

INSPECTION REPORT

Westvale Primary School

Kirkby, Liverpool

LEA area: Knowsley

Unique reference number: 104431

Headteacher: Mrs Kath Wood

Reporting inspector: Steve Bywater
18463

Dates of inspection: 16th to 19th October 2000

Inspection number: 225238

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

© Crown copyright 2000

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Melverley Road Westvale Kirkby Knowsley
Postcode:	L32 0RQ
Telephone number:	0151 546 9812
Fax number:	0151 548 5733
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Pat Herron
Date of previous inspection:	November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Steve Bywater 18463	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Physical education	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught?
Colin Herbert 09652	Lay inspector		How high are standards? (attitudes and behaviour) How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with its parents?
Tess Galvin 21020	Team inspector	Science Music Special educational needs	How well is the school led and managed?
Margaret Lewis 22787	Team inspector	English Foundation Stage	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
Jo Mitchell 27477	Team inspector	Religious education Art Design and technology	
Derek Pattinson 19120	Team inspector	Mathematics History Geography	
Mary Henderson 19827	Team inspector	The speech and language unit Equal opportunities	

The inspection contractor was:

TWA Inspections Ltd
5, Lakeside
Werrington
Peterborough
Cambridgeshire
PE4 6QZ

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
 PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	14
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	19
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	20
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	21
THE SPEECH AND LANGUAGE UNIT	24
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	26
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	27
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	31

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Westvale Primary School is a larger than average primary school with 391 pupils on roll made up of 202 boys and 189 girls aged between three and 11 (331 full-time and 60 part-time children in nursery). The school is slightly smaller than it was at the time of the previous inspection. There is much unemployment in the area and 249 pupils are entitled to free school meals. The proportion of pupils registered for free school meals is 75 per cent and well above the national average of 20 per cent and greater than the proportion of pupils on the free school meals register during the previous inspection. There are very few pupils from ethnic minority groups and no pupils speak English as an additional language. The general attainment of pupils on entry to the school is well below average. The school has 114 pupils on its register of special educational needs (29 per cent), and this is above average. Sixty one pupils on the special educational needs register receive additional support from outside agencies and have individual education plans. Five pupils have statements of special education needs (1.3 per cent) and this is broadly average. Most of the pupils on the special needs register have a moderate learning difficulty although the difficulties are wide ranging. The school has housed the Local Education Authority Expressive Language Unit since 1992 and provides short-term specialist care for up to 15 pupils.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school with some very good features. An energetic headteacher provides very strong leadership and she is supported by a dedicated team of teachers and a knowledgeable and effective governing body. The quality of teaching and learning is good. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' standards in mathematics and science are well above average when compared with similar schools. Parents express justifiable satisfaction with the education their children receive at Westvale Primary School. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- When compared with similar schools, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are well above average in mathematics and science and above average in English.
- Teaching is good and most pupils make good progress throughout the school.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher and governors are very good.
- Pupils have a good attitude to learning and behave well. Relationships within school are very good.
- The school cares for the pupils well.
- The school is held in very high regard by parents and has strong links with the local secondary school and the community.

What could be improved

- The progress of higher attaining pupils and some pupils on the special education needs register.
- The standards and provision for information technology, especially at Key Stage 2.
- The role of senior staff in managing the three key stages and special educational needs.
- The organisation and balance in the curriculum where lessons in literacy and numeracy are too long.
- Attendance rates which are well below the national average.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school was last inspected in November 1996, it has done well in successfully dealing with most of the issues raised. The governors reviewed the time available for teaching within the school day in Key Stage 2 and now provide the recommended teaching time. Teaching has improved since the last inspection and curriculum co-ordinators monitor and evaluate the development and delivery of their areas of responsibility. Opportunities for the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills have increased since the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. Effective strategies have been developed to bring about improved behaviour at lunchtime.

Some of the other areas to develop have been addressed in part but others are still ongoing. For example, teachers are now using assessments more rigorously to inform short-term curriculum planning. However, short-term planning needs to be more specific, especially in addressing the needs of higher attainers and slow learners. Teachers now provide more challenging and enriching opportunities for pupils to be independent in their learning, especially in science and history enquiry

work. However, pupils still need more opportunities in other areas of learning, for example to use computers and to write at length instead of using worksheets. More consideration to classroom management and organisational strategies is also needed to match more closely the pupils' curricular needs, especially in the very long literacy and numeracy lessons.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	D	D	E	B
mathematics	B	D	C	A
science	C	C	C	A

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

In the 2000 national tests for 11 year olds, pupils' standards were close to the national average in mathematics and science but standards were well below the national average in English. When compared with similar schools, standards were well above average in mathematics and science and above average in English.

The full range of inspection evidence shows that at the age of seven, standards in speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics and science are below national expectations. Standards in English, mathematics and science are in line with national expectations at the age of 11 although writing and spelling are areas in need of development. In information and communications technology, pupils reach the nationally expected level by the age of seven but standards by the age of 11 are below national expectations because computers are not used enough. In art, music and geography, standards are in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. In history there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about standards by the age of seven but by 11 pupils meet national expectations and use enquiry skills particularly well. Only ball skills were being taught in physical education lessons but the pupils' skills were impressive and above national expectations for seven and 11 year olds in this aspect of the curriculum. It was not possible to make a judgement about standards in design and technology. Standards in religious education meet the expectations of the local guidelines.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes at all times. They are eager to learn, respond well in lessons and are keen to discuss their views.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in lessons and breaktimes is good. There was no evidence during the inspection of any unsociable behaviour, racism or bullying. Pupils are consistently polite and well mannered towards visitors.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good. Pupils collaborate very well in the classroom and enjoy working together.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. The school has worked hard to improve the attendance rate but it remains well below national average. The punctuality of a small number of pupils is consistently unsatisfactory.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
90 lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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

Teaching is good and no unsatisfactory lessons were observed. Of the 90 lessons seen, 36 per cent were satisfactory, 52 per cent were good and 12 per cent were either very good or excellent. In most lessons the good teaching is characterised by the teachers' good knowledge and understanding of the subject, good levels of challenge resulting from high expectations, purposeful questioning and a good choice and use of resources. All teachers have good relationships with their pupils and they control them well. Assessment is used consistently to inform future planning to enable teachers to build effectively on previous learning. Teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology across the curriculum.

The teaching of English and mathematics is good overall. Strengths in English include the way that teachers give good explanations to pupils and clear instructions for the tasks that they ask pupils to do. Review sessions at the end of literacy and numeracy lessons are consistently used well to consolidate learning and to provide a firm platform on which to further develop understanding. Weaknesses in some literacy lessons are that teachers do not allow sufficient time for pupils to think and reply in a discussion session. In numeracy lessons some introductory sessions are too long and instructions are insufficiently clear. The mental starter to numeracy lessons is sometimes too short or the pace is too slow.

The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Pupils benefit from the good liaison between the school and outside agencies. Some class teachers and classroom support staff are aware of pupils' learning targets and use them well to plan work for pupils, particularly in literacy and numeracy. However, this approach is not consistent across all staff involved in teaching these pupils or across other subjects of the curriculum. Teaching in the expressive language unit is good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Children in the nursery and reception classes receive a stimulating curriculum. A broad and relevant curriculum is planned for the infant and junior classes. However, there is an imbalance in the curriculum. There is too little time spent using information and communication technology and some literacy and numeracy lessons are too long.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and pupils make satisfactory progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. Weaknesses are in the regular systematic assessment of pupils' needs which leads to some teachers setting work which is too easy or too hard.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Pupils' social development is very good, moral development is good and spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Staff provide many opportunities for pupils to collaborate in lessons. Although pupils have a good knowledge of their own culture, their knowledge of the music, art and dance of other cultures is less well developed.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares very well for the health and welfare of its pupils. Staff know the pupils very well and very good relationships exist between them. Effective procedures are in place for monitoring the progress of pupils' academic work and their behaviour.

Parents hold the school in very high esteem and have excellent views about it. This view is reflected by the extremely high response to the questionnaire and the consistently favourable comments that parents make.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very strong and effective leadership and a clear sense of purpose that creates a sense of community among staff, pupils and parents. The senior management team supports the headteacher well and this could be improved further by defining clearly the role of the co-ordinators who oversee departments. The co-ordinator for special educational needs has insufficient time to carry out the important role of monitoring and evaluating the work of colleagues.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is a strong supporter of the school, takes a keen interest in it and fulfils its statutory responsibilities very well. It has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher, deputy headteacher, subject co-ordinators and governors effectively monitor, evaluate and support teaching and the curriculum. The school fully analyses the results of assessments and tests which give a good picture of pupils' attainment and progress.
The strategic use of resources	School development planning is very good and it successfully drives forward the clearly focused initiatives. The detailed plan for the current year is linked well to the school's budget. The governing body ensures that all decisions provide the best value for pupils.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are generally good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school and they make good progress. • The teaching is good and the school expects children to work hard and achieve their best. • The school works closely with parents and keeps parents well informed about how their child is getting on. • Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. • The school is well led and managed. • The school helps children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No significant number of parents expressed dissatisfaction with any aspect of the school.

This table takes account of the views of 13 parents attending a meeting held with the registered inspector prior to the inspection and those expressed in 211 returned questionnaires. The inspection team agrees with the positive views of parents. Of the 12 questions on the questionnaire, over 90 per cent of parents either agreed with or strongly agreed with the school's provision in 11 of them.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Children arriving in the nursery at the age of three have skills in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development well below those usually found in children of this age.
2. Although they do not reach the average for their age by the end of the reception classes, all children make good progress in communication, language and literacy during their time in nursery and reception classes. Early reading and writing skills are developed well. All children make good progress in the mathematical area of their learning throughout the foundation stage although few reach the average standard by the end of the reception classes. Children have little experience of colour, number and shape when they start in the nursery but through a range of well-devised activities they quickly learn to count, are taught the names of and recognise simple shapes and colours. Children make satisfactory progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world in both nursery and reception classes although their overall attainment is below that usually found by the end of the reception year. Children's physical development is typical of other children of this age although more opportunities are needed for outdoor play in both classes. Children make good progress in creative development and the provision is good. The children's personal, social and emotional development also proceeds well in nursery and reception classes.
3. In the 2000 English national tests, results show that by the age of seven, pupils' attainment in reading is below that found nationally. In comparison with similar schools, the number of pupils attaining at the national level (Level 2) and above is well above those usually found. In writing, pupils' attainment was well below the national average but average when compared with similar schools. No pupils attain at the higher level in writing (Level 3) by the age of seven. Boys and girls achieve equally as well as each other.
4. Inspection findings show that pupils start in Year 1 with levels of attainment well below those usually found in language and literacy. By the age of seven, about half of the pupils are achieving within the expected level in the areas of English of speaking and listening, reading and writing, although none reach the higher levels (Level 3) in writing. Speaking and listening skills for pupils at the age of seven are below average although a significant number of the higher attaining pupils achieve standards in line with the national expectation. However, nearly all of the pupils in the lower attaining set for pupils aged seven have below average speaking and listening skills.
5. Many younger pupils at age seven find reading difficult and although they make good progress in Years 1 and 2 they do not reach the expected level by the age of seven. Few pupils read fluently and with expression and the more able readers do not take sufficient account of punctuation. Those pupils who read to their parents regularly make the best progress and enjoy their reading.
6. Writing and spelling have been recognised as the weakest aspect of the English curriculum by the school. This aspect is high on the agenda for development although the majority of pupils are responding well to the good teaching. From a very low base when pupils arrive in Year 1 pupils make good progress and in Year 2 they

are developing a better understanding of the purpose of writing despite being well below average.

