

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST AUGUSTINE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Warrington

LEA area: Warrington

Unique reference number: 111309

Headteacher: Mr Michael Boland

Reporting inspector: Mr Jean-Pierre Kirkland
4483

Dates of inspection: 17th – 19th June 2002

Inspection number: 230672

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2002

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:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Henshall Avenue Latchford Warrington
Postcode:	WA4 1PY
Telephone number:	(01925) 633317
Fax number:	(01925) 575119
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr David Littlewood
Date of previous inspection:	February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
4483	Jean-Pierre Kirkland	Registered inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology (ICT) Music Special educational needs Equality of opportunity	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
9333	Keith Schofield	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
30590	Peter Tuttle	Team inspector	English Geography History Physical education	How good are curricular and other opportunities? How well is the school led and managed?
22113	Aileen King	Team inspector	Provision for children in the Foundation Stage Science Art and design Design and technology	

The inspection contractor was:

PPI Group Ltd
7 Hill Street
Bristol
BS1 5RW

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 Complaints Manager
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	4 - 7
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?	8 - 11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	11 - 12
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	12 - 14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	14 - 15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	15 - 16
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	16 - 17
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	18
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	19 - 22
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	23 - 35

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Augustine's Catholic Primary School is voluntary aided and situated just over a mile to the east of Warrington town centre. It is an old established area of housing, which is largely for rent, but with some owner-occupied dwellings. Pupils are from white UK heritage backgrounds and no pupil has English as an additional language. The school is much smaller than the average primary school, having ninety-eight pupils on roll. There is a nursery within the school, which has twenty-three children who attend in the mornings only. The school has above average numbers on its register of pupils with learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils involved with outside agencies and having statements of special educational need is well above the national average. Attainment on entry to the nursery is well below average and below average when children begin the reception year. Religious education and the Catholic ethos of the school are to be inspected and reported on by the Diocese separately. At its previous inspection, this school was judged to be providing an unsatisfactory level of education.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is now providing a satisfactory level of education for its pupils, with many good and some strong features. Pupils' achievements are good up to the age of seven, and are improving in Years 3 –6. Standards are rising but are not yet good enough by age eleven. Leadership is a strength of the school and management is good. Overall, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- It enables children to make a good start to their learning in the nursery and reception years.
- It ensures that pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2, reaching above average standards in English and science and well above average standards in mathematics.
- It provides good teaching overall, with instances of very good teaching in some lessons.
- It ensures that pupils with learning difficulties are well provided for and make good progress towards their targets.
- It provides a very positive environment for learning in which pupils' successes and achievements are celebrated in a way which inspires greater self-esteem and the determination to succeed.
- It has very good levels of leadership and governance, leading to a clear vision for future improvements.

What could be improved

- Pupils' achievements and standards by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology and writing for higher-attaining pupils across the school.
- Aspects of teaching, such as the level of challenge and the pace of lessons in Years 3 to 6.
- The role of the subject co-ordinators, so that they develop new ways of raising standards through observing and commenting on the teaching in their subject areas.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory improvement since its most recent inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectors in 2000. Standards for pupils at the end of Year 2 have risen significantly and were very high in relation to those in similar schools in reading and mathematics in the national tests in 2001. However, standards for older pupils are still some way below the national average, but improvement over time is at least as good as the national average. Other issues that the school needed to address have also improved satisfactorily. These include the way the school tracks pupils' progress, how well it uses this information and the opportunities for pupils to gain a wider experience of other beliefs and faiths. In addition, there have been other improvements, notably in the provision and standards in information and

communication technology (ICT), the quality of teaching, planning to make the school better and leadership and management. As a result, the school is well placed to continue to improve.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			Similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	C	E	D	C
Mathematics	D	E*	E	D
Science	E	E*	E*	E

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

Overall, standards are rising, but the rate of improvement is better for pupils in Years 1 and 2 than for the older pupils. The main strengths during the inspection in Years 1 and 2 were:

- above-average achievement and standards in English and science;
- well-above-average achievement and standards in mathematics;
- very high standards in reading and mathematics in the 2001 national tests when compared to those in similar schools. Teacher assessments in 2001 showed above average standards in science;
- in all other subjects, good achievement and average standards by the end of Year 2.

In other areas of the school, inspectors judged:

- good achievement in the nursery and reception years, with the majority of children ready to begin the National Curriculum when they start Year 1 work;
- good progress by pupils with learning difficulties, especially when given individual work;
- good achievement in ICT in Years 3 to 6.

Areas for further development and improvement are:

- standards being too low by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science as recorded in the 2001 national tests;
- the quality of writing by higher attaining pupils throughout the school;
- unsatisfactory achievement in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6;
- Below-average-standards in art and design and design and technology by Year 6.

