong relationships with the staff enable them to understand their strengths and weaknesses and to meet the high expectations made of them. Consequently all pupils experience success in learning.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-9 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very 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.*

In the foundation stage, half the lessons seen during the inspection were excellent and the other half were very good. Eight out of ten lessons in the infant classes were at least very good and one in five was excellent. The remaining lessons were at least satisfactory. The teaching in the juniors is satisfactory in the Year 3 classes and very good in the Year 4 class. Two unsatisfactory lessons were observed in the teaching of eight-year-olds. Weaknesses in the teacher's subject knowledge and management of the pupils slow the rate of progress for this age group. The teaching of literacy is strong and the reason why standards are very high in reading and writing. There is more variation in the quality of the teaching of numeracy, but it is very good for five, seven and nine year olds. High expectations, good subject expertise and knowledge of the pupils support their learning well. The pupils who are more able and those with special educational needs receive very good support. All pupils receive very good support from classroom assistants and helpers and this has a positive effect on their learning.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced and very well planned.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This provision is very good and enables the pupils to make very good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision is excellent and makes this aspect of the school's work is a significant strength.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The pupils are very well cared for.

The partnership with parents and the local community is a significant strength and supports the curriculum and the development of a sense of responsibility and citizenship very effectively. Consequently, there is a very clear understanding of school aims and how they can be achieved through partnership. This has a very positive influence on the pupils' attitudes to school as a focal point of the local community. There is an excellent range of extra-curricular activities that enhances the school's general provision. The members of staff know the pupils and their families very well, and the child protection arrangements are very good.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides inspirational leadership and is very well supported by the deputy head and staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are very committed and give very good support to the headteacher.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The procedures are detailed and thorough.
The strategic use of resources	Very good use is made of the school's resources including grants to improve provision.

The headteacher steers school improvement very effectively. The priorities, based on detailed and thorough evaluation, are clearly and accurately defined. The principles of best value are applied effectively and the school very successfully bids for funding to secure improvements. The recent floods have caused extensive damage to the hall floor, but the situation has been very well managed. The levels of staffing and resources are sufficient to support the pupils' learning effectively. The weakness in provision for the foundation stage of learning is the lack of a safe outdoor play area.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The children love school and enjoy their learning.</li> <li>• The good progress their children make.</li> <li>• The children are expected to work hard.</li> <li>• The pupils' behaviour is very good</li> <li>• The school's work with the community is very valuable.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More information about their children's progress and</li> <li>• more extra curricular activities.</li> <li>• A small minority do not feel the school is well managed.</li> </ul>

The inspectors support the parents' very positive responses to the school's work. The annual written reports provide good information about the children's learning and set targets for further improvement. The "open door" policy enables parents to talk to the teachers about their children's progress at times other than the termly open evenings. There is a wide range of extra curricular activities, exceeding that of most first schools, which enables the pupils to develop high levels of community awareness. The school is very well led and managed and sensitive issues and emergencies are handled effectively, taking due account of local guidance and issues of confidentiality.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

#### The school's results and achievements

1. In the 2000 tests for seven-year-olds, the pupils achieved standards in reading and writing, which were well above average nationally and well above those of similar schools. In mathematics, the results were above average and about the same as similar schools. Trends over time are in line with the national trend and show that standards are improving. While there was a dip in the trend in mathematics in 2000, the inspection evidence shows that standards in mathematics in the current cohort of seven year-olds are well above average. Over a third of the pupils now achieve the higher level 3 in English and mathematics, which is well above average. The teacher assessments for science also show standards are above average with the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels being well above average. While the performance of boys and girls exceeds the national averages by age seven, the boys perform better than the girls in reading and writing.
2. Standards have improved in reading and writing. The teacher assessments in reading now show very high achievement, and writing, described as being satisfactory in the last report, is now well above average. In mathematics and science, standards continue to be above average, and particular strengths are evident in the high proportion of pupils achieving level 3 in number, algebra, shape, space and measures. Standards are also very high in aspects of science, such as the study of life and living processes and materials and their properties. The successful implementation of the national literacy and numeracy strategies is supporting the raising of standards well and challenging targets have been exceeded.
3. Since the school was last inspected, good progress has been made in raising standards, with particular gains in the proportions of pupils who achieve the higher levels at seven and nine. The need to improve provision for more able pupils, which was highlighted in the previous report, has been addressed well. Standards in art, design and technology and music are also higher and in most other subjects satisfactory standards have been maintained. Although standards in ICT are now judged to be unsatisfactory, national changes have raised expectations, which are now significantly different from the time of the last inspection. The curriculum for information and communication technology is well planned, but not directly taught with sufficient regularity to enable the pupils to make the progress they should. The school has not yet received the funds and training, organised through a national programme, to support teaching and learning in this subject. The school improvement plan has already prioritised this curriculum area for development and it is in a similar position to many other schools at the present time. New equipment and staff training will enable the school to timetable the direct teaching of the subject and address. **This key issue.**
4. The children start school at the age of four. The examination of baseline assessment results, show a broad range of attainment and variations between cohorts. Overall, the children's achievements are similar to those in most local schools in the important areas of literacy and numeracy. They make very good progress in the foundation classes, infants and Year 4. They achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment by the age of seven. There is a slight dip in the rate of progress of children in the Year 3 classes at the present time. Although the teaching is satisfactory, it is not as strong as in other classes. This is due to minor weaknesses in the teacher's subject knowledge and the inadequate management of the pupils' exuberant behaviour. Consequently, the pace of lessons is less rigorous. The school's monitoring of the teaching and learning has already identified this inconsistency and is providing appropriate support.
5. From the earliest stages of learning, the pupils are encouraged to express their ideas and to record them neatly in a range of ways. The quality of their writing is a significant strength of the school. The

youngest children are given regular opportunities to write independently, their mark making is valued, and they consequently become confident to attempt to write. The pupils in Year 1 apply the phonic skills taught in the literacy sessions to their work in other subjects and the majority construct simple sentences accurately. By the age of seven, the pupils attempt to spell unknown words and put together sequences of sentences that are descriptive and interesting. The pupils' spelling is mainly accurate and the quality of their handwriting is very good. These skills are extended well in the juniors. The pupils are taught to analyse the styles of different authors and various types of text and to understand their appropriateness for different readerships and purposes. The teachers enable their pupils to plan and construct their writing by looking at the use of language to create effects. For example, Year 4 pupils examined the work of Roald Dahl and learned the difference between play scripts and prose; they then used a broad range of adjectives and adverbs to develop a character sketch of their own. Punctuation is used competently and colons, speech marks, exclamation and question marks are evident in the pupils' work. The pupils confidently attempt to spell difficult words and the results are phonetically plausible, at times reflecting the local dialect. However, this characteristic is not prevalent as the teachers usually use language precisely to ensure that the pupils' speech is accurate. Standards in speaking and listening are also well above average because the teachers have high expectations of their pupils to contribute orally to lessons. There are good opportunities for the pupils to speak to audiences in assemblies, in making presentations to their classes and during the evaluation of each other's work in whole class sessions.

6. These very high standards are evident across the curriculum. Pupils of all ages are eager and confident to contribute to discussions using the specific language that has been taught. For example, in the literacy hour they refer to text to exemplify their understanding of terms such as calligram, phoneme, digraph and simile to back up their opinions. Their skills exceed those of most nine-year-olds. A very good example of this work was seen in a Year 4 lesson when more able pupils analysed the text of C.S. Lewis and his character descriptions of Edmund and the queen. Standards are high because the teachers are enthusiastic and express their personal love of literature. Detailed planning, which ensures tasks are well matched to pupils' needs, results in good learning. The teachers make clear reference to the schemes of work in their daily lessons and their very good curriculum planning enables them to build successively on the knowledge and skills taught at each stage.
7. A further reason why standards have risen in literacy and numeracy is the varied and interesting opportunities that the pupils have to use their skills and knowledge in other subjects. This can be seen, for example, when they are making lists of resources, writing directions and measuring materials in design and technology, report writing and measuring in science and writing letters to members of the local community as part of the work on citizenship. The pupils understand the relevance of their learning to daily life and this brings excitement and purpose to their work.
8. In mathematics, the pupils are taught to identify patterns whilst classifying numbers according to their counting order. Progress is swift because the teachers correct errors and set very high standards in the level of accuracy required. In the infants, mental work is very well developed. The pupils in Year R/1 count forwards and backwards beyond 20, and replace 'stolen' numbers on the number line. The very high expectations of the pupils to succeed results in high achievement. The pupils in Year 2 build well on this learning by playing games such as money bingo, competently doubling the amounts shown on the teacher's cards. Higher attainers use various methods to make up sums of money with specific groups of coins. They apply addition and subtraction skills well to identify methods of solving problems. In Year 3 and Year 3/4 the pace of learning is slower because the teaching, while satisfactory, is not as rigorous. In the Year 4 class, the teaching is very good and consequently the pupils' rates of learning accelerate. They have a very good understanding of percentages and use fractions to describe proportions at levels beyond those of most nine-year-olds. In practical tasks, the pupils mentally calculated bargain prices by using the percentage reduction of goods.
9. The pupils make good progress in science in the infants, particularly in developing their investigative skills. The Year 2 pupils relate their work on electricity when discussing how Christmas tree lights work. They explain that the circuit is broken when the lights are switched off and make good use of technical vocabulary, such as plug, switch, wire, crocodile clip and appliance. By the age of nine, the pupils carry out investigations, for example, to predict and determine the absorbency of different papers.

The pupils are confident to test ideas and are encouraged to learn from their errors. This was evident in the Year 3 and 4 class when a pupil explained that his group might not have been careful enough when measuring the elasticity of tights. He recognised the results were different from the rest of the class and realised they would need to be more accurate next time. However pupils have insufficient opportunities to devise and plan their own experiments.

10. Standards in religious education are appropriate for pupils aged seven and eleven. They have a sound knowledge of the life of Jesus and of well-known stories from the Bible. The pupils in Year 2 show an increasing familiarity with the Christmas story and talk about the angel that was sent to Mary and how Joseph was told of the baby Jesus in a dream. By the age of nine the pupils understand that Christians see Jesus as the light of the world and believe He came to light the way so that other might see. They are also aware of other religions and the very good use that is made of educational visits supports their learning well. They see their world as a group of communities, all of which deserve to be valued and appreciated in their own right. By the time they leave the school, the pupils are aware of a range of different world faiths and show respect for the different beliefs and values of others. Religious education makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
11. The progress of the pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school devises individual education plans that have appropriate and clear targets that address the pupils' difficulties effectively and provide a focus for improvement. A key factor in their rates of progress is the very skilled work undertaken by learning support assistants. The self-esteem of these pupils and the confidence with which they tackle their tasks is the direct result of the value that the teachers and learning assistants place on their efforts. This confidence helps pupils to maintain their enthusiasm.