7. In the mathematics 2000 national tests for seven year olds, the school reached a milestone when for the first time every pupil achieved at least the expected level (Level 2). However, very few pupils achieved the higher level. Overall standards were in line with the national average and well above average when compared with similar schools. Boys and girls achieve equally as well as each other. The results were a significant improvement on the 1999 standards when the pupils' performance was judged to be well below the national average. Inspection findings confirm the results of the national tests and also find that for higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 1, work is not always sufficiently challenging to enable them to reach the standards of which they are capable.
8. In science standards by the age of seven are below the national average. In the 2000 teacher assessments for seven year olds the number of pupils reaching the required standard is similar to the national picture but none of the higher-attaining pupils reached the higher level that is expected of them. When compared to pupils in similar schools their attainment is above average. The analysis of pupils' work and discussion with them shows that average-attaining pupils make satisfactory progress from Year 1 to Year 2. However, the high-attaining pupils are not given work that challenges them, and their progress is unsatisfactory. This is mainly because lessons are planned and taught at the average level. This may be appropriate occasionally but not for the majority of lessons.
9. In the 2000 tests for 11 year olds, pupils' performance in English was well below the national average but average when compared with similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected level was below the national average and the proportion of pupils achieving the higher level was well below the expected figure. However, pupils did much better in mathematics and science. In the tests in mathematics and science, pupils achieved standards that were in line with the national average but when compared with similar schools, results were well above the national average and higher attainers did well. Boys and girls achieve equally as well as each other in all subjects.
10. Results in the national tests in English over the past three years show that standards of pupils' attainment by the age of 11 are improving. Following a dip in attainment in 1996 and 1997 standards have risen in line with the national trend. This is due to the good teaching of English at all stages in the school. Inspection findings show standards are continuing to rise and judgements are similar to those found at the previous inspection for pupils aged 11. In their speaking and listening, most pupils in Year 6 speak confidently and with support put forward their own ideas for making a deduction from a text. By the end of Year 6, pupils of all abilities achieve close to the national average for reading although only a few attain at the higher levels. In writing there are already signs in the upper juniors of rising standards particularly in the higher attaining sets of pupils in Years 5 and 6. By the time they reach Year 6, higher attaining pupils' use of vocabulary becomes more imaginative and their use of punctuation is at the expected level. The creativity of writing is not as imaginative for lower attaining groups of pupils although they are developing their confidence and technical skills of writing well. Writing throughout the school is not supported sufficiently by using computers. There are no computers in the classrooms to allow pupils to practise what they learn on a frequent and regular basis, for instance about sentence work and spelling. Handwriting is untidy in some classes and all teachers should raise their expectations of presentation.

11. Standards in mathematics showed further improvements on the 1999 results. Although the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level was below the national average, a particularly pleasing aspect was that 28 per cent of pupils achieved a higher level. The full range of inspection evidence confirms these findings and shows that by the end of Year 6, standards are close to national levels. Improved results can be attributed to the appropriate emphasis given to using and applying number skills, the encouragement given to pupils to explain their thinking to help develop reasoning. The grouping of pupils by ability is helping to ensure that work is more carefully matched to pupils' needs.
12. Most pupils make good gains in learning as they move through the school, especially in Years 5 and 6, because of good teaching. Higher attaining pupils, mostly in Years 1 to 4, make satisfactory progress but this could be improved if they were always given challenging work that built on their recently acquired skills.
13. Inspection evidence shows that by the age of 11 standards in science are in line with the national expectation. When compared to pupils in similar schools pupils' attainment is well above average. Since the previous inspection the improvement in the school's results is similar to the national picture. A significant strength in the subject is that practical work is taught effectively across the school. From Years 3 to 6 teachers match the work well to pupils' needs and this means that most pupils make good progress in their learning.
14. In information technology, the standards achieved at the end of Key Stage 1 are broadly in line with those expected for pupils aged seven years. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in using an expected range of equipment. Attainment by the age of 11 is below average when compared with the national expectation and progress of most pupils is unsatisfactory. This is due to the lack of consistent and prolonged use of the computers which prevents them from reinforcing and building on these skills at an appropriate pace.
15. In art, music and geography, standards are in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. In history there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about standards by the age of seven but by 11 pupils meet national expectations and use enquiry skills particularly well. Only ball skills were being taught in physical education lessons but the pupils' skills were impressive and above national expectations for seven and 11 year olds in this aspect of the curriculum. It was not possible to make a judgement about standards in design and technology. Standards in religious education meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.
16. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in their learning, particularly in literacy and numeracy skills. Standards, although below those expected for the pupils' ages, are satisfactory in relation to the pupils' identified needs and specific targets. These targets are clear, specific, achievable and suitably challenging. The individual targets for pupils with statements of special educational need are reviewed regularly, for example at bi-monthly intervals. The targets for pupils who receive outside support are reviewed carefully and thoroughly every three to six months and are used to set future targets. Formal systems for checking their progress in-between the reviews are not in place and this means that most pupils' progress is only satisfactory.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

17. The attitudes of pupils to school and to their learning are good and their behaviour, in and around school, is also good. The high standards that were evident at the last inspection have been maintained and consolidated. There has been a good

improvement in the behaviour of pupils in the dining hall at lunchtime and the school has addressed the key issue raised in the last inspection effectively. Parents have very positive views about the standards of behaviour in school. Ninety six per cent of those who responded to the questionnaire considered that behaviour was good. In lessons the behaviour of pupils across the school is consistently satisfactory, frequently good and sometimes very good. There are no exclusions from school. Overall, these high standards have a very positive impact on pupils' learning.

18. Pupils are very aware of the rewards and sanctions procedures and take pride in being included in the celebration assemblies. All pupils enjoy their lessons and are keen to discuss their views in class. For example, in a Year 1 personal, social and health education lesson they were talking about the lunchtime rules and the reasons for them. Additionally, in a Year 4 religious education lesson, pupils were discussing the importance of moderation in aspects of their own lives.
19. Relationships, between pupils and one another and pupils and all adults, are very good. Pupils collaborate very well in the classroom and enjoy working together. Pupils play sensibly together in the playground and there was no evidence during the inspection of any unsociable behaviour, racism or bullying. All pupils are consistently polite and well mannered towards visitors. For example, in some classes, visitors were greeted by name as they moved around the class and spoke to pupils. Additionally, when Year 3 pupils went to the swimming pool on the coach, their relationships with staff and parent helpers were very good and, on leaving the coach, most pupils said "thank you" to the driver. The high quality of these relationships has a positive impact on pupils' learning.
20. The opportunities for pupils to take responsibility in school are good. In addition to acting as class monitors, older pupils, who are designated as "friends", are often seen looking after younger ones at dinnertime and in the playground. The school council also provides good opportunities for its elected members to discuss aspects of school life, such as their likes and dislikes of the playground. In Key Stage 1, pupils were interviewing members of staff, including the headteacher, as part of their geography lesson. Additionally, in a Year 6 physical education lesson, pupils were observed controlling their own activities under the skilled guidance of a teacher from Brookfield High School. Pupils make generous donations to a number of charities such as the Poppy Day Appeal, Comic Relief and Christian Aid. Each year they collect about £1,000. The Salvation Army also benefits from the harvest festival donations of pupils. The responsibilities that pupils are given in school have a positive impact on their personal development.
21. Although attendance rates have improved slightly since the last inspection they remain well below national average. The school is working hard to improve the situation and it works closely with the appropriate support agencies. Compared to local schools in similar circumstances, Westvale Primary does well. The punctuality of a small number of pupils to school is consistently unsatisfactory.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

22. Overall, the teaching is good. All lessons are at least satisfactory. Sixty four per cent of lessons are good or better and 12 per cent are very good. Based on the evidence available in the previous inspection report, there has been a good improvement in the quality of teaching. This is due to improved practice in the teaching of literacy, numeracy and information and communications technology resulting from in-service training and the national initiatives. The need for more training in the teaching of information and communications technology is recognised by the school. It can also be attributed to regular and effective monitoring of teaching by the headteacher, curriculum co-ordinators and the local authority adviser. Some teachers who were present at the last inspection are no longer at the school.
23. Teaching in the nursery and reception classes is never less than satisfactory and good in 80 per cent of lessons. Teachers and support staff show a good understanding of the children's needs and communicate with them well. Planning is well organised so that the children's experiences are meaningful and varied. Staff in the nursery and reception classes work well together as teams within their classes. They create a calm, quiet and working atmosphere and there are well-established routines during the nursery sessions and reception lessons where children sit in a group with the teacher for stories, working together in small groups supported by adults. Personal development is developed well at all times in the nursery and in particular in groups and at snack times. Teachers in both the nursery and reception are friendly, have good management skills and have high expectations that children will listen well and follow instructions. Children make good progress in communication, language and literacy during the foundation stage because good teaching in all classes focuses well on the basic skills, especially speaking and listening. Teachers promote an understanding of number through a range of well-devised activities. For example, in a very good, stimulating activity for a teddy bear's tea party, the teacher taught and reinforced the one to one matching of numbers up to five for groups of five children as well as mathematical vocabulary. The well-focused teaching in all areas of learning results in good attitudes and a keenness to listen and take part and concentrate on their learning.
24. Teaching at Key Stage 1 is good with 67 per cent of the lessons seen judged to be good. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is also good in 57 per cent of lessons and especially good in Year 6. All lessons in Key Stages 1 and 2 are at least satisfactory.
25. The teaching of English and mathematics is good overall but there are some areas in which the school should improve. Strengths in English include the way that teachers give good explanations to pupils and clear instructions for the tasks that they ask pupils to do. The end of literacy and numeracy sessions are consistently used well to consolidate learning and to provide a firm platform on which to develop pupils' understanding further. Weaknesses in some literacy lessons are that teachers do not always allow sufficient time for pupils to think and reply in a discussion session. In numeracy lessons some introductory sessions are too long for maximum impact and instructions are insufficiently clear. The quality of the mental starter to numeracy lessons is too variable. Sometimes it is too short, or the pace is insufficiently brisk to enable pupils to increase their speed of mental recall to help improve their learning.
26. In most subjects teachers show good subject knowledge, give clear explanations, and use appropriate technical vocabulary. This is particularly the case in science and history lessons. In the best lessons, the expectations and objectives of the lessons are emphasised at the start and as a result pupils are well focused, concentrate extremely well and make good progress.

27. Teachers and other adults circulate very well to monitor, check and support pupils' learning. In these lessons pupils respond with enthusiasm to the challenging targets and are left with a sense of achievement when the lessons end. Such was the case in a Year 5 science lesson about separating iron filings from a mixture. Through the teacher's very good planning of demanding yet enjoyable activities, she promoted pupils' enquiry skills and encouraged collaborative working. Pupils' personal development was further extended due to the open-ended approach to the task.
28. Most lessons are well organised and some teachers use time and resources imaginatively and efficiently. In an excellent history lesson in Year 6, the teacher organised a street party to celebrate the end of World War II with staff and pupils dressed in the style of the 1940s. The superb use of artefacts, including music of the era played on an old gramophone and the sampling of food such as Marmite sandwiches brought history alive. An original document read out about a father "missing in action – presumed dead" was an emotional experience that left some pupils visibly moved. Much of this would not have worked were it not for the warm and supportive relationships that teachers have with their pupils.
29. In another excellent lesson, a visiting specialist teacher from the local secondary school taught a lesson which could not be bettered. Pupils were enthralled throughout and their ball skills were very impressive. This was the result of the teacher's very high expectations and a genuine and supportive manner. This style raised pupils' self-esteem and confidence through the excellent use of praise to motivate, encourage and inform. Pupils' personal and social development was enhanced as they maturely discussed how to create a ball game with rules and demonstrate it to others. The way that pupils supported each other and considered ways to improve on their ideas without being hurtful was a delight to observe.
30. Despite the strengths by far outweighing the weaknesses, there are areas to develop. One aspect that teachers do not consider enough is the use of information and communication technology to support and enhance pupils' learning in all subjects. Computers are quite simply not used enough. On some occasions the teachers do not clearly show what pupils of different abilities are to learn in their lesson planning. They mainly give pupils work at appropriate levels, but it is sometimes not precise enough in stretching the most able or supporting the slower learners. Evidence from the scrutiny of pupils' work shows that some teachers do not have high enough expectations about the presentation of pupils' and, on occasions, their own work. Teachers' marking is often encouraging but lacks rigour especially in dealing with untidy handwriting, spelling and presentation. This work is often accepted without comment.
31. Most of the homework given is appropriate and supports pupils' learning. Eighty nine per cent of the parents who returned their questionnaires commented favourably about the work that pupils do at home, whereas 7 per cent of parents were dissatisfied.
32. The quality of learning is generally good and most pupils sustain concentration, are responsive and keen to work. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and control them well. They expect pupils to be independent in learning, which helps pupils develop their personal and social skills. Pupils listen attentively, handle resources sensibly and respond well to adults. They recall, use and practise previously learned information in new contexts. Many pupils, particularly those in Years 5 and 6 ask purposeful questions and develop an understanding and appreciation of complex issues. Pupils work well together, helping each other to

succeed. Positive attitudes enable them to sustain concentration and in most classes they are keenly motivated to learn. Good behaviour contributes positively to the standards pupils achieve and to their competence as learners.