Inspectors found pupils' work showing some improvements by Year 6, although almost half that year group is composed of pupils with learning difficulties, a quarter of them needing additional outside help. Standards in English and mathematics are still below average. This is an actual improvement in mathematics since the previous year. There has been a slight improvement in science also, but standards are still well below average. Pupils make satisfactory progress in other subjects. Higher attaining pupils achieve well throughout the school, except in writing, where they could do better. The targets set by the governors are realistic and high enough, given the levels of attainment amongst the current Year 6 pupils.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good; pupils like their school and love to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good in lessons and at play and a significant strength of the school. There have been no exclusions this year.
Personal development and relationships	Good overall, although there is insufficient opportunity for pupils to show how creative and imaginative they can be in some lessons.
Attendance	Attendance is average and reflects the hard work done by the school to encourage better habits. Too many pupils arrive late in the mornings.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Very good	Satisfactory

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

Overall, teaching is good. However, the better teaching is concentrated in the nursery and reception classes and teaching is particularly good in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6, the teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good lessons.

Strengths in teaching and learning include:

- well-prepared lessons, with pupils clear about what they are learning and why;
- making sure that pupils behave well and concentrate on their learning;
- a good spread of interesting activities for children in the nursery and reception years;
- making pupils think hard and ensuring that the work set is not too hard or not too easy;
- teachers knowing their pupils well and having good relationships with them, which enable better learning.

In less successful lessons, areas for improvement include:

- not slowing the lesson down too much, as this results in some pupils getting bored;
- ensuring that all work is neither too hard nor too easy for all pupils in every lesson.

Teaching for children up to the end of reception is good. Lessons are well prepared with very good challenges, enabling children to learn basic skills well and to work effectively in the wide range of interesting activities provided for them. Numeracy and literacy are taught well in Years 1 and 2, where the staff have particularly good understanding of how pupils of this age learn. Teaching and learning in these subjects are satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Parts of some lessons are a little slow and sometimes not all pupils are challenged at the appropriate level. Pupils with learning difficulties are taught well, especially where specialist help and support are available. Support assistants make a valuable contribution to learning throughout the school. Relationships with pupils are good overall and this aids learning as pupils enjoy their lessons.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good and fulfilling statutory requirements. Pupils benefit from a full range of learning experiences, with ICT making a good contribution in many subjects. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities to support learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good throughout the school, leading to pupils making good progress towards their targets.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall, with a significant strength in the provision for pupils' moral development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good provision overall; pupils are secure, safe and looked after effectively. The school is fully aware of the need to protect pupils from harm and does this well.
How well does the school work in partnership with parents	Satisfactory so far, but this area, recognised as a development point by the school, could be better. The school's plans for the future in this respect are good. Parents have a very positive view of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good leadership and good management. The head, supported by a small management team, has a very clear overview of the school, its priorities for development and the best way to move it forward. There is a shared determination to raise standards and to improve educational provision.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. Governors know their school very well and seek the best provision for the pupils. They are fully aware of obtaining the best possible value for money in all their spending decisions. They fulfil their statutory obligations.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good overall, with very good perceptions and work by the headteacher and governors. There is very good knowledge of where the school needs to go in order to improve and it has very realistic plans to follow this up.
The strategic use of resources	Good overall, with support assistants and ICT playing an important part in raising standards. Accommodation is generally satisfactory and the level of resources adequate overall.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents were happy with all aspects of school in general terms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A review of homework, about which there were mixed views, some saying there was too much, others saying not enough.

Inspectors agree with parents in that there are very many strong features in the school, but that there is some considerable improvement needed in standards for the oldest pupils in the school. Inspectors

judged homework to be adequate overall and similar to the amounts set for primary-school pupils generally.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. There is still a mixed pattern of results and pupils' achievements in the school. By the end of Year 2, standards have considerably improved since the previous inspection and achievements are also much better. However, this is balanced by below average standards in English, mathematics, science, art and design, and design and technology by the end of Year 6. Nevertheless, there are signs of some improvements as teachers begin to set more-realistic tasks for their pupils, and sharpen the focus of their planning.
2. Strengths in standards and achievements are:
 - generally above average standards by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and science, with good achievement generally; standards and achievements are well above average by the end of Year 2 in mathematics;
 - very high standards in reading and mathematics in the 2001 national tests in Year 2, when compared to those in similar schools, and above average standards in writing;
 - much improved standards in ICT throughout the school, which are now equal to national averages and which show a marked improvement since the previous inspection, with good achievement in Years 3 to 6;
 - in all other subjects, good achievement and average standards by the end of Year 6;
 - good progress by pupils with learning difficulties, especially when given individual work;
 - good achievement throughout the nursery and reception years, with children ready to start the National Curriculum in most areas of learning when they enter Year 1.
3. Areas for further development and improvement are:
 - standards being too low by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science as recorded in the 2001 national tests and during the inspection;
 - the quality of writing by higher attaining pupils throughout the school;
 - unsatisfactory achievement in English, mathematics and science – it could be better;
 - below-average standards in art and design and in design and technology by Year 6.
4. Children enter the nursery with standards well below average. Teachers check the standards of children when they enter the reception year, which shows that they have made good, sustained progress, although they are still below average. The good progress continues, with children ready to start the National Curriculum as they enter Year 1. Progress is best in personal, social and emotional development, with above average achievement; progress is less marked in physical development.
5. Results in national tests in 2001 showed pupils in Year 2 to be well above the national average in reading and mathematics, above average in the teacher assessments in science and broadly average in writing. When compared to those of pupils from similar backgrounds, standards are very high in reading and mathematics and well above average in writing. This shows good achievement since these pupils started the National Curriculum overall. Inspectors found similar standards for pupils in Year 2 and for those recorded in last year's national tests and teacher gradings. These results are a significant improvement since the previous three years and since the previous inspection. Serious challenges, very good planning and good use of assessment are the main factors causing standards to be so good.
6. Overall, inspectors found standards rising, but for the oldest pupils in the school they are below average in English and mathematics and well below average in science. These findings are better than the results of the national tests in 2001, but still not good enough. The improvements over the past year have been due to improved teaching and using what is known of pupils' capabilities