Further details about standards in other subjects can be found in subject paragraphs in Part D of the report.

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

12. The pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. From the earliest stages of their time in school, they are well motivated and say that they like school. In lessons, they are enthusiastic about their work and eager to succeed. The pupils sustain very high levels of interest and concentration because the teachers plan tasks that interest and motivate them. They take great pride and enjoyment in producing work of good quality and are encouraged to express their ideas and opinions. They respond to the high expectations made of them with confidence, enthusiasm and enjoyment.
13. The pupils' behaviour is consistently very good, and this confirms the views of parents. When they come to school, in lessons, assemblies, at lunchtimes and at playtimes, very high standards of behaviour are achieved. They move around the school in a quiet and orderly manner and have a very clear understanding of the standards expected of them. During the inspection, there was no evidence of bullying or lack of respect for school property. The school's positive strategies to manage behaviour are very effective and there have been no exclusions. The pupils with special educational needs show unbounded enthusiasm for their work. They are cheerful and excited and relish the challenges set for them by their teachers. The interesting, and at times inspirational, lessons help to promote very high levels of interest and concentration. This means that behaviour is always very good because pupils are so keen to carry on with their work and to please their teachers.
14. Relationships in the school are excellent. The pupils form extremely constructive relationships with each other and with adults. They work co-operatively, listen with interest and strive to understand the views of others. On several occasions, pupils spontaneously applauded the work of their classmates, for example, when singing number rhymes in the reception class and when a group of lower attaining pupils in Year 3 shared their play reading with the class. The pupils play together well and the lunchtime playworker is particularly successful in promoting interesting activities and games. All pupils consistently demonstrate patience, tolerance and understanding for others.
15. The pupils' personal development has improved dramatically since the last report and is now excellent. The school provides a wide range of opportunities for the pupils to show initiative and take responsibility. They regularly perform jobs within the classroom and around the school, for example,

taking registers to the school office and ensuring their classrooms are maintained neatly and tidily. As they progress through the school greater levels of independence are encouraged. Older pupils regularly help the younger ones in a range of ways, for example, in the dining hall and in the playground. Recently, the pupils acted as 'managers for the day' at the local supermarket. During the inspection, a book of children's work was launched. The pupils represented their school proudly, meeting the local mayor to receive their awards. Three pupils were interviewed live on the local radio station and presented their poems and stories. All pupils are eager to be involved in fund raising activities.

16. Attendance at the school remains above the national average and is good. There is no unauthorised absence. Punctuality is very good. Virtually all pupils are punctual, many arriving early. They come happily to school, eager and ready to learn, thereby enabling the school to make a prompt and efficient start to the day.
17. The pupils' excellent relationships and attitudes to learning, their very high standards of behaviour and the vastly improved opportunities for their personal development are important strengths of the school. All these factors have a beneficial influence on the quality of the teaching and learning.

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

18. The teaching in the infants' classes and Year 4 is a strength of the school. Almost a quarter of lessons seen were either excellent or very good. A further seven out of ten lessons were good and the remainder were mainly satisfactory. Two unsatisfactory lessons were observed in the classes of Year 3 pupils. The high proportion of excellent and very good teaching in the infants and Year 4 is the reason why the pupils make very good progress in their learning. Overall, the teachers have very good subject knowledge across the breadth of the curriculum and their lessons are planned in detail to ensure a very good balance of review, extension and reinforcement. The lesson objectives are very precise and consistently displayed to remind pupils of the focus of their learning during each lesson. Consequently, the pupils are very clear about the expectations made of them.
19. A feature of the excellent teaching observed in Years 1, 2 and 4 was the consistently positive way that the teachers talked to pupils. When introducing them to new ideas they take great care to describe the purpose of the learning and link it to the pupils' experiences. This makes learning exciting and enjoyable and results in very positive attitudes to work. The teachers and classroom assistants value the responses of all pupils and this generates the very high levels of trust and respect and establishes very good relationships. An example was evident in a literacy lesson in Year 3. The pupils were eager to listen to the teacher and to learn how to recognise prose from a playscript. The teacher's good explanations and questioning of individual pupils enabled them to respond positively to identify differences and to work together. They enjoyed the teacher's humorous approach to the text, and subsequent opportunities to model his expressive language and present their interpretations to the class. They aspired to read with the same fluency and expression, and by the end of the lesson made good progress in identifying the key differences between these types of texts.
20. All pupils received the appropriate level of challenge and support to secure success. The less able pupils contributed to the whole class discussion and presented their play readings, having received very good support from the classroom assistant. The spontaneous applause of other pupils showed how they are taught to value the contributions of others to their learning.
21. Inspiring features of the very good teaching are the teachers' desire to see the children succeed and their commitment to ensuring that all pupils achieve their best. In the teaching of the additional literacy strategy, the classroom assistant reinforced directions continuously and asked searching questions to support self-evaluation. This enabled pupils to recognise the many and varied 'igh' sounds within a passage of text and at the same time provided opportunities to extend their speaking and reading skills. The ability of the pupils to attempt difficult tasks independently is a measure of the confidence they have to make mistakes and learn from the evaluative comments of the adults who teach them and their friends. Well-focussed training has enabled staff to achieve consistency in the strategies they use, and this is a significant strength of the provision.

22. The teaching of literacy is strong and leads to the achievement of high standards. Specific details of the qualities of teaching literacy can be found in the English paragraph, but the approaches used to develop speaking, listening and the application of reading and writing to other subjects enable the pupils to understand the importance of these aspects of learning. Consequently, they read with expression, write to engage the interest of the reader and speak clearly to maintain the interest of the listener. The teachers' very good use of technical vocabulary supports the learning very well. By the age of nine, the pupils use terms such as digraph, alliteration and paragraph in their self evaluations and the more able pupils work with text, creating character profiles and accounts of historical events, such as the dissolution of the monasteries, in vivid detail.
23. The pace of the lessons is brisk. The teachers balance the level of new knowledge, skill development and interactive questioning to secure progress. This results in all pupils being fully engaged in their tasks. The pupils know that they will be expected to achieve specific targets and to contribute to the whole class sessions. The teachers make very good links between the various subjects, ensuring that learning is meaningful and the pupils apply their skills and knowledge across the curriculum. This is evident, for example, in reinforcing the importance of directions in design and technology and in the interpretation of factual information in history. They provide opportunities for features of writing introduced through the literacy hour to be practised, such as note taking, letter and poetry writing. The very good subject knowledge of teachers in subjects such as music and art has a positive influence on learning. In a lesson in Years 3 and 4, the teacher skilfully enabled the pupils to use tuned percussion instruments to compose repeating patterns. Because the teacher enabled the pupils to know when phrases of music should end, they improved their performances during the lesson and achieved standards above those of most pupils of this age range. Similarly, in a Year 4 art lesson, the pupils improved their awareness of form and colour because the teacher required them to observe carefully and to select a portion of a picture as the focus of their work. The pupils become skilful in describing the outcomes of their work because the intentions of their learning are clear and they recognise the progress they have made, both within the lessons and over time. Teachers' comments are supportive and evaluative. The setting of time related targets for learning has a positive effect on the standards achieved. However, in subjects other than English the written marking is inconsistent from one class to another. There are very good examples of marking that indicates how successful the pupils have been and what they need to do next to improve. This practice now needs to become consistent across all classes. Similarly, although the majority of teachers use Standard English very well, a small proportion does not consistently apply this strategy to their teaching, and at times uses dialect which is inappropriate in formal situations. This is one of the main differences between teaching which is very good and that which is satisfactory.
24. The focus on reading stories from world religions and the performance of these stories in assemblies supports the pupils' cultural development and understanding very well. Teachers make good use of stories such as Baboushka and the traditional Christian stories of Christmas to enable pupils to act out the roles of people from different cultures. These opportunities to compare and contrast different beliefs and to respect different interpretations are strengths of the provision.
25. The teaching in the classes of Year 3 pupils is mainly satisfactory but at times good, for example, in the lessons for literacy and information and communication technology. However, in contrast to the infants and Year 4, the lessons generally do not have the same consistent degree of rigour. Two unsatisfactory lessons were observed in the teaching of religious education and history. In these lessons, the teachers had insecure subject knowledge and in one instance the pupils' exuberance for learning was inadequately channelled and the class management was inappropriate. Consequently, opportunities to direct and develop the children's interest and motivation were lost. **This is a key issue.**
26. Other minor weaknesses were observed when the teachers' expectations in regard to the pupils' speaking skills were not sufficiently high to support progress at a faster rate.
27. The quality of the teaching for the pupils with special educational needs is very good, and the work of the learning support assistants is at times exemplary. The teachers and learning assistants maintain extremely close links; they are very well prepared before lessons and have very thorough feedbacks at the end of sessions. This enables them to track the pupils' progress carefully to ensure that the next lesson builds very well on the success of the last. The very high quality teaching and support that is

clearly focussed on pupils' needs maintains the very good rates of these pupils' progress throughout the school.

28. The quality of the teaching has improved overall since the last inspection. There is now a much higher proportion of very good and excellent teaching and only a very small number of unsatisfactory lessons were observed. The school's monitoring programme has already promoted the features of high quality teaching, identified the issues raised for development and taken steps to improve them.