33. Pupils' learning benefits from the good liaison between the school and outside agencies and from specialist teachers who visit the school regularly. Classroom teachers and classroom support staff, provide a good level of general support for these pupils. The learning of Year 3 pupils with special educational needs is enhanced by the effective teaching of the well structured 'catch up' programme that focuses on improving pupils' literacy skills, such as reading and spelling. Some class teachers and classroom support staff are aware of pupils' learning targets and use them well to plan work for pupils, particularly in literacy and numeracy. This approach is not consistent across all staff involved in teaching these pupils or across other subjects of the curriculum. This means that pupils' learning is only satisfactory.

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

34. Children in the nursery and reception classes receive a sound and stimulating curriculum that helps them to make satisfactory progress. Teachers focus on developing children's number, language and communication skills as well as social skills and this is very effective. The new curriculum for the foundation phase has been reviewed during this year. The nursery plans very well to the early learning goals but this curriculum is not fully carried through for all children in the reception years. Some children move into aspects of the infant curriculum before they have had sufficient experiences, for instance in their creative and physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. This hampers the development of some children. Planning in the nursery is well organised with a selection of relevant topics over a two-year period so that nursery experiences are meaningful and varied.
35. The curriculum for the infant and junior classes meets statutory requirements and provides pupils with a range of learning opportunities. These opportunities are well planned and prepared for pupils of all abilities throughout the school and from Year 2 onwards pupils are set into classes by ability for English and mathematics. This ensures that pupils are taught according to their previous ability and that the activities prepared for them by teachers are relevant to their interests and understanding. Religious education is taught according to the locally recommended guidelines.
36. The school plans for a balance of all subjects within the curriculum and there is an appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Additional lessons are in place for these subjects as well as booster catch-up groups that take place all year round. However, some literacy lessons are extended beyond the time normally recommended. This results in a lack of pace in these lessons and all pupils do not sustain their interest to the end of the lessons. In some classes there is an imbalance of subjects over the week. For instance, on one day a class has no numeracy lesson all day and the next day additional numeracy lessons are on the timetable. This means that the daily mental mathematics session to improve pupils' mental agility with number is inconsistently applied. Information technology is planned for and the curriculum meets the statutory requirements although the provision does not have sufficient effect on the standard of pupils' attainment. Neither does information technology contribute sufficiently well to other subjects of the curriculum such as literacy, mathematics and science. The provision for pupils to acquire information technology skills has been hampered by a lack of teachers' expertise in the subject. Also, the current organisation of computers into a suite, which is timetabled for class use, allows insufficient time for pupils' personal study or

use in other subjects. The science curriculum is good and practical scientific enquiry is a strength in the teaching of science.

37. The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and the effective teaching in these lessons is leading to improved standards by the age of 11. Planning for these subjects follows the nationally recommended guidelines. Although these areas take up a considerable part of the school day other subjects are planned for accordingly.
38. There is satisfactory provision for most pupils who have special educational needs. The provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs is met fully. The school meets the requirements of the national Code of Practice¹. There is a good, clear, up-to-date policy that includes provision for gifted and talented pupils, although the school currently has none of these pupils. Pupils' individual targets are sufficiently challenging, practical, clear and easy for staff, parents and pupils to understand. When specialist support staff withdraw pupils from the classroom for focused work on their specific targets or on assessments of their progress, class teachers make sure this does not affect the pupils' curriculum entitlement. Pupils' individual learning targets are mainly used in literacy and numeracy and this approach is not applied consistently across all areas of the curriculum. This means that most pupils' needs are not being fully met across the curriculum.
39. Sex education and drugs education is provided through a well-planned programme of personal, social and health education and the science curriculum. Visitors to school such as the school nurse and community policeman make a good contribution in these areas.
40. As part of the group of Kirkby Mainstream Maintained Schools, Westvale works well with other schools in the area to develop curriculum links across all subjects. Led by a local headteacher, different curriculum groups meet regularly over the year to raise awareness of recent curriculum developments and initiate areas to develop. For instance, the history group benefited the school by working closely with the local library and enhanced the opportunity for pupils to develop and increase their library research skills.
41. The school provides well for extra-curricular activities. A variety of after-school clubs is in place. These include football, art, and computers. Last year pupils had the opportunity to take part in French, musical composition and a lunch-time judo club. Not all activities are well attended.
42. The school provides a good range of educational visits to complement lessons and many visitors such as poets, authors and musicians come into school. Pupils visit local churches and places of worship for different faiths such as a mosque in Liverpool. Frequent visits to places of interest such as museums, theatres, concerts, a nearby safari park and a local farm contribute well to the curriculum. Older pupils have the opportunity of a residential visit at an outdoor centre and a visit abroad. This promotes their personal development well.
43. The school's involvement with local businesses and the community makes a contribution to pupils' learning. Notably the link with Zeneca (a large multi-national pharmaceutical corporation) has made an important contribution to the science

¹ Code of Practice – this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.

curriculum and the Everton and Liverpool football teams to pupils' team participation in football. The school has very good links with the main local feeder secondary school. Teachers from the school visit on a regular basis. Staff and pupils get to know each other when teachers from the secondary school contribute to the teaching of pupils, for instance in physical education and in the running of a computer club.

44. The provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Limited opportunities arise in religious education lessons when pupils can reflect on the values and beliefs of other faiths such as when pupils considered the values of moderation in Buddhism. In assemblies themes such as helping each other are developed through the week but there is little time for reflection on these themes during the assembly. Although younger pupils were asked how they had helped and who had helped them, no time was allowed for them to reflect quietly on the story of the Good Samaritan. However, in an assembly led by a visitor for the older pupils, prayers and reflection followed the theme of helping the homeless and starving. Assemblies still do not contribute sufficiently to spiritual development as was the case at the last inspection. In a history lesson at the completion of work on the Second World War pupils took part in a 'street party'. They were struck with awe when a notice of a 'person missing, presumed dead' was read out from an original document.
45. Provision for moral development is good and that for social development is very good. These two elements are brought together when pupils agree on their own rules for the classroom. Pupils have a clear understanding of right from wrong and appreciate the need to have rules and accepted codes of behaviour both inside and outside the classroom. The election of a school council for periods of half a term gives the opportunity for as many pupils as possible to serve. An assembly presented by the school council provided a good opportunity for them to present rules for the school playground that they had compiled from information collected by the representatives.
46. Throughout the school pupils are given the opportunities to work co-operatively and collaboratively within the classroom. All adults present good role models and pupils are respected and valued. The programme of personal and social lessons is good and these give pupils the chance to consider social values. For example Year 1 pupils drew posters to illustrate good behaviour at lunchtime and then described these to the rest of the class. In a Year 3 class pupils thought of occasions when they would use 'please', 'thank you' and 'sorry'.
47. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Through the curriculum pupils study the main religions of the world and therefore gain some knowledge of other cultures but music and art outside the religions is under-developed. The art curriculum includes the study of famous artists such as Van Gogh, Cézanne and Kandinsky. Pupils from all age groups have had the opportunity to work with an artist and all pupils have the experience of educational visits, including a residential visit for the oldest pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

48. The school cares very well for its pupils. This aspect of school life continues to be a strength of the school. This high standard of care is underpinned by the very good knowledge that staff have of their pupils and the very good quality of relationships which exist between all members of staff and the pupils.
49. A number of very effective and comprehensive procedures are in place for both child protection and health and safety, which result in a safe and secure environment in which the children learn. For example, staff and parent helpers ensure that all pupils wear seat belts in the coach on the way to the swimming baths. Additionally, the governing body takes an active part in ensuring that regular health and safety inspections and fire drills are carried out at least once a term. Effective arrangements exist for first aid and to cope with any allergies that pupils may have. On a number of occasions staff were seen giving tender loving care to pupils who had hurt themselves in minor playground accidents or who were feeling unwell. The effectiveness of the personal, social and health education programme also ensures that pupils are very well supported in drug awareness, citizenship and other important aspects of school life.
50. All the members of staff have information about any medical problems that pupils have. This ensures pupils receive the necessary care and attention they may need. The provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs is met fully. Staff encourage pupils with special educational needs to become independent in their social skills and learning. They take all available steps to promote self-esteem and self-confidence, for example by praising pupils' efforts and achievements. Teachers use assessment effectively to identify needs at an early stage and pupils' individual targets are reviewed every three to six months. Pupils' progress is discussed informally in between the reviews but formal, regular and efficient systems for assessing, recording and tracking pupils' progress are not in place. This means that there may be a delay in moving pupils up and down the register as their needs change because of the period of time between reviews. For example, in a Year 3 literacy lesson two pupils with special educational needs were working at the same level. One of the pupils had made good progress in reading in half a term and was much more advanced in reading than the other. The review of her progress was not scheduled for at least another half term.
51. The procedures for promoting and monitoring behaviour are good. The school has high expectations for the behaviour of its pupils and there is a consistent application of rewards and sanctions by all staff. Pupils are involved in monitoring their own behaviour if they are involved in an incident. They are required to consider "how they should have reacted". These procedures have a positive impact in that pupils have a very good idea of right and wrong and almost all respond in the appropriate way. The school now has effective procedures to ensure that the midday assistants are involved in the implementation of policies. As a result, the quality of supervision in the dining hall and in the playground has improved well since the last inspection.
52. The school is working hard to improve attendance rates and the procedures for promoting and monitoring attendance are satisfactory.
53. Very good procedures have been developed to ensure that pupils are well prepared to move into the next stage of their education. Very effective relationships exist between the school and Brookfield High School and these result in a smooth transition for all pupils into Year 7.

54. The arrangements to assess and monitor pupils' academic progress are good. The school has worked hard to improve its assessment procedures since the last inspection and it now successfully links planning, assessment and record keeping which involves both pupils and teachers. Children are assessed on entry to the nursery by regular observations that are related to a series of statements linked to the early learning goals. Baseline assessment takes place in reception classes and the results of this assessment are added to the records that start when a child starts the school.
55. Assessment of English and mathematics and science is linked to clear learning targets in planning. These targets are set every half term for groups of pupils of similar ability and achievement matched against these targets. The results of these assessments are recorded on individual pupil profiles. Progress is therefore successfully monitored throughout the school and pupils regularly move between groups ensuring that the needs of individual pupils are met. The school has compiled portfolios of work taken from pupils in both the younger and older classes of varying ability and over a period of time. This is now a valuable resource for staff to track pupils' progress.
56. The school fully analyses the results of the national tests for pupils of seven and 11 years old. Staff are therefore able to identify any areas of general weakness and this is used to inform future curriculum planning. The school also makes full use of optional standardised tests in Years 3, 4 and 5. This gives the school a good picture of pupils' attainment and progress from year to year and enables pupils to be placed in sets of approximately equal attainment for English and mathematics lessons. It also enables targets to be set for particular groups of pupils and support given to those groups whose attainment is insufficiently high. Individual projected levels of attainment are set at the beginning of each year and these are effective in assessing if pupils' achievement is high enough.
57. Pupils have the opportunity to build up their own records of achievement over their school life by choosing their own pieces of work to go into a personal portfolio. As well as building a record of work that shows the development in their learning it builds their self-esteem and therefore contributes to their personal development.
58. With the exception of religious education and information and communication technology, foundation subjects (that is, subjects other than English, mathematics and science) are assessed and evaluated by the teacher and pupil at the end of each unit of work. Pupils record what they have learnt and possibly what they enjoyed and any new words that may be associated with the topic concerned.
59. Teachers successfully evaluate their lessons on a daily basis and use this information to guide future lessons. Teachers mark pupils work conscientiously, encouraging them by praising good work and genuine effort.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

60. The school has maintained and consolidated its good partnership with parents since the last inspection. Parents now hold the school in very high esteem and have excellent views about it. This view is reflected by the very high response to the questionnaire and the very favourable comments that all parents made. Ninety six per cent of those parents that responded felt that the school worked closely with them and an even higher percentage considered that they could approach the school with any problems or concerns that they might have.

61. A number of parents were observed helping in class and on a visit to the swimming bath and their overall contribution to school life is good. They are well prepared for each lesson and regularly receive feedback on their contribution. They feel valued by the school. Additionally, the school has provided opportunities for parents to improve their own learning by attending link classes in such subjects as, English, maths, first aid and dress making. This has had a positive impact in that more parents are visiting the school.
62. Parents and friends of the school work hard to raise large sums of money through the friends' association which has only recently been formed. In the last year they have raised £4,500 from various events. This money has been used to improve the fabric of the school and to improve resources.
63. The nursery induction procedures involve a series of visits by parents and carers with the children to familiarise them with the routines and to get to know the adults working with them. A separate nursery brochure as well as the school brochure is informative and the welcome booklet for nursery children helps teachers and helpers get to know what the children can do before they arrive at school. Parents and carers receive satisfactory information on the nursery curriculum for each term and informative letters are sent home with children frequently.
64. The quality of information that the school provides for its parents continues to be very good. The school produces the regular Westvale Gazette, which is a chatty and informative newsletter informing parents of future events and activities. Additionally, the headteacher always ensures that she is in the playground each morning to greet parents. School reports on pupils' progress are very useful and informative. Most parents are interested in the teachers' comments and support the school in providing the best they can for their children.
65. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are invited to discuss their children's progress as part of the special educational needs review process and parents respond well to the invitation. This mainly takes place with specialist staff during parent consultation evenings.
66. The support provided by parents to home reading, reading in school and to other homework is satisfactory and it has had a positive impact on raising standards.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

67. The headteacher provides very strong and effective leadership and a clear sense of purpose that creates a sense of community among staff, pupils and parents. This is reflected in the school's move to gain the 'Investors in People' award. All the parents who replied to the pre-inspection questionnaire feel that the school is well led and managed. The headteacher has a strong commitment to high achievement. She has been in post for one year and has developed a number of very good systems and initiatives to raise standards but these have not been in place long enough to have sufficient impact. The headteacher is ably supported by the deputy headteacher. The senior management team supports the headteacher well and this could be improved further by defining clearly the role of the co-ordinators who oversee departments. The school is very well placed to extend the good improvements made since the previous inspection.
68. The school promotes equality of opportunity and meets its aims successfully, except with regard to high-attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs

achieving their full potential. There is a positive ethos reflected in the very good relationships within the school and this has a beneficial effect on standards.

69. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and subject co-ordinators effectively monitor, evaluate and support teaching and the curriculum. The school has responded well to national initiatives in literacy and numeracy and initiatives in information and communication technology are developing. The school has suitable induction procedures for new staff. The headteacher appraises and develops all staff very effectively and ensures that a range of training opportunities is available to improve their skills. These are linked to external funding and to the school development plan. This well developed approach and the fact that two staff are accredited trainers, ensures that the school provides very well for initial teacher training. The school trained several students last year.
70. There is a good, clear, up-to-date policy for special educational needs, good liaison with outside agencies and provision for pupils from specialist staff who visit the school. The identified governor for special educational needs visits the school regularly. The co-ordinator for special educational needs has insufficient time to carry out the important role of monitoring and evaluating the work of colleagues. Formal, regular and efficient systems for tracking pupils' progress are not in place. These factors have affected the good management of special educational needs identified in the previous inspection and it is now satisfactory.
71. The governing body is a strong supporter of the school, takes a keen interest in it and carefully monitors standards of teaching, learning and the curriculum. It fulfils its statutory responsibilities very well, and has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The governing body meets regularly and has an effective system of committees to oversee various aspects of school life. Teachers make regular presentations to the governing body on curriculum initiatives. Some governors are involved in observing, teaching and learning, such as the literacy and numeracy governors.
72. School development planning is very good and it successfully drives forward the clearly focused initiatives. The detailed plan for this year is linked well to the school's budget and there is outline planning for the next four years. The initiatives in numeracy last year resulted in improvements in the 2000 national tests; for example, 100 per cent of Year 2 pupils gained Level 2 in mathematics. The school has set sufficiently challenging targets for improvement in national tests at age 11 and has taken effective action towards achieving these targets.
73. The previous inspection identified leadership and management as a strength of the school. This has been maintained and the roles of the subject co-ordinators and opportunities for their professional development have improved. The role of the co-ordinators with the responsibility for overseeing departments requires further development. Their roles are not clear, for example in being specific about monitoring and analysis of standards and the evaluating of the quality of education.
74. The school has clear procedures for ensuring that financial management is effective. Educational priorities are well supported through the school's financial planning, which is very good. Decisions for spending are closely linked to identified priorities in the school development plan. The governing body ensures that these decisions provide the best value for pupils. The allocation and use of finance to support identified priorities in the school development plan, is evaluated carefully to ensure that money is spent wisely. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

Specific grants available to the school, such as to support the training of staff, are carefully targeted to areas of greatest need.

75. Funding allocated to pupils with special educational needs is used efficiently to promote their progress and attainment through a good level of adult support and an appropriate range of learning resources. The school makes effective use of the special needs support service. This has a beneficial effect on learning and progress. The special educational needs co-ordinator manages this area well. However, the co-ordinator has insufficient time to carry out the role. This reduces her effectiveness in monitoring and evaluating the work of colleagues and the use made of individual education plans across the whole curriculum.
76. Overall, the school is staffed with well-qualified and dedicated teachers. Newly qualified teachers are well supported, both by the effective mentoring scheme and a good staffroom ethos. Appropriate job descriptions are in place, although in the case of the three key stage leaders these are not sufficiently specific about individuals' responsibilities. Nursery nurses and general assistants are much appreciated members of staff. Students from local colleges, both teaching and nursery nurses regularly undertake their training at the school and are supported well. The site manager is valued for his efforts, many of which are beyond the call of duty. He and the ancillary staff work very effectively and the school is clean and well cared for. The administration staff are experienced and highly efficient and make an important contribution to the smooth running of the school.
77. There have been a number of improvements made to the accommodation since the last inspection, particularly in the provision of two computer suites and a community room. However, some weaknesses remain. The non-fiction library is unattractive and not well organised. This creates problems for pupils in locating information books. A further problem is the grassed area for the nursery class that cannot be used all the year around due to difficulties with drainage. However, the nursery building is spacious and attractive and lively displays enhance the working environment for the children. Although space is limited, teachers in the reception classes organise their classrooms well and they are colourful and attractive with sound resources for use by a smaller number of children.
78. Most teachers are delighted that they have sufficient resources for all subjects of the curriculum and they use them well. However, in the foundation stage, climbing apparatus is not available every day either inside or outside and the outside activities are not planned for. This slows children's progress in increasing their control, for instance, manoeuvring at slower speeds. Children in the reception classes do not have access to the same outdoor provision and toys as nursery children. Since the last inspection, the school has improved and increased the range of computer hardware and software. However, despite the increases there have been significant technical problems that have led to pupils having irregular access to the machines and this is having a negative effect on standards. Most resources are used well to support learning. There is careful forward planning to take account of fluctuating pupil numbers and their impact on income and rigorous and frequent monitoring of spending patterns to ensure that the finances are tightly controlled. Contingency arrangements to ensure that the school's budget can meet future developments are clearly established and provide evidence of prudent financial management.
79. Taking into account the attainment of most pupils on entry and when they leave the school, the progress they make, and the quality of the education provided, the school provides good value for money.

THE SPEECH AND LANGUAGE UNIT

80. The purpose of the unit is to provide each pupil with intensive language intervention within the broad framework of the National Curriculum. Admission to the unit is closely controlled by the local authority and requires a statement of special educational need prior to entry. In recent years the unit has been full. Currently, however, due to the reintegration of a relatively large number of pupils, there are five empty places. In addition to their expressive language difficulties, some pupils have additional special educational needs such as dyspraxia, moderate learning difficulties, specific learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural difficulties.
81. The unit is very successful in meeting its primary aim, to return pupils to full-time education in mainstream classes as soon as possible. At present most of the pupils taught in the unit are in the infant age group. Older pupils work almost full-time, with support, in junior classes in the main school. One new pupil is under assessment within a reception class. At the end of last term several older pupils returned to their mainstream or special school base. The unit also performs an important diagnostic role in the assessment of pupils' difficulties and statements may be changed in the light of observations of progress.
82. Pupils make good progress in relation to their primary language needs. Progress is most notable in the development of understanding and use of sounds and in the way that words or parts of words combine in phrases and sentences. Pupils develop clearer articulation and better awareness of how to use intonation and stress to convey meaning in speech. Pupils also make good education progress in National Curriculum subjects in relation to their prior attainment. However, most remain below national expectations for their age group because of the delays in their early speech and language development.
83. Pupils have very good attitudes to their learning. Within the unit they work very hard to develop better articulation. They accept correction well and are always willing to practise areas that have been identified as part of their individual education plan or are their targets for the week. For example, in one lesson paired pupils are required to give clear instructions to each other, one pupil works continually on sounding the letter 't' and the other in putting words correctly into a sentence. Both are prepared to repeat the teacher's exemplars, regardless of the number of times they are asked. Most pupils find turn taking difficult and need continual reminders not to call out, although the development of confident speaking is itself welcomed.
84. Teaching is good overall. Teaching is usually carefully structured, often involving enjoyable games, to give pupils practice with essential terms and useful phrases. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the range of learning difficulties and have developed satisfactory strategies to promote pupils' learning. For example, as many pupils have difficulties in acquiring skills to become independent readers, good teaching was seen in helping pupils to use contextual and picture clues to decode words. Subject knowledge is satisfactory. Flexible use is made of opportunities for pupils to work with peers from mainstream classes to provide models of good speaking. Pupils are usually managed well. However, strategies for managing pupils with additional behavioural difficulties are not always clear and insufficient use is made of information technology as a support for learning. Teachers and support assistants work well as a team. Staff are firm, but tactful, in insisting that pupils answering questions are given sufficient time to think by other pupils eager to answer the question. The school's teaching and learning policy has not yet been adapted by the unit staff to make clear the teaching and learning strategies most effective for children with expressive language difficulties.