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

29. The school's curriculum is very good. It contains the subjects of the primary National Curriculum and religious education and is very strongly influenced by the value the school places on pupils working in the community. The school has taken great pains to ensure that the curriculum is broad and balanced across the various subjects and that the learning experiences of each year group are carefully considered at the planning stage. This means that when the assessment results are analysed particular subjects are emphasised to make certain that the pupils are receiving learning experiences that are relevant. However, the planning is sufficiently flexible to allow for changes to be made to include other aspects of learning as the need arises. This responsive approach is well managed and carefully monitored. All in all, it brings about a curriculum that is rich in practical experiences, focussed on promoting high achievement and ensures that the pupils see how their learning is relevant to the world of work and their responsibilities as maturing citizens.
30. These enriching activities form crucial elements of pupils' personal development; for example, the personal, social, health and sex education aspects of the curriculum are very well addressed and are integrated carefully with work in science and design and technology. Citizenship is given very high prominence as all pupils learn how local politicians lead their community and the importance of local democracy. As the pupils visit the council chambers and, for instance, chat to the mayor, they begin to develop an understanding of the rights they have, but that these rights should be exercised within a framework of responsibility to others. Other very good links led to the pupils having the opportunity to manage their local supermarket for a day. They learned the importance of being able to work with other people to achieve goals in a similar way to the targets they are set in their work in school. The classroom displays in Year 4 highlight the qualities of a good citizen and so the pupils learn that friendship, reliability, caring and thoughtfulness, honesty and optimism are all important aspects of their growth. This work is very skilfully taken from an in-depth study of literature and again the pupils see immediately the relevance of their studies to their everyday lives. The planning of the curriculum is sophisticated and the targets set for the managers and teachers are directly linked to curriculum improvements. Enrichment and entitlement targets focus on building a curriculum that is rich in worthwhile and interesting activities. These are at the heart of the school's approach to teaching and learning. From supporting a local hospice to participating in Britain in Bloom, no opportunity is missed to ensure that the pupils receive the highest possible curriculum provision.
31. The pupils with special educational needs are included in all aspects of the curriculum. The challenges are high and support is well focused for all pupils. The targets laid out in the individual education plans are carefully tailored to meet the requirements of all pupils with special educational needs. At the same time a very wide range of curriculum activities is also available to other pupils. For example, the school included work of pupils with special educational needs in entries for a Christmas poetry and story publication. The school's work on meeting the needs of all pupils in its local community is a testament to the high quality special educational needs policy and the school's determination to design an inclusive curriculum that benefits all pupils. Equality of access to the opportunities the school provides is excellent.
32. The school's provision for extra-curricular activities is also excellent. The choice is wide-ranging and interesting and includes almost 100 places for music, including thriving peripatetic string tuition, a new

French club, extensive 'before and after school' provision and educational visits which provide highly relevant learning experiences. The teachers are highly skilled at exploiting opportunities to improve their school's environment as well as teaching the pupils important lessons about the wider community. A good example is the development of the sensory garden. This excellent learning provision involved the pupils, parents, staff, artists and local companies in developing a garden rich in fragrance, colour, texture and sound.

33. The school's strategy for teaching literacy and numeracy is very effective although one area of relative weakness is the length of some lessons in the morning session. In some classes, over-long lessons lead to a lack of concentration and a slowing of the pace of learning. Generally, however, not only are the pupils provided with opportunities to see how their learning is based on the real life situations of the world of work, but they are also taught the skills to be used in other subjects, by drawing upon very good quality literature, for example. The very high standards in reading, writing and number are shown in all work and highlight the school's success in developing a curriculum that is highly effective in the development of knowledge, skills and ideas.
34. The provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. This shows a considerable improvement since the last inspection.
35. The school uses the time when the pupils are gathered together in assemblies to create an atmosphere of reflection and wonder. Music and candles are used to great effect. For example, in a whole school Christingle service the mood is heightened by darkening the room for the candle procession and prayers by Year 4 pupils. The audience is totally spellbound and the headteacher asks them to carry that special feeling with them throughout the day. Every assembly gives pupils the opportunity to have a sense of joy and sharing. Links are very skilfully made to the pupils' everyday lives and feelings. In an infant assembly, the teacher tells the pupils about overcoming her fear of the dark by cuddling her teddy and in a junior assembly, a group's guitar playing and the teacher's beautiful singing provided a moving introduction and finale. In lessons, there is often time for quiet reflection and consideration. This is further enhanced by imaginative use of the sensory garden.
36. The school's five golden rules promote tolerance and respect and are at the heart of all aspects of school life. They are evident in the exemplary behaviour of the pupils both in class and in the playground. The pupils are always encouraged to consider the impact of their words and actions on others. In discussions, they talk comfortably about qualities such as truthfulness and fair play and know these are valued in their school. They have a well-developed sense of what is right and wrong and are not afraid to make mistakes. They are given opportunities in class to share special feelings and beliefs. Examples include a reflection corner in Year 4 and "magic moments" in Year 2. This helps the pupils to understand how they should work and play together and how they are all members of a learning community. The pupils show great pride when awarded house points for their particular achievements. A range of charities is well supported by the pupils and their families. All adults provide very good role models in how they treat each other and the pupils.
37. The high status given to promoting the pupils' social development contributes very effectively to the atmosphere of calm and order throughout the school. The parents feel the school is very successful in promoting positive attitudes and behaviour and that they are valued for the contribution they make. There are clear expectations of how the pupils should work and play together. Those who have been elected to represent the school take their responsibilities very seriously. They help younger pupils in the playground and have a supervisory role at lunchtimes and in the library. The sensible way in which the pupils organise themselves and their equipment is impressive and shows the importance given to developing responsibility and independence. Both the staff and the pupils are proud of the school, its ethos and appearance. Some pupils were upset by the damage to the hall, as a result of the recent flooding, not only because they missed their PE lesson, but also because it spoilt how the school looked. The pupils benefit from excellent links with the local community and an extensive range of visits and visitors. The "Walking Bus", which encourages pupils to walk to school together accompanied by volunteer adults, is a nationally acclaimed initiative and again fosters very good opportunities for social interaction.

38. There is a genuine feeling of celebrating cultural difference in many aspects of the work of the school. In art, for example, Indian embroidery is studied for its influence on design. Musical instruments include a range from other countries and music is used imaginatively as a stimulus for creative writing. Very good use is made of links with a school in Mousehole to enrich many areas of the curriculum, for example, through correspondence with the pupils in English and a comparison of the different features of the locality in geography. The pupils studied the techniques of a local Cornish artist and were very motivated when they saw paintings they knew well on the Internet. Their knowledge and understanding of their own community is well developed through good quality planning in geography. Effective use is made of seasonal activities to celebrate the traditions and culture of this country. Country dancing is provided as part of the PE curriculum and history is brought alive by a very popular visit to Little Moreton Hall and by actors who visit the school. Working closely with one of the governors, the school is preparing to bid for funds to support a very exciting project on promoting cultural diversity. If successful, this will give the pupils further opportunities to extend their awareness of other faiths and cultures through a wide range of enrichment activities. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is now a significant strength of the school curriculum

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

39. Throughout the school there are very good procedures for assessing and monitoring the pupils' academic achievements and progress in literacy and numeracy. This is now a strength of the school. It represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection when it was a key issue for development.
40. The infant teachers make very good use of the high quality records passed on by the reception teacher to plan their work. All teachers use information from tests and reviews very effectively to set targets for individuals and groups of pupils in literacy and numeracy. These targets identify what they expect their pupils to learn and they are discussed with parents at regular termly meetings. The teachers then evaluate how successful the pupils have been in achieving the targets and this helps them to plan very good learning opportunities. Consequently, the pupils are highly motivated and want to do their best. This has had a major impact on standards in English and mathematics, which are now well above the national expectations. The teachers keep very detailed records of their pupils' achievements in literacy and numeracy. These are passed on to the next teacher to make sure that the planned work meets the pupils' needs and they continue to make good progress. In lessons, the learning objectives are shared with the pupils so they have a better understanding of the work and why they will be doing it. This makes for a very productive learning environment where pupils are engaged and challenged. In some subjects, these objectives are too broad to help teachers judge how well the pupils have progressed during the lesson. An excellent example of how well the school cares for the pupils is in the setting of enrichment targets for improvement in behaviour and attitudes and self esteem. These help to develop well-rounded and confident individuals. The school has made a good start in assessing and recording achievement at the end of topic units in other subjects, particularly science.
41. The annual written reports for parents contain targets for English and mathematics. The parents are valued for the contribution they make to help the pupils to meet these targets. The care and attention afforded to the pupils with special educational needs are very good. The identification of pupils who might have special educational needs is very good and effectively ensures that if difficulties arise then the school can flexibly meet their needs. A key feature of this work is the very early identification of pupils' difficulties and the follow-up work with the learning support service. This combined approach, along with the very high quality notes that the learning assistants maintain, ensures that needs are met and progress is tracked. As a result, new plans are made which ensure that pupils are kept on target. These plans are regularly reviewed with the parents.
42. The headteacher provides a very good role model to promote the care for and high expectations of each pupil. These high standards are shared by staff throughout the school. The well being of all pupils is prioritised and there is a wide range of measures to promote their development. The teachers are sensitive to the needs of the pupils and consistently monitor very well their ability to cope on a day-to-day basis. Staff continue to be completely successful in promoting very high standards of good behaviour. The behaviour policy is consistently applied and fully understood.

43. The school has very effective systems in place to monitor and promote attendance. The registers are marked speedily, correctly and efficiently at the start of the school day and after lunch. Frequently, this time is used creatively to support learning, for example, by singing the register in the reception class and counting the numbers of pupils present and absent in Year 2. All absences are properly noted and contact is made with parents to justify them.
44. Child protection is handled very effectively. The headteacher continues to hold responsibility for these issues and ensures all staff are aware of the need for vigilance and the steps to take if concerns arise. Health and safety is promoted well across the curriculum, for example, through the teaching of healthy eating in science and the correct use of tools and equipment in design and technology and information and communication technology. Potential hazards are identified and appropriate action is taken when necessary. All staff are safety conscious and take care to ensure the security of the children. Hazardous materials are kept securely away from pupils.
45. Overall, the staff works extremely hard and creates a caring environment where the interests of the pupils are promoted very effectively.

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

46. Parents are extremely supportive of the school and confirm that it has many strengths. Virtually all parents responding to the questionnaire believe that their children like school and are making good progress. They also believe that behaviour is good, teaching is good, their children are expected to work hard and the school is helping them to become mature and responsible individuals. They also feel comfortable about approaching the school at any time. However, a small minority of parents showed concerns about the leadership and management of the school, the range of activities provided outside lessons and the partnership with parents. These reservations were not supported by inspection evidence. The school is very well led and managed and there is strong partnership between the headteacher, staff and governors. They are effectively moving the school forward and strive to take on board the views of parents through the use of questionnaires. They also offer opportunities for the parents to discuss school issues at curriculum meetings, parent training opportunities and annual meetings with governors. Difficult issues relating to confidential aspects of health and safety have been handled sensitively by following local guidance explicitly. During the inspection, the condition of the hall floor, damaged by recent floods, worsened considerably. The management of this situation was exemplary, ensuring the health and safety of pupils and adults as a priority and instigating speedy action to repair the damage at the earliest opportunity.
47. Parents and other adults are encouraged to become involved in the life of the school and many respond enthusiastically by participating in a wide range of activities. Many help regularly within the classroom and around the school as well as on trips and other activities. All helpers are deployed effectively; they are given clear directions and their help is well structured. In addition parents are very supportive of the work that their children are expected to do at home. There is an active "Friends of Pirehill School" group, which organizes a comprehensive range of social and fund-raising activities in support of the school. The school values highly the contributions made by the parents, which enhance the children's learning and personal development.
48. The parents are well informed about the school, their children's activities and progress in learning through a range of very high quality letters, newsletters, reports and meeting. The "open door" policy enables parents to speak to staff regularly.
49. The special educational needs co-ordinator ensures that the parents are full participants in reviewing the progress their children make against their individual education plans. These reviews meet the requirements of the Code of Practice and are handled flexibly by the school to guarantee that the pupils' needs are met in the most suitable manner. There are good links to inform parents of their child's progress and regular consultations with parents to review progress and needs.
50. The governors' annual report to parents is clearly written, provides interesting information and is very well presented. The prospectus is also very attractive and informative. The annual written reports to

parents provide good information about their child's progress and set future targets. However, they could give more advice about areas for development within each subject. The parents are well informed about the areas of study for their children and ample opportunities are provided for consultation when concerns arise. The school provides very good quality information and access to parents and good improvements have been made since the last inspection.

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

51. The headteacher provides strong, effective leadership of the highest quality. Her creativity and drive to move the school forward, high expectations and commitment to developing citizenship and the school's place within the community underpin the school's aims. Strong, caring leadership and commitment to developing community links have enabled her to forge an impressive number of contacts with local schools, businesses and the local council. This has enabled the school to benefit from a wide range of donations and contributions, which have enhanced the quality of education provided. For example, a local business and garden centre supported the development of the sensory garden, and the links of a school governor have also enabled pupils to visit the local council chambers. In addition, a very well run "Before and After" school club supports families at the start and end of the school day.
52. The school has a warm, caring ethos in which the pupils are expected to work hard and achieve their best. These qualities are recognised in the parents' responses. The headteacher and senior staff provide very good role models in projecting the values that the school promotes. There is a very strong team spirit and commitment to school improvement, ensuring that all pupils achieve their best. The aims of the school are present in its daily life and are very well met. The headteacher and the deputy head work in close partnership. All staff are included in the decision-making processes and their roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. These features enable the staff and pupils to work in a happy learning environment. Staff contribute their ideas and embrace new initiatives with enthusiasm. For example, there is significant excitement and anticipation about the forthcoming admission of four-year-olds to school and the very good links which have been established with local play groups have enabled these plans to progress speedily and harmoniously. Because the views of staff are welcomed, the policies are clearly understood. This enables the pupils in all classes to benefit from consistent approaches to discipline and learning. The rigorous monitoring of standards in literacy and numeracy and of the quality of teaching are examples of very good practice.
53. The monitoring of standards is now a strength of the provision. Since the last report, when it was a key issue, significant strides have been taken in evaluating strengths and weaknesses in the teaching and learning. Senior staff and the co-ordinators for literacy and numeracy have time allocated to enable them to observe lessons, review planning and look at the pupils' work. The governors play an important role in this process. They undertake responsibility for subjects, have discussions with co-ordinators and spend time in school. They write evaluative reports and share their findings at governors' meetings. Consequently, the governors have a good knowledge of standards and are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They offer very good support, and this is because their strengths are used well to support improvements. For example, the literacy governor spends time in school on a regular basis and has a clear view of the improvements made in the teaching of reading and writing and the stimulus of new books on pupils' enthusiasm for reading. She also recognises that some remaining old books are of less interest to younger pupils and that these will be replaced in time. The governors feel valued and take part in a wide range of school initiatives. During the inspection, a book of poems was published to raise funds for a local charity as a result of a governor's initiative. The pupils also benefited from reading their poems on local radio, which was both exciting and rewarding. The governors are eager to attend local training sessions and are well informed. New governors are well supported and attend induction training. The annual report for parents and the school prospectus are of very good quality; they provide useful information for parents, which is very attractively presented and written in clear language.
54. The work of the governor who oversees the school's special educational needs work has many outstanding features and makes a considerable contribution to the very high quality of provision. The monitoring of the provision is frequent and meticulous, and not only tracks the school's work against a good quality policy but also maintains a critical watching brief on the work of the local education authority and support agencies. Excellent reports are provided for the governing body and the school

benefits greatly from the suggestions and advice contained in them. The special educational needs co-ordinator manages this aspect of the school's work very well. The great efforts undertaken to ensure that all pupils are offered the best possible curriculum and teaching are a key strength of the school.

55. The headteacher, staff and governors are very skilled at bidding and receiving additional funds from industry, local and national government and charities. These funds are used extremely effectively to support the school's educational priorities and provide learning opportunities for pupils, which would not otherwise be possible. The school has used special educational needs funding to provide learning support of the very highest quality. This extremely sensible approach has made it possible for all pupils, and notably those with special educational needs, to receive excellent support based on the very close and effective working relationships between teachers and learning support assistants.
56. The school development plan is carefully costed to support the school's priorities for improvement and the staff and governors are provided with good quality information based on spending patterns. These reports are derived from the school's effective use of computer tracking. The information provided helps the governors and managers to ensure that the principles of best value are applied very well. The administration and the financial control overseen by the governors are of very good quality, and although the school has not been audited recently the low-level issues identified in 1997 have been addressed well.
57. The school is well staffed and resourced to meet the needs of the pupils. The accommodation, internally and externally, is spacious, but there is a lack of outdoor toys and a secure play area for children in the foundation stage of learning. **This is a weakness.** The library is well appointed and teachers go to great lengths to provide very high quality displays, which not only celebrate the pupils' work to very good effect, but are also a key feature of the learning experiences provided by the school. Teachers who are new to the school are very well supported, and all members of staff are provided with a professional development programme of high quality.

58. **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

- (1) \*Raise standards in information and communication technology by:  
  
Improving the teachers' confidence and subject expertise  
Timetabling the direct teaching of the subject **(paragraphs 3 and 112)**
  
- (2) Improve the teaching where it is unsatisfactory by:  
Providing further training to enhance the teachers' subject knowledge and the effectiveness of their behaviour management.  
Continuing to monitor rigorously the progress made in addressing these weaknesses  
**(paragraphs 25, 108 and 127)**
  
- (3) \*Seeking ways to improve the outdoor facilities to support the curriculum for children in the foundation stage of learning. **(paragraphs 58 and 67)**

**Other issues which should be considered in the action plan:**

Ensure consistency in the quality of marking in all classes.  
Review the length of lessons in morning sessions.

**\* The school is aware of the issue and has included it as part of its school development plan**

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	38
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	22

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
21	37	13	24	5	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		226
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		12

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

%
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#### Unauthorised absence

%
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School data	4.5
National comparative data	5.4

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	19	22	41

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	16	17
	Girls	21	22	21
	Total	37	38	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (90)	93 (96)	93 (96)
	National	(82)	(83)	(87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	17	17
	Girls	22	21	22
	Total	39	38	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (94)	93 (96)	95 (90)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	3
Chinese	
White	169
Any other minority ethnic group	3

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	28.7

**Education support staff: YR – Y6**

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

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

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

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

***Financial information***

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	365380
Total expenditure	365251
Expenditure per pupil	1617
Balance brought forward from previous year	12470
Balance carried forward to next year	12599

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

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	201
Number of questionnaires returned	50

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	30	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	58	40	0	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	46	0	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	46	12	0	2
The teaching is good.	48	48	0	2	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	28	54	12	2	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	48	46	4	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	46	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	24	52	20	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	26	48	16	4	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	54	2	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	30	22	4	16

**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**

59. The school's provision for the reception-aged children is very good. The curriculum provides a wide range of challenging and exciting learning experiences, which engage the children in structured play to promote all areas of the foundation curriculum. There is a broad range of attainment on entry to the school. The analysis of baseline assessment shows that the overall attainment of most children is about the same as other schools locally and slightly higher in reading at the present time. The teaching for this age range is of a very high standard and has a very positive effect on the children's learning. As a result, they achieve well and by the end of the reception year, they are likely to exceed the early learning goals in the important areas of language and communication and mathematics.
60. In all the aspects of the curriculum, the teaching observed in the foundation stage was very good and half the lessons were excellent. All staff have a very clear understanding of the needs of young children and the importance of play and first hand experiences. This has a very beneficial effect on the children's learning, and consequently they make very rapid progress and are well prepared to begin the national curriculum in Year 1. The lesson plans are very clear and have precise and relevant learning objectives linked to experiences that are interesting and challenging. The activities are well organised and promote communication, language, literacy, mathematical understanding and independence. There is a very good balance of teacher directed activities and opportunities for the children to choose their tasks and resources. The staff provides very effective support for all activities, they join in and ask probing questions to check and extend the children's understanding. They quickly identify the children with special educational needs and those who are more able in order to ensure they are appropriately challenged and supported. Praise and encouragement are used very effectively and consequently the children's behaviour is excellent and they enjoy trusting relationships with adults. The children are given very clear instructions about what it is they are expected to do and the daily routine provides security and excitement in learning.
61. Regular assessments of the children's understanding are used effectively to plan tasks to meet individual needs. The teachers' records indicate the gains made in learning and set targets for improvement, which are challenging but appropriate. Assessments are used to predict the pupils' likely attainment at the end of Year 2 and identify the support they are likely to need to achieve these levels. The staff work very well as a team and this has a positive effect on the quality of the children's learning. The teachers are enthusiastic and inspirational. The teachers' high expectations and the very good support of classroom assistants enable the children to achieve their best. The parents are encouraged to become partners in their children's learning through sharing books and talking to their children about their topics.