85. The provision of curricular opportunities is satisfactory. The use of curriculum time to provide specific help in developing communication skills and become competent language users is good. All pupils taught in the unit receive speech therapy and additional time for working on individual targets in speaking and listening and reading and writing. Pupils taught in the main school continue to receive speech therapy as well as some monitoring of progress towards targets. The curriculum developed for infants in the main school provides an appropriate basis upon which to plan the pupils' work. Good use is made of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy, which are generally satisfactorily adapted to the needs of pupils in the unit. Opportunities for working with other classes are more difficult to plan for in relation to foundation subjects. Some terms, staff provide both the infant and junior curriculum. It is therefore difficult to adapt all medium term plans to meet the needs of pupils in the unit. It is also difficult to plan for the absence of pupils on the days when they work in integrated classes and for when they are withdrawn for speech therapy. The school is rightly considering how to change the current system of planning.
86. The care for pupils and monitoring of overall progress is satisfactory. A wide range of assessment tools is used which staff are currently adapting to provide a closer match with special needs and language development. Staff need to clarify how and when ongoing assessment will take place. There is regular assessment against short-term planning but this is not consistent nor always in a form that is straightforward to monitor. The annual reviews are well held and provide a good overview of progress in educational and personal development. The presence of additional professionals such as educational psychologists and speech therapists, as well as the parents and school staff ensure a very good process of review. Staff in the unit have a very good awareness of the personal and social needs of pupils and the frustration pupils sometimes feel as well as inappropriate strategies for expressing their feelings. Additional guidance and support is provided both by the school staff and sometimes other specialists from outside the school.
87. The leadership and management of the unit are satisfactory. There is very good use made of other professional expertise and there were many examples of the speech therapist and teaching staff working closely together. Good use is made of volunteers, often parents and former members of staff, who have asked to work in school. Increased in-service opportunities are being well used to develop further expertise. The co-ordinator is also the school's special educational need co-ordinator. Although this has many advantages, particularly in developing common systems throughout the school, it also imposes some restrictions. For most of the week the co-ordinator teaches in the unit. Where older pupils are taught in classes within the main school, there is insufficient time for monitoring their progress or raising the awareness of teachers about the continuing need for support in language development. Policy in relation to ongoing monitoring is weak.
88. The school and unit staff are well aware of the implications of the local authority's current consultation across all schools on the future shape of provision for special educational needs. Their expertise and experience and very successful record in developing language competence as well as inclusion opportunities, means they are well placed to meet future developmental needs.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

89. In order to raise standards and improve the quality of education the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- i) address more specifically the needs of higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs by:
 - ensuring that a more coherent and common approach to short term-planning and preparation of individual education plans ensures that all teachers are clear about precisely what it is that pupils are to learn in lessons;
 - improving the consistency in quality of individual education programmes by ensuring that:
 - (a) work is more accurately matched for lowest ability groups;
 - (b) time scales are clearly stated to ensure that targets are met in the shortest time possible;
 - (c) individual education plans are updated more frequently;
 - ensuring that all staff have high expectations of pupils' presentation of their work and implement a consistent strategy to deal with untidy work and handwriting;
(paragraphs 10, 12, 16, 30, 33, 36, 38, 50, 103, 109, 111, 118, 121)
- ii) improve the standards in information technology by:
 - ensuring that teachers allocate sufficient time to information technology;
 - providing sufficiently detailed guidance to support teachers in planning effectively;
 - ensuring that a programme of work in each subject gives enough emphasis to all its required aspects;
 - providing further training for teachers in the use of information technology and how to organise it effectively for pupils;
(paragraphs 10, 14, 22, 30, 78, 105, 110, 121, 134, 139, 140, 142-146, 150)
- iii) improve the leadership and management of the school by:
 - clarifying and articulating the roles of the leader of the foundation stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and the special educational needs co-ordinator by ensuring that expectations and tasks are explicitly stated with dates for completion and success criteria:
(paragraphs 67, 70, 73, 76)
- iv) improve the organisation and balance in the curriculum where lessons in literacy and numeracy are too long by ensuring:
 - literacy lessons are not extended beyond the time normally recommended so that a good pace is maintained in the lessons and all pupils sustain their interest to the end.
 - numeracy lessons are organised more sensibly so that the daily mental mathematics session to improve pupils' mental agility with number is applied consistently.
(paragraphs 25, 30, 36, 104, 114)
- v) continue to stress the importance of attendance and punctuality and take action to raise the rate closer to the national average.
(paragraphs 21, 52)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	90
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	43

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2	10	52	36	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	30 FTE	331
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/A	249

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	12	114

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	24
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	35

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
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	22	17	39

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	17	22
	Girls	11	15	17
	Total	27	32	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	69 (76)	82 (80)	100 (86)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	21	20
	Girls	14	15	13
	Total	31	36	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (76)	92 (88)	85 (90)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	23	24	47

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	18	22
	Girls	17	16	20
	Total	32	34	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	68 (72)	72 (67)	89 (83)
	National	75 (71)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	18	21
	Girls	14	16	19
	Total	27	34	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	57 (71)	72 (69)	85 (84)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	3
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	277
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	17.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19
Average class size	24

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	234

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	30

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	15
--------------------------------	----

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	816,727
Total expenditure	832,030
Expenditure per pupil	2,156
Balance brought forward from previous year	32,010
Balance carried forward to next year	16,707

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 53%

Number of questionnaires sent out	397
Number of questionnaires returned	211

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	29	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	64	33	1	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	61	35	1	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	48	41	6	1	4
The teaching is good.	74	25	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	61	31	7	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	18	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	78	22	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	64	32	3	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	77	23	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	72	26	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	69	27	3	0	1

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

90. Children arriving in the nursery at the age of three have skills in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development well below those usually found in children of this age. Teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good and is good overall. Teachers and support staff show a good understanding of the children's needs and communicate with them well. Staff in the nursery and reception classes work well together as teams within their classes.

Personal, social and emotional development

91. Personal, social and emotional development is good for pupils both in nursery and reception classes. During the inspection children in the nursery were well settled before the first half term holiday. Relationships are good in all classes and staff create a calm, quiet and working atmosphere. This results in well-established routines during the nursery sessions and reception lessons. Children in the nursery quickly become independent in their personal hygiene. Their personal development is achieved especially successfully, in particular in groups and at snack times. These are pleasant social times for children who are encouraged to offer food to each other, and to say "please" and "thank you" to the ones chosen to give out drinks. Children develop friendships gradually in the nursery and some begin to play together in pairs although many prefer to play and work alone although sitting in a group. By the time they are in the reception class many work in pairs or small friendship groups. They take turns, help each other in their groups and tidy up their own activities towards the end of the session.

Communication, language and literacy

92. Although they do not reach the average for their age by the end of the reception classes, all children make good progress in communication, language and literacy during the foundation stage. This is because of good teaching in all classes that focuses well on the basic skills. The promotion of speaking and listening skills is good in both the nursery and reception classes. Children in the nursery say little to each other at first. Most children speak in single words and these are often hard to understand due to indistinct speech and pronunciation difficulties. By the time the children reach the reception classes, they listen well to the teachers and other adults although they still find it difficult to express themselves in long sentences. Letter sounds and names are reinforced constantly in the reception classes. These are linked very well to actions to help pupils remember and to the stories in the books they read with teachers. Children in both nursery and reception classes are learning to appreciate and enjoy books and stories. In the nursery they learn how to hold a book and that words have a meaning. With support, reception children choose their own books to take home and share with adults. In a discussion with the teacher they learn about the names and characters from the reading scheme books that they are beginning to use. These early reading skills are developed well by teachers. Children experiment with making marks on paper for birthday cards and invitations in the nursery. These are attractively prepared to encourage the children in their early writing activities. Pencil control is limited for many pupils. Activities in drawing and writing continue and some children in reception are beginning to make recognisable letter shapes. Only a small number of children write their names legibly in the reception year.

Mathematical development

93. All children make good progress in this area throughout the foundation stage although few reach the average standard by the end of the reception classes. Children have little experience of colour, number and shape when they start in the nursery. Through a range of well-devised activities they quickly learn to count to five and to match objects from one to three. They are taught the names and to recognise simple shapes and colours such as triangles, circles, squares and oblongs. In a very good lesson based on a teddy bear's tea party, the teacher taught and reinforced the one to one matching of numbers up to five. The children constantly checked and counted whether they had enough. *"Do we have 5 straws?" "Do we need one more?" "Do we have enough?"* When an extra teddy joined the group, they had to add another place. The well-focused teaching resulted in good attitudes and a keenness to listen and take part and concentrate on their learning. Teachers use rhymes, songs and poems and counting games to help children grasp the concepts of mathematics. They use words such as bigger and smaller to describe size and use a variety of simple shapes in their picture making. They compare objects to decide which are big and small and lengths to decide on long and short.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

94. Children make satisfactory progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world throughout the foundation stage although their overall attainment is below that usually found by the end of the reception year. Adults provide stimulating and interesting activities for them to enhance their learning in the nursery and reception classes. In the nursery, groups of children make a birthday cake with the use of a balance and scales. They weigh the ingredients learning new vocabulary as they do so and stir the mixture before cooking in the oven. They know that when the cake is cooked it will be changed and better to eat. Children in the nursery and reception class have very limited access to information technology in their learning. The computer in the nursery has been removed due to constantly breaking down and children are not confident in the use of the tape machine for listening to story tapes independently. A few understand that some people follow the Hindu religion and celebrate different things from them. During a Divali party, reception children experience food and music from India. They show a limited understanding of the main characters in the story about Rama and Sita.

Physical development

95. Children's physical development is in line with expectations for children of this age. Most days children in the nursery play outside on a variety of wheeled toys and with balls and bats. They run and walk with suitable co-ordination and they balance pedal bikes with co-ordination and control showing a suitable awareness of space and each other. They throw and hit balls with confidence. However, climbing apparatus is not available every day either inside or outside. Children in the reception classes do not have access to the same outdoor provision and toys as nursery children. This is a weakness. A minority of children bounce and catch balls with accuracy for their age but all improve their skills with practice. Children are encouraged to develop their fine motor skills. For example, they use a variety of tools and containers including paintbrushes, pencils, crayons and thick pens when mark making and rollers, cutters, spoons and forks when making patterns.

Creative development

96. Children make good progress in creative development and the provision is good. They use their imagination by dressing up and acting out situations for instance in the play areas such as the hospital and the kitchen. Teachers carefully prepare activities such as pretend and real parties in both the nursery and reception classes. Children learn the words of rhymes and songs from memory and add actions. Children in the nursery listen carefully to the sounds made by musical instruments and have opportunities to experiment with them. They play traditional singing games and have opportunities to listen to music from cultures other than their own. They draw and paint and use a variety of materials such as play dough and clay to form three-dimensional models. Reception children work well with the nursery nurse and each completes a clay pot for a candle to celebrate the festival of Divali.

ENGLISH

97. Results in the national tests in English over the past three years show that standards of pupils' attainment by the age of 11 are improving. Following a dip in attainment in 1996 and 1997 standards have risen in line with the national trend. The 2000 national test results show that pupils attain standards well below those found nationally and average in comparison with those found in similar schools. Compared with schools nationally fewer pupils achieve at the higher levels (Level 5) but in comparison with similar schools standards are above average. This is due to the good teaching of English at all stages in the school. Inspection findings agree with these results, which are similar to those found at the previous inspection for pupils aged 11. The 2000 test results show that by the age of seven, pupils' attainment is below that found nationally although in comparison with similar schools, the overall number of pupils attaining at the national level (Level 2) and above is well above those usually found. No pupils attain at the higher level (Level 3) by the age of seven.
98. Inspection findings show that, despite good teaching in the early years in the nursery, reception and Years 1 and 2 classes and the good learning that takes place, pupils do not achieve standards overall to bring them up to the national average for their age by the age of seven. About half of the pupils are achieving within the expected level in the areas of English of speaking and listening, reading and writing, although none reach the higher levels (Level 3) in writing.
99. Speaking and listening skills for pupils at the age of seven are below average overall although a significant number of the higher attaining pupils achieve standards in line with the national expectation. As a result of good teaching including clear explanations and careful questioning, pupils are confident in answering questions and building word lists for sounds and spelling patterns in their lessons. However, nearly all of the pupils in the lower attaining set for pupils aged seven have below average speaking and listening skills. Many are difficult to understand, give single word answers to the teacher's questions and have a narrow range of vocabulary. They use immature language such as "bunny rabbit". Towards the end of the juniors pupils speak confidently. When questions are challenging and pupils find them difficult, higher attaining pupils at Year 6 are reticent in answering questions before the whole class. However, in smaller groups or pairs they discuss well and come up with good answers.
100. Many pupils do not reach the expected average for their age by the end of Year 2. Pupils use a variety of skills in their reading but few read fluently and with expression. The more able readers do not take account of punctuation such as full stops and speech marks in their reading and consequently their reading lacks fluency and expression. The pupils who make the best progress and enjoy their reading are

those who read aloud at home to adults regularly. All pupils take a wide selection of books home and are encouraged by the school to read every night. However, very few pupils' reading record cards and booklets are completed by adults from home and whilst teachers make comments, there is little evidence of an ongoing dialogue between teachers and parents.