**Communication, language and literacy**

62. Communication, language and literacy are given a very high priority. The reception classes provide a wide range of effective experiences and activities to develop and extend the children's language and literacy skills. Very good emphasis is placed on listening carefully to adults and following instructions. Consequently, they are attentive listeners and are usually confident to take part in discussions. They enjoy listening to stories and rhymes and join in enthusiastically. However, not all children have a broad knowledge of well-known rhymes. The children are encouraged to share conversations with adults, and the various members of staff provide very good role models to support the development of spoken language. Challenging questions and comments are used to promote children's thinking. This contributes well to the progress the children make as they develop a broad range of vocabulary and enjoy using new words.
63. Most children answer questions with confidence and enthusiasm, using phrases and simple sentences, but a small proportion prefers either to use one-word answers or to demonstrate practically what they know. For example, staff introduced new vocabulary and ideas when planning a party with the children. They made lists of interesting foods and learned the term 'invitation'. They were encouraged to repeat and articulate the word accurately. This activity was further extended in lively discussion while making

party cakes. The support assistant used words such as 'stir' and 'whisk' to enable the children to describe accurately the process of cake making. This resulted in considerable excitement and the children's knowledge and understanding were enhanced as they observed changes in the texture of the ingredients as they were mixed together. Structured play situations, such as the home corner, sand and water areas also provide opportunities for the children to talk about their own experiences and extend their vocabulary. The classroom displays are of very good quality and clear labelling helps the children to develop early reading and writing skills. They are encouraged to make marks on paper as they create their own shopping lists and invitations. **They write their own names and with adult support they also write simple sentences.** They are developing good knowledge of letters, sounds and words and the more able children identify capital and small letters and the use of full stops. An inviting book corner and taped stories promote a love of books and teach the children handle them with care. The higher attaining children use their knowledge of initial sounds to read unfamiliar words. All children take books home on a regular basis to share with family members. This has a very positive effect on their reading. Appropriate elements of the literacy strategy are implemented and enhance the children's achievements, which overall are well above those expected of the age range.

### **Mathematical Development**

64. There is a wide range of activities to promote mathematical understanding. The children enjoy mathematics and learn to use mathematical ideas and skills in real situations, for example, when weighing out the ingredients to make cakes, making imaginary telephone calls or ordering their monsters by position on a number line. The children have opportunities to count, match, sort, compare, order and sequence through a range of games and activities. Well-planned tasks enable them to explore number, pattern, shape and measurement. For example, they develop understanding of the concepts "full" and "empty" through their play with water and sand, and they can accurately order containers by size. Staff place good emphasis on developing appropriate mathematical language. The children understand the terms forwards and backwards when counting to ten and twenty and the more able reception children join in with the teacher and count to 30. With help they order numbers accurately and the effective use of a number line helps to develop an understanding of position. Staff use games and rhymes such as 'jump in the jelly' to extend children's early ideas of "more than" and "less than". The children enjoy the opportunities they have to express their knowledge and understanding and explain to adults what they are doing. Appropriate elements of the numeracy strategy, such as oral and mental calculations are implemented effectively to advance the children's skills and knowledge, which are above those of most children of this age.

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

65. The children develop a good understanding of the world around them through tasks, which require them to discover and to be curious. Staff continually encourage them to talk about their discoveries and experiences, asking 'why' and 'how' to encourage reasoning and decision-making. This was evident when the children observed the changes that occurred as they baked cakes. For example, they described the changes made to an egg when whisked and questions such as 'What changes can we see?' prompted them to describe 'bubbles', the appearance and texture. Consideration for others is encouraged. The children thought carefully about how Joseph and Mary felt when leaving their home to travel on a long journey. The celebration of festivals, such as Christmas and birthdays, encourages the children to develop an understanding of their own community and culture. They learn of the passing of time through discussions about the days of the week and the changing of the seasons and the weather. Although many are not yet certain of the order of the days of the week, they know that the weather changes with each season and by looking at pictures describe the difference between trees in summer and in winter. Good use is made of registration times to develop rhythm as children sing the register following the teacher's lead. The children help each other, especially those who have difficulty pitching the syllables of their names. This creative approach is very effective and makes excellent use of time to develop early learning skills. Through role-play the children learn about relationships and life. For example, they act out the roles of adults and take turns to lead and organise.
66. The staff carefully observe and assess the children's skills, for instance, as they cut, fold and stick when making party hats. The computer and tape recorders are used frequently and regularly and many children are competent in using the 'mouse' and programs to support their learning, for example, in

mathematics and language and literacy. Construction equipment is used well to encourage the children to design and make their own models and to discover how things work.

### **Physical Development**

67. The provision is limited for this aspect of the curriculum because there is neither a safe outdoor area nor a supply of large equipment, such as wheeled toys and a climbing frame, to advance the children's physical development. **This is a weakness.** However, good use is made of the school hall and children's energy and enthusiasm continue to be promoted effectively despite these weaknesses. Appropriate activities for their physical development are carefully planned, but there were no opportunities to observe them during the inspection because of extensive flood damage to the hall. In their play, the children can run, hop, skip and jump and their co-ordination and confidence are similar to that of most five and six-year-olds. The children co-operate well together and enjoy the chance to play with others and adults, for example, skipping. The mid-day staff give very good support in this respect.
68. Proper emphasis is placed on developing the children's skills when handling pencils, crayons, brushes and scissors. Good attention is given to correct holding positions and the accurate orientation of letters. The children learn how to handle and manipulate materials including, paper, fabrics and paints and how to use various tools carefully and safely.

### **Creative Development**

69. The children enjoy a very good range of experiences in art, story and imaginative play. They are encouraged to develop their vocabulary and to use new language to express ideas. The teaching of songs and rhymes helps to foster their understanding of sound, rhythm and pattern. They enjoy their play in the 'writers' corner' and 'home corner'. These activities help them to use their imagination as they take on the roles of the adults in their lives. There are many opportunities for the children to develop their senses through investigating texture and colour. This is evident, for example when they are painting pictures and finding that red and yellow make orange, when discovering that coloured cellophane can change the appearance of other coloured papers and when baking cakes to explore the taste and smells of foods. Staff encourage children to independently select their materials and colours and to create their own designs, pictures and models. They work with a range of papers, fabrics and recycled materials to create two and three-dimensional pictures and models.

### **Social and personal development**

70. The personal, social and emotional development of the children is given a very high priority. They love coming to school and enjoy its well-organised routines. They understand the rules and how these enable everyone to be happy. They are eager to learn new skills and to explore new ideas. Due emphasis is placed on developing their understanding of right and wrong and how their actions and words affect others. Consequently, their behaviour is very good. Staff handle the children's actions and questions sensitively to enable them to consider the feelings of others and to learn to say 'I am sorry' if they have upset someone. The children co-operate very well, sharing and working happily together in a variety of situations, such as painting, writing, listening to stories and in the home corner. The more able children work independently for sustained periods of time, for example, when completing challenging writing tasks. Relationships are very strong and the children are encouraged to reflect on their feelings, actions and experiences. There are well-planned opportunities for them to develop a sensitivity and awareness of other people, their different religions, cultures and ways of life.

### **ENGLISH**

71. In the 2000 tests, the pupils aged seven achieved standards in reading and writing that were well above the national average and well above those of similar schools. Trends over time are in line with the national picture and show that standards have improved since the school was last inspected. Over half the pupils now achieve the higher level 3 in reading, which is well above average. A quarter of them attain the higher level 3 in writing which is also well above average and shows significant progress from the last report, which described standards as satisfactory. The performance of both boys and girls exceeds the national averages by age seven, but the boys perform better than girls in both reading and

writing which is contrary to the national trend. The inspection evidence mirrors these results. The successful implementation of the national literacy strategy is supporting the raising of standards, particularly those of the higher attaining pupils.

72. A feature of the very good work is the confidence with which the pupils take part in class discussions using the specific vocabulary introduced within each subject. For example, the pupils in Year 1 and 2 use terms such as exclamation and speech marks and refer to the text to give examples. By the age of nine, they confidently express their opinions about different styles of writing. When comparing character descriptions in texts, for instance, the pupils analysed accurately the success of CS Lewis in developing the characters of Edmund and the Queen in 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe'. Because the quality of teaching in this lesson was excellent, the more able pupils also analysed style and used this model to prepare and write their own character portraits. The outcomes were of a very high standard for nine-year-olds. Their writing was very convincing and engaged the reader through the use of vivid description and sustained sequences of ideas.
73. The quality of the teaching is very good, and teachers are confident and knowledgeable in their presentation of the literacy hour. The literacy strategy is very well implemented and has improved the pupils' learning and assisted in the achievement of high standards. The teachers make clear references to the curriculum in their daily planning and this ensures progression in learning at each stage. From their time in the reception and Year 1 classes, the pupils are encouraged to speak clearly, give reasons for their ideas and to record them in a variety of ways. The quality of their writing is a significant strength of the school. This is due to the emphasis placed on promoting the children's confidence to write independently. Their early attempts to write are valued and the very good teaching of phonics (letter sounds) enables the pupils to apply these skills to their reading and writing. By the time they are seven, the pupils' spelling is mainly accurate and they are confident to attempt unknown words. They use the language introduced in their lessons to write sequences of sentences that are descriptive and interesting.
74. This is built upon in the juniors, and although the teaching for pupils in Year 3 classes lacks the same high level of rigour as in other year groups, the pupils continue to make satisfactory progress. The teaching in the Year 3 class is good. Occasionally, in the mixed age class of Year 3 and 4 pupils there are unnecessary concerns about the pupils' behaviour. Exuberance and interest is at times mistaken for noise. On these occasions, the pace of the lesson slows as time is wasted requiring pupils to be quiet when a well-focussed question would enable them to describe their ideas openly. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed in English and these weaknesses should be seen in contrast to the very good and excellent teaching observed in other classes.
75. All the teachers show their pupils how to construct their ideas and develop the use of language to create effect. This could be seen, for example, in the Year 3 / 4 lesson when the teacher developed calligrams as a form of poetry writing, and when the pupils in Year 2 wrote descriptive accounts based on the use of factual information about animals and their habitats. Grammar is taught well, and the pupils have a good understanding of punctuation, the use of tenses and the purpose of adjectives and adverbs. There are many opportunities for the pupils to apply their skills in other subjects, for example, report writing in science and making lists in design and technology. This is a further reason why standards are particularly high.
76. The pupils' speaking and listening skills are promoted very well. The teachers ensure that their lesson introductions are lively and interesting; consequently, the pupils are attentive listeners. They understand instructions and strive to meet the high expectations made of them, in both independent and group work. Most teachers model Standard English competently and consistently, expecting the pupils to reply in sentences. On a small number of occasions, less experienced staff do not always speak in complete sentences and accept one-word answers and the use of dialect in formal presentation. However, oral presentation, is encouraged, for example, at the end of lessons and in assemblies and overall is a strength. For example, the Year 4 pupils presented the Christingle service with confidence and pride. Their individual parts reflected the teachers' knowledge of her class and ensured that all pupils made a valuable contribution to the service. The pupils had learned their lines well, their speech was clear; and they supported one another skilfully to ensure the presentation was successful and

enjoyed by the audience. The strong sense of caring and spiritual dimension of the performance was outstanding for this age group and created a sense of reverence and wonder.

77. These high standards are achieved because the pupils expect and act upon constructive criticism. They value and learn from the comments made by their teachers and friends. Pupils of all abilities have similar opportunities to share their successes and this is a strength of the provision and a feature of the school's commitment to promoting citizenship.
78. The analysis of the pupils' books shows a substantial amount of work covered and very good progress over time. Target setting is a powerful way of supporting progress. The pupils expect to be set new targets and in discussion refer to lesson objectives when explaining how they have improved.
79. Pupils of all ages enjoy reading. They read for pleasure and for information and by the age of seven use terms such as 'author', 'illustrator', 'title', 'glossary' and 'index' automatically. By the time they are nine, they read widely a range of poetry, fiction and non-fiction and make good use of the libraries as a resource. Their reading is expressive and fluent and they have a good awareness of the need to make it for the listener. The consistent good modelling of reading by teachers encourages the pupils to achieve high standards. A minor weakness of the provision for younger pupils is the inclusion of some old reading books, which do not command the same level of interest as newer and more exciting materials.
80. The deputy headteacher has provided very good leadership and her thorough monitoring of standards has ensured continuity in the presentation of the literacy hour and a consistently high quality of teaching and learning. Consequently, the pupils' achievements in English are a significant strength of the curriculum.

## **MATHEMATICS**

81. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected levels was above average when compared to all schools and about the same as that found in similar schools. These results were out of step with the school's rising trend. Generally, the proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels is well above the national proportion. The boys out performed the girls in these tests although the margin was less than in English. The school met its targets and has set challenging targets for seven and nine year olds to achieve in 2001. The school is well placed to achieve these targets. The progress since the last inspection has been very good and is due to the consistent focus by the headteacher, co-ordinator and other members of staff on raising attainment.
82. The inspectors found that attainment by the age of seven and nine is well above average, as the school's strategy for numeracy becomes more effective and the very high quality of teaching skills develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of mathematics. The teaching is very good overall, although weaker in the class of mixed Years 3 and 4. However, the teachers' skills generally are very well developed and focussed on raising the pupils' attainment. Most of the very high quality teaching observed was in Years R/1, 2, and 4, making the infant classes more effective than junior classes overall. However, very high quality teaching skills are identifiable in all classes. They include very good, and at times excellent, planning; the teaching of numeracy skills, the working relationships between the teachers and the very skilled learning support assistants; and the excellent management of the pupils.
83. Of particular note in all classes is the value placed on the pupils' work by all teachers and support workers. High quality skills are brought to bear, and the pupils are encouraged, whatever their levels of ability, to work hard, to participate in all aspects of the lessons and to feel that they are succeeding in their work. This pays dividends because as the pupils' confidence in their abilities rises they confidently grapple with problems and new situations. They acquire excellent working habits and from a very early age understand that if they work hard and try their best they will do well.
84. In the reception and Year 1 class, very good learning was brought about by the teacher using very effective questioning techniques, requiring the pupils to think carefully and identify patterns whilst classifying numbers according to their counting order. Excellent behaviour and support from learning

assistants for the pupils with special educational needs ensured that all pupils made very good progress and tackled problems with energy and diligence. The teacher was very diligent in picking up the errors pupils had made and asking for corrections. This established very high standards in the pace of working and the level of thinking and accuracy required. In this lesson, the oral and mental work was conducted in an exemplary manner and ensured that pupils were very highly motivated. The teacher's very good subject knowledge, excellent plans and very high expectations enables pupils to achieve highly.

85. Very good "starters" were also a feature in Year 1/2 when the pupils were encouraged to frame questions in order to identify certain numbers. The high levels of interaction and attention were evidence that the pupils were extremely keen to be involved in the elimination activity. The very good pace and highly effective use of the learning support assistant to record timed observations maintained the well-balanced introduction to the main part of the lesson. Generally, the main section of the lesson proceeded well with the exception of the task for low attainers. This involved cutting and sticking and ran into difficulty when the pupils could not complete the sequencing exercise because of a shortcoming in the worksheet. The very good rates of learning are built upon well in Year 2 where the pupils played money bingo, having to double the amount shown on the teacher's cards. They managed this very well, maintaining excellent behaviour at all times even though they were very excited. Excellent levels of attention and interest were also observed during the main section of the lesson during which the high attainers had to find how many ways they could make up 45p using only silver coins. Some of these pupils began to identify a system for solving this problem and the teacher made so many positive responses that every child felt worthy and successful. The lesson ended with the pupils buying and giving change for models that had been made the previous school day. Every pupil was involved from the model makers to shoppers and shopkeepers. This was a highly productive lesson in which the pupils made very good rates of progress.
86. In the Year 3 and Year 3/4 classes, the learning is satisfactory. The teaching skills, knowledge and understanding of teachers are satisfactory. However, at times opportunities are missed in both classes to probe the pupils' understanding. For example, during question and answer sessions, the pupils are asked to raise their hands to give answers. Digit cards were not used to enable each pupil to display his or her answer. This prevented the teachers gaining a keener insight into each pupils' capability. Generally, these lessons lacked sufficient clarity of intent and purpose. At times in Year 3/4 the class management was overbearing, obtrusive and unnecessary. For these reasons the rate of progress slows in these classes, but it picks up in Year 4 where the quality of teaching is very good. A wide range of methods is used to capture the pupils' interest and maintain their very high levels of concentration. In this class, attainment was well above the level usually expected of pupils aged nine. They demonstrate a very good understanding of percentages and use fractions to describe proportions. To whet the pupils' appetites for their next lesson, the teacher cleverly used sale advertisements and the lesson ended with the pupils mentally calculating bargain prices by using the percentage reduction of goods. This lesson was very brisk and focussed. The very good elements of direct teaching ensured that the pupils understood how to divide to find fractions of numbers. The lesson finished by the teacher giving very good encouragement to ensure that the pupils understood how well they had done.
87. The curriculum for mathematics is very good and is very well planned. The co-ordinator and teachers have taken care to plan in an increasing variety of practical activities. This is beginning to be more evident in the daily plans of the teachers, but there is a slight inadequacy in the teacher's subject knowledge in one of the junior classes. This means that the strategy for stretching the most able pupils in Year 4 needs further monitoring to ensure that their progress is as rapid as possible. The co-ordinator is a skilled and highly effective practitioner who understands the needs and priorities for the development of mathematics. The school is well placed to continue improving the curriculum and the pupils' attainment.

## SCIENCE

88. In the 2000 teacher assessments carried out for seven year-olds, the proportion attaining the expected levels was above average. The proportion attaining the higher levels was well above average. When compared with similar schools the results are above average. The pupils did particularly well in two aspects of the subject - life and living processes and materials, where their attainment overall was well above the average. In experimental and investigative work, their attainment was in line with the national

average. This reflects the findings of the previous report where standards were described as well above average for the higher attainers. The school has set challenging targets for the 2001 tests. The inspection findings indicate that the present Year 2 pupils are on line to meet those targets.

89. The pupils' attainment in both the infants and the juniors is above the national expectations. They make good progress in science in the infants and satisfactory progress in Years 3 and 4. A major factor contributing to their progress is the way the subject is planned and taught. All aspects of science are covered in a carefully constructed two-year programme of work with clear links to national guidance. This ensures that the pupils make steady progress overall in their scientific skills, knowledge and understanding. The good progress in the infants is related to the emphasis given in the daily and weekly planning to the development of their investigating skills. Careful planning at class level means that clear links are made with previous work and the pupils can make the necessary connections. For example, in a Year 2 class the teacher made very good use of the Christmas tree lights to remind the pupils of work they had covered previously on their investigations into the uses of electricity. They were able to explain that the circuit was broken when the lights were switched off and used appropriate vocabulary, such as plug, switch, wire, crocodile clip and appliance. In a Year 1 lesson, the structure was crafted in an excellent manner to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. The tasks helped all the pupils to succeed. For example, in their investigations into which materials can reflect light, the more able pupils recorded their findings on a grid while the less able pupils used a simple diagram to sort out shiny and non-shiny materials. Too often, however, the same worksheet is given to all the pupils to record their work and this can be restricting, especially for more able pupils. Throughout the school, the learning objectives are shared with the pupils at the beginning of the lesson and this helps them to have a clearer understanding of the work they are covering. At the end of the lesson, the pupils are given opportunities to decide whether or not they have achieved the lesson objectives. In the junior classes, the objectives are sometimes too broad and are not as useful in helping the pupils and teachers to know how well they have done in the lesson. An exception was seen in a Year 4 class where the pupils knew they were carrying out an investigation into the absorbency of different papers and could state what they were trying to find out.
90. The teachers use questions effectively to check what the pupils already know and to make sure they have understood the work they are doing. This is particularly effective when the questions challenge the pupils to explain their thinking using appropriate vocabulary. For example, more probing questions enabled a group of Year 2 pupils to describe what was needed to make the circuit work. They explained that 'the wires need to go right round and connect up so the electricity gets through to the bulb'. Very good management and organisation, particularly in the infants, mean that the pupils develop good work habits and are confident in handling equipment and organising themselves. The older pupils need to be allowed to build on this and to be given more opportunities to contribute their own ideas for the experiments rather than always carrying out the teacher's instructions.
91. The resources are extremely well prepared and are of a good range and quantity. These are further enhanced by very effective use of the school's sensory garden. This is used as an exciting stimulus, particularly in the work on life and living processes. Constant reminders are given about safety issues when the pupils are using the equipment. The learning support assistants and volunteer teachers, who were previously members of staff, are used to good effect. This means that the pupils are given help where it is most needed. The support given to pupils with special needs is particularly good.
92. In the infants, very good use of time means that the lessons move along at a brisk pace and the pupils stay focussed on what they are doing. They are highly motivated to concentrate and finish their work. Relationships are a significant strength throughout the school and an atmosphere is created where the pupils can become confident and diligent learners. They are not afraid to make mistakes and know that they can learn from them. For example, the pupils in a Year 3 and 4 class investigating how to compare tension in different pairs of tights. One pupil felt secure enough to explain to the whole class why the results of his group were different from the rest of the class. He realised that they may not have been careful enough with the measurements and would need to be more accurate next time.
93. In the infants, the teachers use the end of lessons very effectively to check what the pupils have learnt and to give them opportunities to share their ideas and opinions. Throughout the school the pupils' work is regularly marked. However, there are few comments or targets set to help the teachers keep track of individual progress through their recorded work. Overall, the teachers keep good quality class records of how well individual pupils have understood each topic and these are passed on to the next

teacher. The method of assessing and recording the pupils' progress is in the process of being reviewed to ensure a more consistent approach. This will enable the teachers to build up a more accurate picture of individual progress as the pupils move through the school, particularly in relation to their investigating and experimenting skills.