101. By the end of Year 6, pupils of all abilities achieve close to the national expectation for reading although only a few attain at the higher levels. Pupils develop sound understanding of the texts they read during the literacy hour and this is due to the careful direction and questioning of pupils by teachers. Pupils read with accuracy and talk about the plot and characters in their books and their favourite authors. They predict what is about to happen next in a story and talk about their favourite part of the book. Pupils also enjoy a selection of non-fiction books. They know how to use a contents page and an index to find information but are less confident in scanning a page and using headings and sub-headings to find quickly what they need to know.
102. Writing is the weakest aspect of the English curriculum and the school has identified this as a thrust area for the curriculum in the current year throughout the school. The majority of pupils are responding well to the good teaching. When pupils arrive in Year 1 many are unsure how to write their names and of the initial letter sounds for words. They quickly develop pencil control and soon show clear letter formation. Teachers use a variety of methods to encourage hesitant writers such as small white boards that can be rubbed out and practising simple sentence writing using ideas from stories they have read. In Year 2 pupils develop a good understanding of the purpose of writing. They learn the need to write instructions in sequence and gain confidence in writing their own sentences.
103. Teachers begin to teach a joined up style of writing at the beginning of the junior classes. However, this is not taught and modelled consistently and pupils do not transfer what they learn to their daily work. As a consequence by the end of Year 6, many pupils do not have a fluent style of joined-up writing. When whiteboards are used frequently by higher attaining pupils it restricts the amount, quality and editing of writing. Work photocopied from these boards is of poor quality and does not promote high standards of presentation. By Year 6, higher attaining pupils use vocabulary well in their writing tasks and their language becomes more imaginative. They use speech marks accurately and edit long sentences well to improve the meaning of a confidential and persuasive tone. For instance one pupil wrote, *"I'll let you into a secret...because nobody has ever heard my side of the story, nobody knows the real story"*. The creativity of writing is not as imaginative for lower attaining groups of pupils although they are developing their confidence and technical skills of writing well.
104. The school provides additional literacy support and catch-up support sessions for pupils in the lower ability sets. All classes from Year 1 onwards have additional lessons in English for both reading and writing. These are successful in consolidating the skills pupils have learnt in the literacy hour. However, when the literacy hour is extended to an hour and a half the pace of the lessons slows. Not all pupils, particularly those in the lower ability sets are able to sustain their concentration and pace of working effectively for this length of time. Nevertheless, in all classes pupils listen well to their teachers, following directions carefully. Behaviour in lessons is good and sometimes very good. This good and very good behaviour is due to the good management and high expectations of teachers as well as the provision of a range of interesting texts and activities to interest pupils.

105. There are already signs of rising standards particularly in the higher attaining sets of pupils in Years 5 and 6. Pupils with special educational needs and those with formal statements of need make satisfactory progress towards the targets in their individual educational plans. They receive effective support to help them learn although their individual plans are not always reviewed with sufficient frequency to move them on quickly enough in their learning. Information technology is not used sufficiently well to enable pupils to improve and practise their writing skills. There are no computers in the classrooms to allow them to practise what they learn on a frequent and regular basis for instance, about sentence work and spelling. Spelling is an area in which many pupils have difficulty right through the school.
106. The quality of teaching and learning is good. In the lessons seen 70 per cent were good or very good and all other lessons were satisfactory. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and are confident in teaching the National Literacy Strategy. There are many strengths in the teaching of literacy. Teachers give good explanations and clear instructions to pupils. Most teachers question pupils effectively to direct the pupils' thinking to what they want them to learn and value their contributions to lessons. A weakness in some lessons is that teachers do not always allow sufficient time for pupils to think and reply in a discussion session. Teachers provide well-chosen texts and interesting activities for pupils in the literacy hour. Good support is given to those who have difficulties. This results in pupils being well motivated in lessons and most lessons are carried out in a good working atmosphere where pupils concentrate on their learning. Teachers use imaginative methods in their teaching to arouse pupils' interests and curiosity. An example of this was in a lesson for lower attaining pupils at Year 3 when the teacher prepared attractive boxes with hidden objects. As a result both the teacher and the highly motivated pupils used a range of descriptive vocabulary in the lesson. Homework is generally satisfactory although many parents give little support in hearing their children read at home.
107. The subject is managed efficiently by the two co-ordinators. English receives additional curriculum time in order to raise standards. The National Literacy Strategy is fully in place and assessment procedures are well developed and used well to group pupils and identify those requiring additional support. Pupils' test results have been analysed. This has resulted in identifying a weaker area such as writing but not the standard of pupils' presentation and the inconsistent teaching of handwriting which remains an aspect for further attention. The school has a broad range of reading books available for pupils to borrow and take home. This is good although in the older classes books are spread around several classes and are not all readily available for all pupils to choose from. Younger pupils choose freely but do not always make wise choices in their selection and choose books that are difficult for them to read. The non-fiction library is unattractive and not well organised and systems for locating information books are not well known to the pupils.

MATHEMATICS

108. Standards in mathematics are below national expectations by the end of Year 2, although the school is performing much better than similar schools. The most recent national test results show an improvement on the previous year with all pupils reaching the nationally expected standard for the first time. However, fewer pupils than nationally attain the higher level, which is the reason for the overall judgement. For higher attaining pupils, work is not always sufficiently challenging to enable them to reach the standards of which they are capable.
109. By the end of Year 6, standards are close to national levels with pupils' results well above the average for similar schools. In the most recent national tests, almost three quarters of all pupils reached the nationally expected Level 4, of which just over one quarter attained the higher Level 5. These results show an improvement on test results for the previous year. Improved results can be attributed to the appropriate emphasis given to using and applying number skills, the encouragement given to pupils to explain their thinking to help develop reasoning and the grouping of pupils by ability to help ensure that work is more carefully matched to pupils' needs. However, throughout the school, there is still scope for further improvement to ensure that pupils are not given tasks for them to complete which they clearly understand before they are given more challenging work.
110. Mathematics is given good emphasis in the school's curriculum. Although all components are represented, with number work rightly given the most weighting, data handling is insufficiently represented and too little emphasis is given to using mathematics in real-life situations. The school is now placing increasing regard to encouraging pupils to explain their mathematical thinking to help develop reasoning and increase levels of confidence and understanding. The use of information technology in mathematics is an area that needs development, as little was seen during the period of the inspection.
111. Most pupils make good gains in learning as they move through the school, especially in Years 5 and 6, because of good teaching. Higher attaining pupils, mostly in Years 1 to 4, make satisfactory progress because they are not always given appropriately challenging work.
112. Pupils enter school knowing little about numbers or about the language of mathematics, such as 'greater' or 'smaller'. Most pupils achieve quite well in the nursery and reception where they receive an appropriate range of mathematical experiences, which prepare them well for the National Curriculum. Pupils in Year 1 start to count, sequence, add, subtract, read and write numbers, with up to 10 objects, begin to identify different shapes and number patterns, and recognise coins. Year 2 pupils start to understand place value to 100, begin to use standard units of time and length and to pay for specific items using coins. At this stage, few are confidently able to give reasons for their answers being correct. Year 3 pupils add and subtract two digit numbers increasingly confidently, give change from 50 pence, classify two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes using their properties and count forwards and backwards in tens. Pupils in Year 4 understand place value of numbers to 1,000 and begin to approximate and check the reasonableness of their answers. Year 5 pupils make comparisons between fractions, recognising when two fractions have the same value and place lists of four-digit numbers in ascending and descending order. By the time pupils leave the school, they can solve number problems using a variety of approaches, find the perimeter and areas of shapes and begin to employ and interpret mathematical diagrams. Most pupils have substantially gained in confidence and are keen to succeed.

113. Most pupils work with good application, reflecting their teachers' drive and enthusiasm, and achieve well. Pupils are beginning to take responsibility for their work, and older pupils are starting to set their own targets for improvement. Most pupils with special educational needs are given work at the right level and receive appropriate support, enabling them to make satisfactory progress.
114. Teaching is never less than satisfactory in all areas of the school and judged to be good overall. Good teaching was seen in Years 1, 2 and 5, and very good teaching was seen in Year 6. The good or better teaching seen is the result of secure relationships, good levels of challenge resulting from high expectations, purposeful questioning, which helps develop mathematical understanding, a good choice and use of resources and helpful marking, which contributes to learning. Following a programme of monitoring, plenary sessions are now mostly consistently used to consolidate learning, providing a firm platform on which to develop understanding further. Assessment is beginning to be used more consistently to inform future planning to enable teachers to build effectively on previous learning. Unsatisfactory features of otherwise sound teaching include introductory sessions which are too long for maximum impact and instructions which are not as clear as they could be. The quality of the mental starter to numeracy lessons is too variable. Sometimes it is too short, or the pace is insufficiently brisk to enable pupils to increase their speed of mental recall to help improve their learning. However, overall, the National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully introduced throughout the school.
115. The subject is well led and there are clear plans for its continued development. Displays help to motivate pupils and place good emphasis on the acquisition of a mathematical vocabulary and strategies to use when solving problems. There is a variety of systems for assessing attainment, data is analysed, weaknesses are identified and targets set to improve performance. Resources are sufficient to meet National Curriculum requirements, although deficiencies have been identified to support work on time and money. The school has made sound improvements in provision, teaching and learning since the last inspection.

SCIENCE

116. By the age of seven standards are below the national average. In the 2000 teacher assessments for seven year olds the number of pupils reaching the required standard is similar to the national picture but none of the higher-attaining pupils reached the higher level that is expected of them. When compared to pupils in similar schools their attainment is above average. By the age of 11 standards are in line with the national average. When compared to pupils in similar schools pupils' attainment is well above average. Boys and girls achieve equally as well as each other. Since the previous inspection the improvement in the school's results is similar to the national picture.
117. Inspection findings reflect the 2000 national test results. A significant strength in the subject is that practical work is taught effectively across the school. This successfully promotes pupils' scientific enquiry skills and their knowledge and understanding of all aspects of science. Pupils enjoy the practical work; it motivates them to work well together and their levels of concentration are high. In a Year 6 lesson high-attaining pupils planned and carried out an enquiry to find out which member of the group had the greatest lung capacity. They made an informed prediction that it would be the fittest person and produced graphs from the data using the computer. Average-attaining pupils considered how to make the enquiry fair and low-attaining pupils decided how to take accurate measurements, for example for the balloon that each

pupil had inflated. Teachers use skilful questions that encourage pupils to think carefully. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of other aspects of science; for example, Year 6 pupils identify the parts of a flower, such as anther and stamen. Year 2 pupils have a sound understanding of push and pull forces and a developing understanding of the factors that affect the speed of a swing.