94. In the lessons observed, the pupils' attitudes were excellent in the infants and satisfactory in the juniors. For example, the infant pupils are very keen to participate in their investigations and are eagerly responsive to the teacher's questions. They listen very well, follow the instructions very carefully and are highly motivated. They are attentive, well focussed and absorbed in what they are doing. In the juniors, they show interest in their lessons and try hard to concentrate and complete their work. In discussion, they are keen to talk about their work and show enthusiasm and enjoyment. They offer sensible suggestions and ideas. They share, take turns and co-operate well in practical activities, and use materials and equipment sensibly. On occasions, when too many pupils are engaged in the same activity at the same time, the noise level rises and the pupils lose concentration and are less well motivated.
95. The co-ordinator has only had responsibility for science since September. She is keen to develop the subject further and has a good understanding of what needs to be done, particularly in teacher assessment. She is well supported in this by the previous post holder and has also made effective use of the LEA's advisory teacher. At present she keeps a careful check of the teachers' planning and time will be made available next term for observations of their teaching. Good links have been established with next school to ensure that the pupils continue to achieve high standards.

#### **ART AND DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

96. Standards in art and design and technology are a strength of the school and above those usually expected of pupils at the ages of seven and nine. They have improved since the last inspection when they were described as sound. Positive attitudes to painting, drawing and model making are fostered from the time children enter reception classes. The pupils draw and paint pictures of their experiences, learn to mix colours to create shades and have many opportunities to design and make items that are linked to their learning across the curriculum. In one lesson, the pupils painted their clay candleholders using pearlised paint to create stunning results and this linked well to their understanding of the symbol of light at Christmas time. Displays of masks also reflected the attention to detail given in the making and finishing of the end product.
97. No direct teaching of design and technology was observed during the inspection and therefore judgements cannot be made about the quality of teaching. However, in the small number of art lessons observed the teaching was very good, particularly that of the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. A significant strength is the level of subject expertise, specialism and interest in the subject. The emphasis on teaching skills and techniques through demonstration and the study of artists' work enables all pupils to feel confident to succeed. The very positive attitudes to art are evident in discussions with pupils of all ages, who frequently describe art and design and technology as their favourite subjects. For instance, they are eager to describe how they created clay tiles to decorate the sensory garden in winter, the plaque that commemorates 'Stone in Bloom' and the attractive wall hanging, which celebrates the new millennium. By the age of seven, the pupils have a clear understanding of the process of designing and making. This is due to very good teaching of process skills and the effective strategy of linking projects to daily life. Consequently, the pupils recognise the relevance of their learning. In Year 2 they cut, fold and glue card and paper to produce pop up and folding cards. Older pupils used simple stitches to sew the celebratory millennium wall hanging and there is good evidence of the planning, which took place to create the design. In Year 2, there is further evidence of this process as the pupils' work reflects the stages in designing, making and evaluating a technicolour coat for 'Joseph'. This project formed very good links with both religious education and music.
98. The pupils describe their headteacher as a good artist and look forward to being taught by her. A feature of the very good teaching seen in Years 2 and 4 is the way in which teachers and classroom assistants show the pupils how to improve their work and resolve difficulties. For example, the teacher warned the pupils that clay berries might become detached from their candleholders during the painting

process. She dispelled concerns by advising the how this difficulty could be resolved and how to improve their techniques of joining clay in the future. Consequently, there was no fuss and the pupils completed their tasks with a high level of motivation.

99. The headteacher is the art co-ordinator and provides a very good role model for staff and pupils. She ensures that the pupils observe and learn from their introductions to art from other cultures. For example, very good use was made of Indian cushion covers to investigate pattern and the use of beads and sequins to create effects and to tell stories. The pupils developed this by making their own designs and by using colour washes and sequins to create similar effects.
100. A significant feature of the pupils' achievements by the age of nine is their awareness of artists from different cultures. The teachers make good links with geography, for example the work of two artists from Cornwall was studied to enhance the pupils' understanding of life in a contrasting locality. The styles of the artists and their compositions provided sharp contrasts, which generated rich discussion and comparisons of the techniques used. The pupils then selected elements of the pictures on which to base their own pictures and prints. This strategy was very effective. The teacher used original paintings which she owned, shared her own appreciation of the pictures with pupils and skilfully extended their understanding by accessing more examples through an art gallery website on the internet. This very good teaching added relevance to the pupils' links with the school in Mousehole and enhanced their appreciation of its contrasting coastal environment.
101. Wall displays of pastel portraits of Henry VIII and his wives show the links made to history, and the study of artists such as Van Gogh and Simon Hart enrich the pupils' understanding of art. There is good continuity between the classes and by the age of nine the pupils explain how they have worked in the style of these painters and talk about the techniques they have used.
102. Curriculum guidance is of very good quality and good progress has been made in planning a detailed scheme of work following the last inspection. The teaching of art and design and technology is purposefully connected through carefully planned units of work. Good links are also made with English and mathematics through the use of specific vocabulary such as pattern, tone and perspective when pupils write and draw their experiences.
103. Very good use is made of visiting artists to promote and extend the pupils' skills and knowledge. For example, artists in residence have led developments in the use of clay and all staff now feel confident to work in this medium. Work in batik, led by the headteacher is also of a very high standard and exceeds that of most nine year olds.
104. The pupils describe enthusiastically the many opportunities they have to work with clay, fabrics and paint. Throughout the school, the displays of work are of very high standard and considerably enhance the quality of the learning environment. They not only describe the learning that has taken place, but also engage the pupils' interest and encourage reflection.

## **GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY**

105. Geography was not taught during the inspection and therefore overall judgements on the teaching of this subject cannot be made. In history, the teaching was only observed in the juniors and so, again, an overall judgement cannot be made. The following judgements are, therefore, based on scrutiny of the teachers' planning, the pupils' previous work and discussion with staff and children.
106. Attainment at both seven and nine is in line with national expectations and progress in both the infants and juniors is satisfactory. This matches the findings of the previous inspection where standards were described as sound. The planning for both subjects is good, and there is a two-year rolling programme of work, which covers all the required strands and links appropriately to other subjects, such as art and religious education.

107. In the juniors, the teaching in history is satisfactory overall and it is very good in Year 4. In the very good lesson observed, the pupils were exploring the concept of cause and effect leading up to the dissolution of the monasteries. Very good organisation and good quality resources meant that the pupils stayed focused and were highly motivated throughout. The work was planned with the different abilities of pupils in mind and there was good support from the learning support assistant for a group of lower attainers. Time was used well and the pupils settled back to their work quickly after a playtime break. They were able to give a good account of the problems facing King Henry VIII. For example, they explained that Henry needed funds, the monasteries were wealthy and he was angry with their attitude to his marriage, so he decided to destroy them and take their riches for himself. Very imaginative accounts were produced and read in pairs. The higher attainers were required to check and comment on each other's work. This reflects the very secure learning environment promoted by the teacher. At the end of the lesson, three pupils read out their accounts with confidence and expression and the teacher asked for comments on the different styles.
108. The pupils in the Year 3 /4 class covered the same work, but some of the ideas being presented to year 3 were difficult for them to understand. In a Year 3 class, the teacher's lively introduction and carefully organised resources helped to address this to some extent and he realised the need to give more targeted support during the lesson. In an unsatisfactory lesson in the other class, the explanations and tasks were not made sufficiently meaningful for the different ages and abilities of the pupils. This meant that too many pupils were confused and as they began to lose concentration, the noise level grew. **This is an issue for the school to address.**
109. The pupils study either history or geography at any one time and the teachers use the national schemes of work to support the new National Curriculum. In the infants these have been well adapted to suit the needs of the younger pupils, ensuring that there is coherence in the work they cover and very good cross-curricular links. However, overall in the juniors the teachers are less secure in their subject knowledge, and in the history lessons observed national guidance is followed too rigidly. Insufficient adjustment is made to reflect the wide range of abilities and age of the pupils in some classes.
110. Throughout both subjects and in the history lessons observed, pupils' personal, social and health education is effectively promoted and there are planned opportunities for them to express their feelings and emotions about the things they learn. They are also given opportunities to consider people's impact on the environment and on each other. The curriculum for both subjects is enriched and enlivened by an extensive range of visits, visitors and community links.

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

111. The following judgements about standards are based on scrutiny of the teachers' planning, samples of the pupils' work, discussion with pupils and observation of small groups engaged in information and communication technology (ICT) tasks during the lessons. No class lessons in the subject were timetabled during the inspection and while the quality of support for individuals and groups was satisfactory no overall judgements on the quality of teaching could be made.
112. Standards at both seven and nine are below those usually expected and the pupils do not make the rapid progress evident in other subjects. Although it would appear that standards have deteriorated since the last inspection, the curriculum for ICT has become more demanding. The school recognises this weakness and a good quality plan has been drawn up which addresses the issues raised in the previous inspection. It aims to increase the teachers' knowledge and skills so that they become more confident in teaching the whole class and in exploiting the opportunities to apply ICT skills and knowledge in other subjects. A scheme of work, a new policy and assessment and record keeping systems are now in place, providing a good structure for progression. However, they have not yet been in place for long enough to positively influence the teaching and learning across the school or to have a significant effect on standards. At present, there are examples of good practice in some classes, but there are inconsistencies throughout the school. Overall, this means that the current practice neither raises standards as high as they should be nor supports progress well enough. The resources have been increased, but are still not yet of sufficient quality or quantity. The school has plans to increase and upgrade both the hardware and the software through national initiatives and funding, but this has been affected by delays in allocation of the appropriate grants that are beyond the school's control. All

of the strands of the curriculum are now in place although they are not yet exploited to a sufficient depth, particularly in controlling and modelling. **This is a key issue.**

113. In discussions with Year 1 groups working on the computers, it was clear that they were familiar with the keyboard and knew how to use the space bar, delete and return keys confidently. The very good organisation of a Year 2 class meant that individual pupils were working confidently with a volunteer parent to check their understanding of what a circuit needs in order to make it work. They used a pre-set program and could select and click on to appropriate icons representing a battery and a bulb. They then drew lines on the screen to show how the wires are connected and could satisfactorily explain what was happening. In an English lesson on identifying the features of a play script and preparing one for a performance, groups of Year 4 pupils were using the computer to draft their work. Most are competent in their word-processing skills. They could centre headings on the page, use a range of features and type with reasonable speed. Some of the pupils who do not benefit from using home computers take much longer and therefore make slower progress. In a scientific investigation into tension, Year 3 and 4 pupils were using a program to enter their data. This was presented in graph form and they were then able to interpret the results appropriately. In discussion with a group of pupils, they were able to explain how to load, save, file, print and name a document. The use of the Internet is as yet underdeveloped, although the work of a Year 4 class studying the techniques of a Cornish artist was enriched through access to an appropriate web site.
114. In a group activity on making calendars using a digital camera, Year 3 and 4 pupils worked confidently in pairs of different ability. They took photographs of each other with accuracy and then cropped the image and pasted it on to their preferred layout for the calendar. Good quality advice and coaching from the teacher meant that the pupils were encouraged to experiment with the range of tools available the program. The higher attaining pupils described how the memory stores information to make up the images. Lower attainers also described how they alter and adapt the same information for a range of purposes. The pairing of the pupils in this activity made a valuable contribution to their social development and they worked sensibly and imaginatively together. These positive achievements indicate that the school's action to raise standards higher are effective and with additional resources, staff training and timetabled provision standards are likely to improve further.

## MUSIC

115. Only three music lessons were observed, but the subject is very well represented throughout the school in recorder and guitar groups and a large choir. A variety of very high quality performances also enrich the school's curriculum and the cultural development of the pupils. By the time the pupils are seven and nine years of age, standards of attainment are above average, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Of particular note is the quality of the singing throughout the school, which is well above average. The pupils sing sweetly and in tune, understand the need to vary their performance in terms of volume and pace, and have very clear articulation and good breath control. The singing in assemblies and special occasions, like Christingle, contributes very significantly to an atmosphere of reverence and spirituality. The pupils understand how to use silence as a balance to their singing and are engaging in their enthusiasm and joy when performing.
116. In the one lesson observed in the infant classes, the teaching was satisfactory, but the lesson was disrupted because of mistiming. As pupils in one year-group returned from changing library books, the pupils in the music lesson had their concentration interrupted and the flow of the lesson faltered. However, once the lesson had restarted, the pupils played long and short sounds on untuned percussion instruments. They listened very quietly to their teacher and echoed accurately what they had heard. In a series of lessons conducted by the music co-ordinator, younger junior pupils used musical instruments to portray animals, and older pupils created textures using the pentatonic scale. These lessons had common characteristics. The pupils' behaviour, levels of attention and enthusiasm were all excellent. The teacher's very good levels of subject knowledge and expertise were mirrored in the quality of the teaching. The pupils were set very challenging work, and the standard of their final performances was high.
117. In both lessons, the pupils echoed the teacher as she sang greetings and used tonic sol-fah to set the lesson off to a very good start. In exercises of growing complexity, the pupils responded accurately to

patterns set by the teacher or, as in the older group of pupils, to notation read from a board. In the first lesson, an excerpt from Saint-Saens, which the pupils successfully identified, led into the singing of *Daddy's taking us to the Zoo*. They were then set the task of finding ways of portraying animals such as the panda, elephant and snake using a good range of instruments. The pupils understand terms such as ostinato and developed high quality individual performances that their teacher skilfully constructed into a whole group performance. They learned the importance of a conductor as a pupil took them through a performance and their evaluations of their work were accurate and critically supportive of each other.

118. In the second lesson in the series, the pupils asked each other questions using the tonic sol-fah as their teacher moved them into groups to sing rounds. The worthy performance attracted due praise and encouragement. The pupils understand the nature of the five-note scale (pentatonic) and know which notes are removed. Using good quality tuned percussion instruments, they developed ostinati based on phrases, like *firefly and red blazing eyes* to describe a Chinese dragon. During the performance, the pupils accompanied their work with a drone and a pulse, both terms that they understood and applied well. As the performance grew in complexity and texture, their teacher reminded the pupils of the need to create an atmosphere and immediately they reacted very well to the suggestion. This lesson highlighted the pupils' relaxed yet mature attitudes to performance.
119. Music is managed very well and the skills, preparation and specialist teaching of the co-ordinator ensure that aspects of the pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development enrich the music lessons. The subject as a whole makes an important contribution to the life of the school.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

120. During the inspection major problems with the hall floor, caused by heavy rain and flooding, meant that only one lesson could be observed. No judgements can therefore be made on teaching, learning or overall standards. The following judgements are based on scrutiny of the teachers' planning and discussions with the co-ordinator and the pupils. In the previous report standards were sound overall and sometimes good.
121. The subject is well supported by planning which covers all the required activities, including dance, games and gymnastics throughout the school and swimming, athletics and outdoor activities for the older pupils. This shows good improvement since the last inspection when the curriculum planning was an issue for development. Each class in the juniors has swimming lessons for one term in the year, and certificates are awarded, as the pupils become more proficient. The teachers plan the lessons carefully to make sure that the pupils have a warm-up session, opportunities to practise and perform their skills and time to cool down at the end. Their planning also shows that the pupils are encouraged to think about how they can improve their movements and to understand what happens to their bodies when they exercise. Clear guidance on health and safety matters is included. The after school clubs are popular and well attended. Both boys and girls are members of the football and tag rugby teams.
122. The pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and are keen to talk about all the different activities and opportunities they experience. Races, team games and swimming are popular. They particularly like having the large apparatus out in the hall, but think that it is heavy to move. This is also the view of the co-ordinator who plans to update the equipment as soon as funds become available. In the one lesson observed, Year 1/2 pupils responded enthusiastically to the high expectations of the teacher. The Learning Assistant also provided good quality support. Because the quality of the teaching was good, the pupils developed sequences of movements including forward and backward rolls and worked with partners to perform two directional sequences. The teacher made comments and suggestions, which enabled the pupils to improve the quality of these sequences considerably during the lesson. The pupils expected their efforts to be evaluated and consequently enjoyed the lesson and made good gains in their learning. A feature of pupils' enthusiasm and care for their school was evident in the concern they showed for the flood damaged hall floor and in their disappointment not to be able to enjoy gymnastics, games and dance lessons.

123. The co-ordinator has only had responsibility for the subject since September and he is keen to ensure that it continues to make a valuable contribution to the overall development of the pupils. He is well supported in this by the previous post holder. He is aware of the need to check provision throughout the school by observing the lessons and will have the opportunity to monitor the teaching and learning when the subject is a priority area for development.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

124. Attainment is above the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus by the ages of seven and nine. These findings broadly are above those of the last inspection and the school has made good progress since that time. Throughout the school, the pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to participate in all activities and make progress in line with the others in their class.
125. In a Year R/1 lesson the quality of teaching was excellent and as a result the pupils' learning was extremely rapid and their attainment very high. By the clever use of finger puppets representing the Three Kings, the teacher asked questions about their journey and what had occurred. This session brought out good responses from all pupils and clear tasks helped them, including those with special educational needs, to understand what they had learned. The activities were planned at appropriate levels of difficulty and most pupils wrote several sentences about the journey of the magi. Some pupils used computers to word process their work and the teacher circulated well intervening and correcting where necessary.
126. The pupils in Year 2 showed an increasing familiarity with the Christmas story and told their teacher of the angel that was sent to Mary, of Simeon and Anna and that Joseph was told of the baby Jesus in a dream. They concentrated very well and because their teacher valued all of their contributions their confidence was high and they spoke clearly and precisely about their ideas. The teacher was very skilled at encouraging these young pupils, and those with special educational needs, to think of every baby as special and that the birth of Jesus was important for all Christians. After singing "*Away in a Manger*," (accompanied by a music programme on a CD ROM), the pupils began to think of the words of the carol and how they would write their own lyrics to show how special the baby Jesus was to his parents and his followers. The teacher introduced to them to the word *Gloria* and they used their new knowledge to help them compose their verses. The verses were well formed, written in a joined handwriting style and well spelled. Their high attainment in English helped them produce work of good quality in terms of their religious knowledge.
127. The quality of the teaching in Year 3 was unsatisfactory and as a result pupils did not make sufficient progress in understanding why Advent is important in the Christian faith and the customs that surround the festivals. **This is an issue for development.** The practical activities planned for this lesson were not organised effectively although in discussions the pupils remembered the journey of Gladys Aylwood and the journeys biblical characters undertook in the time of the Old and New Testaments. In Year 4, there was a thorough exploration of the meaning of Advent and of the symbolism of light in the Christian calendar. The pupils understood that Jesus was the light of the world and had come to light the way so that other might see. At the beginning of the lesson, the pupils entered the classroom to quiet music and were then asked to reflect on the light of the candle. They responded very well to questions about Advent and the teacher carefully made the point that light, particularly at this time of year, makes us feel secure and safe and guides us along the right way. The pupils became quietly excited about writing prayers, which expressed hope for the future and selflessness, just as Jesus had taught. The teacher handled the reading of prayers extremely sensitively. If they were personal to the writer there was no compunction to report back, but others were well written and read. The prayers were composed in language that was forthright in its form and without intricacy.
128. The pupils are aware of other religions. They see their world as a group of communities, all of which deserve to be valued and appreciated in their own right. The visits that they make, the very good

documentation from the local education authority and the well-developed skills and knowledge of the curriculum co-ordinator stand the subject's development in good stead. There are good resources for teaching the major religions and religious education makes a significant and very positive contribution to the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.