118. The analysis of pupils' work and discussion with them show that average-attaining pupils make satisfactory progress from Year 1 to Year 2. However, the high-attaining pupils are not given work that challenges them and their progress is unsatisfactory. This is mainly because lessons are planned and taught at the average level. This may be appropriate occasionally but not for the majority of lessons. From Years 3 to 6 teachers match the work well to pupils' needs and this means that most pupils make good progress in their learning, except for pupils with special educational needs. Staff support these pupils well and this enables them to carry out the same work as the low-attaining pupils in the group. However, the work is not matched sufficiently to the targets in their individual education plans and this means that their progress is satisfactory rather than good.
119. The quality of teaching is good and occasionally it is very good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when it ranged from satisfactory to good. A feature of all the lessons is the clear learning targets that are shared with the pupils. This means that pupils understand what they are to do, start work promptly and focus well on what they are to achieve. Staff check, support and extend pupils' learning effectively in practical work. They manage the pupils well, for example, they consistently implement the school rules: such as, pupils should take turns to speak. Pupils respond well and their behaviour is good.
120. In a very good Year 5 lesson the challenging practical work motivated pupils and resulted in high levels of concentration. They worked very well together in small groups to solve the problem they had been given. They used their practical skills and knowledge about salt, sand, iron filings and stones to separate them out of a mixture. This led to pupils making very good progress in independent enquiry skills and increasing their knowledge and understanding of substances. This knowledge of substances is extended well in Year 6. A discussion with some Year 6 low-attaining pupils shows that they have a good understanding of solids, liquids and gases. One pupil said: "In a solid the molecules are packed tightly together and in a gas they are spaced much further apart".
121. Across the school, marking is used to reward effort and achievement and it is most successful when teachers point out to pupils ways in which they can improve their work. Numeracy skills are promoted well through measuring accurately, data handling and graph work, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Literacy skills are promoted satisfactorily. This could be improved by raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in written work. For example, they could use worksheets less frequently and give pupils more opportunities to write independently and at length. Although information technology is sometimes used well, for instance for graph work in Year 6, this could be extended further.
122. The effective co-ordinator monitors and evaluates teaching and the curriculum systematically. This, together with visits out, such as to a science museum and a nature reserve, has a beneficial effect on pupils' learning. There are good assessment procedures in lessons and over time; for example, assessments are undertaken at the end of a series of lessons on a particular topic, such as forces. These are used effectively to plan the next step in pupils' learning. Since the previous inspection, good progress has been made in the quality of provision.

ART AND DESIGN

123. Pupils enjoy art and teachers value the contribution that art makes to the curriculum. Only two art lessons were seen during the inspection so evidence is taken from the scrutiny of work on display and from planning documents. No judgement can be made on teaching. Pupils make steady progress throughout the school. By the age of seven and 11 they achieve the expected standards for their ages.
124. Evidence of work on display covered a good range of artwork including, drawing, painting, printing, collage and textiles. Little three-dimensional work was on display except in the reception classes where children had made clay burners as part of their celebrations for Diwali. Pupils in Year 2 used paper maché as a base for imaginative animal masks. Evidence of older pupils' work was found in photographs of plaster-of-Paris pots, made and decorated effectively, to support work on ancient Greece whilst other photos showed clay tiles from Year 1.
125. Pupils up to seven learn to mix colours of paint and therefore develop a good understanding of tone tints and shades. Printing techniques are successfully developed using a variety of techniques including polystyrene blocks where the design is etched out and cardboard blocks where string is stuck to the card. These blocks were used very effectively to print on fabric creating an imaginative display. Pupils start observational drawing and painting from an early age. In Year 2 pupils used pencil to draw plants and pastels on black paper to draw the heads of lilies, showing good colour and detail.
126. Observational work continues to develop satisfactorily throughout the rest of the school. Pupils study the work of famous artists, learning from the techniques the artists used. For example in Year 5 pupils studied the work of Cézanne and then used a mixture of media successfully to create still life paintings in a similar style. In Year 6 abstract painting was inspired by the study of paintings by Degas. Very effective textile work was seen in Year 5. Pupils throughout the school have had the opportunity to work with an artist on such themes as depicted movement in drawing. Wall hangings depicting the stories of Snow White and Jack and the Beanstalk were the result of children working collaboratively in workshop periods over consecutive days. The project gave pupils very good opportunities to work together in groups, designing and then making striking wall hangings to enhance the corridor outside their room. The work provided good opportunities to use a range of materials and fixing techniques. The co-ordinator in school, organising themes such as a recent 'Rainbow', successfully promotes collaborative working. Classes worked using one colour and a variety of different techniques and media to produce an effective display.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

127. Evidence for design and technology was severely limited during the inspection with only one full lesson in a Year 2 class being seen. Discussions with Year 6 pupils provided little evidence therefore no judgements can be made on pupils' attainment or progress or on teaching of the subject. Evidence is therefore taken from the small amount of work on display, from schemes of work and discussions with the co-ordinator.
128. Younger pupils build on experience with construction kits and learn techniques for joining and fixing. In Year 2 pupils study different types of puppets to find out what makes them move. Following this work they are then able to start designing a simple

glove puppet of their own, sketching what the final puppet will look like and deciding what materials will be needed. In an observed lesson pupils concentrated well in cutting felt for the front and back. The teacher gave clear directions to support the development of pupils' sewing skills such as threading needles and tying knots in the thread. Pupils were suitably challenged to solve their own problems such as when the open end was accidentally sewn up.

129. In Year 3 pupils disassembled a number of greetings cards with movable parts before making their own with a movable head. Opportunities for design were limited to the nature of the character on the card as all pupils used the same joining method for the head. Although little design was involved in the construction of the card pupils satisfactorily recorded the stages of making using a prepared worksheet.
130. Teachers have a satisfactory scheme of work to support their planning and design and technology satisfactorily supports work in other areas of the curriculum. For example, in Year 4 pupils build Tudor houses as part of their work in history. At the end of each unit of work pupils evaluate their own work through filling in an evaluation form which indicates what they have learnt and what they like about the product they have made.

GEOGRAPHY

131. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school and reach standards that are broadly typical of pupils nationally by the time they are seven and 11. When pupils leave school standards are higher than at the time of the last inspection when they were slightly below national levels. This represents an improvement. This is because geography is soundly represented within the school's curriculum, with the development of important skills, such as mapping skills, given appropriate emphasis. The use of visits, such as to Southport and Dolgellau for older pupils, a variety of approaches and emphasis on work in the locality also help to enrich the curriculum and make the subject more appealing to pupils.
132. Year 1 pupils learn about the jobs of adults in the school and where they work, partly by interviewing key personnel, to acquire knowledge of the human and physical features of their school. Year 3 pupils draw a pictorial map of the school grounds, begin to understand the importance of symbols to help them understand maps, and start to appreciate that a plan is a 'bird's eye view'. They start to express views on how the school grounds could be tidier and substantially improved, by carrying out a survey of the different types of pollution evident and designing a better playground. Year 4 pupils carry out a study of a village in India, compare Indian village life with the locality of the school, and contrast different types of weather around the world. Year 5 pupils study and compare two local rivers the Alt and the Mersey, discover why large ships can enter the Albert Dock, and acquire an appropriate 'river' vocabulary. For example, they learn source, tributary, transportation, erosion and estuary. By the time pupils leave the school they demonstrate knowledge and understanding of different areas, such as a mountain environment and their local area and compare and contrast them. They have acquired geographical information from many different sources, and have developed an appropriate geographical vocabulary.
133. Teaching is sound in both infant and junior classes, from the small number of lessons seen. Good features of teaching observed include secure subject knowledge and appropriate questioning to develop understanding, effective organisation to ensure that no time is wasted, good use of resources which contribute to progress and significant emphasis on learning from first-hand experience to increase levels of

enthusiasm and involvement. These approaches help to promote positive attitudes to learning about geography. Weaknesses include the use of control strategies, which are not effective for all pupils and the inappropriate use of colouring, which does not extend geographical understanding.

134. The subject is soundly led and there are plans for its continued development. These plans include extending the contribution geography makes to the development of the literacy and numeracy of pupils and increasing the use of information technology in geography, as this is under-represented. However, recent improvements include a review of current provision, a reorganisation of resources and the compilation of an inventory to ensure all who work with pupils know what is available. Consistent approaches to the assessment of geography have not yet been introduced, such as the levelling of work to National Curriculum requirements. There are few opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor teaching and learning, to enable her to assess more accurately strengths and weaknesses in the subject. Although resources are satisfactory overall, there are few Ordnance Survey maps and maps of different scales, to facilitate the development of mapping skills.

HISTORY

135. History is secure within the school's curriculum, as it was at the time of the last inspection. All areas of the subject are well represented. Standards are close to national levels by the end of Key Stage 2 and pupils make good gains in learning in the junior classes. However, as little history was seen in the infant classes, there was insufficient evidence to make judgements about the standards pupils attain and the extent to which they make progress in Years 1 and 2.
136. Pupils acquire knowledge and understanding of events, people and changes studied from a wide range of information sources, which helps to bring the subject alive and ensure good levels of motivation and interest. For example, teachers enrich history lessons through visits, visitors, re-enactments, taped broadcasts, video recordings, the study of artefacts, manuscripts and documents as well as information from books. Year 2 pupils examine toys of the past in order to make comparisons with those of today. Year 4 pupils, in a study of the Tudor period, learn about the dissolution of the monasteries from a tape and through discussion, acquire information about the life and work of Henry the Eighth. Year 5 pupils compare toys used by Victorian children with those of today, appreciating the extent to which they have changed over the past 100 years. Year 6 pupils, wearing clothes of the time, hold a street party in their classroom to celebrate the end of the Second World War. They savour the delights of marmite sandwiches and enjoy real treats of sugary biscuits and oranges, as they listen to the music of the 1940s playing on a gramophone! By the time pupils leave the school, they communicate their developing knowledge and understanding of history in different ways, such as through writing, discussion, art, and mapwork and many have acquired a sound historical vocabulary. They are able to describe characteristics of past periods, explain and suggest consequences of principal events and changes and know the difference between primary and secondary sources of evidence.
137. Pupils develop chronological understanding by using and studying timelines. For example, Year 5 pupils place major events of the Victorian era in dated order and complete a timeline spanning the last 2,000 years, from the Romans to the present day.
138. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about the quality of teaching in infant classes, as no lessons were observed. However, in junior classes it is good

and in one Year 6 lesson was judged excellent. Good or better teaching in history is characterised by secure subject knowledge, varied and interesting presentations to stimulate interest and involvement, purposeful questioning to help improve understanding and good use of resources, including artefacts, which contribute to learning. Teachers mount interesting and colourful displays, using posters, postcards, pictures, documents and well chosen artefacts, which help to fire pupils' imaginations and enthuse pupils with an enjoyment of history.

139. The subject is soundly led and there are clear plans for its further development. There are a good number and range of artefacts to support learning in history. The subject is making a good contribution to literacy, such as through factual writing, research, letters, reports and discussion and a developing contribution to numeracy, such as through the use of timelines. Resources are sufficient to meet the requirements of the curriculum and they are well stored and easily accessed. However, there is no formal assessment of the subject at present. The co-ordinator has had good opportunity to monitor teaching and learning to help her assess strengths and weaknesses in teaching and provision. The use of information technology is under-represented, although the school does possess some software, and CD-ROMs, which are available to support the history curriculum.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

140. The school has maintained similar standards to those found at the last inspection but there are weaknesses in standards at the end of Key Stage 2 that were not evident at that time.
141. The standards achieved at the end of Key Stage 1 are broadly in line with those expected for pupils aged seven years. Pupils from a young age are familiar with computers. In work on graphics the pupils draw pictures and patterns using a drawing program, for example a picture of a house or truck. The higher attaining pupils use different tools including spray to produce an interesting end product. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in using an expected range of equipment, including programmable toys (roamers) and listening centres. Higher attaining pupils open programs and save work independently whilst many others need help.
142. Attainment by the age of 11 is below average when compared with the national expectation and progress of most pupils is unsatisfactory. Where pupils are taught information technology skills, their learning of new skills is satisfactory. However, lack of consistent and prolonged use of the computers prevents them from reinforcing and building on these skills at an appropriate pace. Since the last inspection there has been very little improvement development in the provision for information technology. This has been due in part to the technical problems with the new computers but mainly because almost every teacher misses opportunities in allowing pupils to apply, consolidate and develop further their skills through other subjects. For much of the time the computers are not used and pupils in each class have only a very small amount of scheduled time in the computer suite.
143. Very few pupils are confident enough to use the computer to communicate and handle information and by the age of 11 pupils' attainment is well below national expectations. For example, when pupils design posters they are more likely to use a felt pen or pencil crayons and produce a less pleasing effect than by experimenting with different sizes of font, styles and colour. Yet pupils in Year 4 clearly displayed their skills in choosing fonts, size and colour and importing a clip art picture into the text during a short information and communication technology lesson. Displays around school do not foster computer literacy. Pupils' basic keyboard skills are

below average and they do not, for example, spend sufficient time drafting and redrafting their stories. Word processing skills are weak. Despite having the knowledge to combine text and graphics and knowing how to save and print their work, they are not given sufficient opportunities to work with independence. The full potential of this application is not being explored.

144. Pupils are unable to use a database effectively and due to lack of opportunities they fail to realise how a computer can be used to collect and store information and to record details in an organised way to help them to answer questions. Unsatisfactory progress is directly related to the lack of access to equipment at the time pupils need it. Teachers also lack subject knowledge and confidence, for example in the use of spreadsheets. However, pupils in a Year 6 science lesson could enter data into a basic computer program and create graphs to display the outcomes of their investigations. Many pupils are competent at using the CD-ROM to access information, having their machines at home. However, their opportunities to develop these skills further, for example to support work in geography and history, are hampered by lack of time using the computer. Pupils' understanding of control technology is unsatisfactory by the age of 11. Although some pupils remember how to program floor robots and make on-screen turtles follow a pre-determined set of instructions, many pupils have been unable to consolidate their skills and knowledge. This is partly due to the difficulties as the equipment is upgraded. For example some of the new computers do not have the relevant programs to develop pupils' control technology skills. Pupils develop little knowledge of how to use information technology systems. They have not been able to develop skills in using temperature, light or movement sensors in science lessons due to a lack of equipment. As yet there has been no teaching of how to use the Internet because until very recently no computer in the school was linked. Those who do not have the Internet at home are unlikely to retain much of their newly acquired skills and knowledge.
145. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory overall with some good elements. The weakness is in the failure to plan for and use information and communications technology to support work in other subjects. Good in service training has improved the teachers' confidence and subject knowledge in teaching computer skills. However, their understanding of spreadsheets and control technology requires further development. The teachers give clear instructions. This allows pupils to work without direct supervision. There is regular checking of pupils' work to ensure that they understand what they are doing. All teachers control their classes well; this means that they can concentrate on teaching the pupils. The pupils enjoy information technology. They concentrate on their work. They behave well, share the resources with good consideration towards others as they take turns fairly and they treat the computers with respect. They are enthusiastic and higher attaining pupils are happy to help other pupils. This supports their learning whilst using the computers, for example when acting as a 'tutor' in work on drawing shapes. The positive attitudes and good standards of behaviour allow the teacher to help other pupils.
146. The two co-ordinators recognise the need to develop a scheme of work to underpin the delivery of a broad and balanced curriculum for information and communication technology. They also recognise that more training is needed to improve teachers' grasp of certain elements of the information and communication technology curriculum. Teachers do not formally monitor pupils' skill development during lessons but occasional samples of pupils' work are kept as a record of attainment. However, the school is now at a watershed and has the potential to improve at a good pace. The co-ordinators are clear about what they need to do and what they need. Resources have been improved significantly and are now good. There is

sufficient computer hardware and software to support pupils' learning across the curriculum and to continue to provide the necessary teaching of skills. It is essential however to ensure that the organisation of computer availability provides for the flexibility of pupils and classes.

MUSIC

147. Pupils' attainment is in line with expectations for their age across the school. During the inspection it was possible to observe only a few lessons. Further evidence was gained from discussion with pupils and observations of assemblies.
148. In lessons across the school pupils sing tunefully and with expression and singing in assemblies needs to be raised to the same standard. In lessons, teachers use interesting methods and these promote successfully pupils' concentration and learning. Year 6 pupils sing tunefully songs that are linked to an interesting history topic on the Second World War. Year 1 pupils taped the sounds they heard on a mystery walk around the school and this was used in a song about the school. This motivated pupils to learn and promoted their high levels of concentration and enthusiasm for the work. The words to the new song were taught gradually and this enabled the pupils to learn them quickly. The range of musical activities used in a Year 5 lesson developed effectively pupils' singing, listening, composing and performing skills.
149. In the few lessons seen, teaching was good in two lessons and satisfactory in one lesson. A feature of all the lessons is the good management of pupils and this fosters their very good attitudes and behaviour. This is effected through the good use of praise, the very good relationships between pupils and teachers and securely established routines, such as listening carefully to the performance of others. Basic skills, such as technical vocabulary are taught well and this promotes pupils' good progress. For example, Year 5 pupils use technical terms accurately, such as tempo and pitch. Some of the junior pupils benefit from additional tuition for example, in clarinet, violin, cello and keyboard.
150. Class teachers and support staff support pupils with special educational needs appropriately. This enables them to make satisfactory progress in relation to their previous learning. For instance, in the Year 5 lesson the good organisation of the group work meant that these pupils benefited from working co-operatively with pupils of all levels of ability within a small group. This enabled them to contribute successfully to the group composition. There are no pupils who are learning English as an additional language. Literacy and numeracy are promoted soundly, for instance through following song sheets in lessons and through work on rhythm and beat. Computers are not used to support pupils' learning but the school does make effective use of tape recordings and CD ROMs.
151. The co-ordinator is new to the role this term and is already effectively supporting teaching and learning through monitoring how the subject is taught. She has produced a useful overview of the curriculum across the school. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social development, for example through providing opportunities for pupils to work together in groups. Cultural development is promoted well through the range of music used in lessons. Visitors to the school, such as a string orchestra enhance the good curriculum. Standards have been maintained and the quality of teaching has improved from satisfactory to good since the previous report.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

152. All of the lessons observed during the inspection were games lessons. This was because the sessions were blocked as part of a new scheme of work. However, there is clear evidence of both standards and progress in this aspect of physical education at both key stages. No gymnastics or dance skills were seen and it is not possible to make judgements on standards in those aspects. One swimming lesson was observed. It is not possible to make a direct comparison with the previous inspection due to the limited range of activities seen.
153. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils achieve well above average levels in games and highly impressive ball handling skills. Pupils in Year 1 classes practise passing a ball to a partner in a straight line using different methods such as rolling and throwing. They refine their skills and are able to suggest ways of improving their skills. In Year 2 this develops into sending and receiving balls using a wide range of passing skills including chest and bounce passes and finding ways to improve their skills to compete in simple games against each other. Pupils know and understand the need for health and safety in their lessons and appreciate the necessity for appropriate clothing and footwear. They understand the effects of exercise on their bodies and the need for warm up sessions.
154. In Key Stage 2, pupils build on previous learning and develop their skills in ball games. Towards the end of the key stage they participate in small group and team games where they improve their skills of travelling with, passing and catching balls. By the end of Year 6, most pupils have developed the skills to take part in a range of games, some of which they made up themselves as a mixture of netball and skittleball. Throughout Key Stage 2 pupils receive a planned programme of swimming tuition and the majority of pupils swim at least 25 metres by the age of 11. Many progress to a more advanced standard and achieve a variety of awards for their swimming skills.
155. Pupils enjoy their physical education lessons and they work well together and co-operate in their tasks and teamwork. This was especially true in an excellent Year 6 lesson where pupils worked together to invent a game with rules and methods of scoring. Behaviour is generally good. Pupils handle apparatus sensibly and use it carefully. They show a good awareness of each other and the space others need and take turns well.
156. Teaching is variable between excellent and satisfactory. However, it is best judged as satisfactory overall in both key stages because the best teaching was delivered by a specialist visiting teacher from a local secondary school. Of seven lessons seen, four were satisfactory, two were good and one was excellent. The lesson was characterised by excellent control and relationships with the pupils so that they listen carefully and behave impeccably. Superbly effective instruction, regular demonstration and a very good use of praise kept all pupils interested, motivated and working hard to improve. All lessons were structured and organised to support both high levels of vigorous exercise and reflection so that by the end all pupils are clear how to improve their performance through appraisal by the teacher and their peers. Support staff give good support to pupils with special educational needs, enabling them to participate fully in the activities. Sometimes, however, pupils with special educational needs are withdrawn to be given extra support in literacy and so miss their physical education lessons. Swimming lessons are well planned and organised, with a good pace so that pupils are active for a significant length of time.
157. The curriculum is broad and well balanced between the different aspects. There are good opportunities to work with partners and in small groups and this develops

pupils' social skills well. There are good extra-curricular opportunities, with a football club, high fives (netball/basketball) and gymnastics for pupils at Key Stage 2. These enrich the physical education curriculum for those participating, though the numbers attending are relatively low. The school plays matches against other schools in football and netball.

158. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and effective in leading and developing the subject and raising standards. All teachers have been supported in teaching games by receiving practical guidance in teaching and a very detailed scheme of work so that pupils develop their skills in a systematic way.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

159. The teaching of religious education is based on local guidelines that have recently been adopted by the school and provides teachers with a secure framework in which to work. Pupils learn about Christianity and other major world faiths including Hinduism, Sikhism, Islam, Judaism and Buddhism. Attainment for pupils of seven and 11 is in line with expectations of the agreed syllabus as it was at the last inspection.
160. Teachers have good subject knowledge of the major faiths. This is reflected in the respect that values in other faiths are given. For example in Year 4 lessons, teachers effectively use the story of Prince Sidhatra to promote the values of 'moderation' found in Buddhism. Pupils examined their own lifestyles and through very good opportunities provided by the teacher were able to reflect on various aspects of their lives including 'healthy eating'. These lessons made a good contribution to pupils' social development.
161. In a Year 2 class pupils showed a good knowledge of the story of Rama and Sita and talked about Hindu gods. They worked hard as they drew pictures to illustrate the pages that were going to be put together in the form of a class book. The teacher had caught their imagination and they had obviously enjoyed the story, successfully recalling the sequence of events. However, all teachers need to make the most of opportunities to emphasise the importance of such stories to other faiths.
162. The lack of resources identified at the last inspection has been addressed and there are now good artefacts to support the teaching of other faiths. These are effectively used through the school in striking displays that provide a stimulus to pupils' learning. In addition a display depicting Buddhism in the hall enabled all the older pupils either to refresh their knowledge or to introduce them to the faith that they will study later. A shortage of suitable bibles is soon to be addressed by a grant from an outside body.
163. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher effectively focused pupils' attention on rewriting a Bible story for younger children. This gave their work on studying texts a real purpose as they had considered various versions of the same story including readings from the authorised St James version and a children's version. The teacher gave pupils clear criteria that their story had to appeal to younger children and they had a selection of Old and New Testament stories to choose from. Pupils had a good knowledge of the stories and knew whether they came from the Old or New Testament. This work made a good contribution to pupils' literary development.
164. Pupils assess their own work at the end of each unit of work. They are encouraged to record what they have learnt and any special words associated with the topic.

This self-evaluation contributes to their own self-esteem and supports their personal development.