to set more-appropriate work. Progress since these pupils took national tests when aged seven is also unsatisfactory. Standards are coming closer to matching those in similar schools, except in science, where they are well below average. Aware of this, the school has created two teaching groups in order to raise standards and this is having some beneficial effects. However, the level of work undertaken by pupils independently and in a creative manner is unsatisfactory. This is due in large part to the fact that these pupils historically have not acquired appropriate skills to work effectively in this way. A similar pattern exists in mathematics, where pupils do not undertake sufficient problem solving, investigative work or graph work across the four years in the juniors. The tables below summarise this.

Attainment by the end of Year 2:

SUBJECT	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	ABOVE AVERAGE
English			♦
Mathematics			Well above
Science		♦	
Art and design		♦	
Design and technology		♦	
Geography		♦	
History		♦	
ICT		♦	
Music		♦	
Physical education		♦	

Pupils' achievements: The table below show the amount of progress pupils make over time in each of their subjects.

Achievement up to the end of Year 2:

SUBJECT	UNSATISFACTORY	SATISFACTORY	GOOD
English			♦
Mathematics			Very good
Science			♦
Art and design			♦
Design and technology			♦
Geography			♦
History			♦
ICT			♦
Music			♦
Physical education			♦

Attainment at the end of Year 6:

SUBJECT	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	ABOVE AVERAGE
English	♦		
Mathematics	♦		
Science	Well below		
Art and design	♦		
Design and technology	♦		
Geography		♦	
History		♦	
ICT		♦	
Music		♦	
Physical education		♦	

Pupils' achievements: The table below show the amount of progress pupils make over time in each of their subjects.

Achievement up to the end of Year 6:

SUBJECT	UNSATISFACTORY	SATISFACTORY	GOOD
English	♦		
Mathematics	♦		
Science	♦		
Art and design		♦	
Design and technology		♦	
Geography		♦	
History		♦	
ICT			♦
Music		♦	
Physical education		♦	

More-specific information on each subject area can be found in Section D of this report.

7. Higher attaining pupils achieve well throughout the school, except in writing at the end of Year 2, where they could do better. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress overall. Their progress towards the targets set is better when they have individual or small-group provision either in the classroom or when withdrawn for specific work. The targets set by the governors are realistic and high enough, given the levels of attainment amongst the current Year 6 pupils. Inspectors found that the current Year 6 pupils were on course to reach these targets.
8. The results in the national tests for seven-year-olds are much improved since the previous inspection. However, there is still some way to go to show real improvement by the end of Year 6.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils' attitudes and values are strengths of the school. In Years 1 and 2 especially, they develop high levels of concentration and show a very good attitude to all the activities provided. Many factors contribute to the positive values seen during the inspection:
 - very good behaviour was observed throughout the school and is a credit to the staff and pupils;
 - pupils radiate their enthusiasm for school;
 - interest and involvement in classroom activities are apparent, particularly among the younger pupils;
 - relationships between all members of the school community are very strong.
10. Children in the nursery and reception classes take responsibility for accessing their own activities effectively. They play and learn well together. They soon learn to share resources, but also how to work on their own successfully. As pupils progress though the school, they develop a very good level of self-discipline. For example, older pupils help and care for their younger colleagues in the playground.
11. Behaviour is very good. If inappropriate behaviour occurs, pupils know what to do and both pupils and parents believe that the system of sanctions is fair. Bullying is not a significant problem in the school, although lunch-time supervisors and members of staff are continually vigilant and deal with any very rare incidents quickly and effectively. Pupils take very good care of the building, property and resources. Behaviour has received a great deal of attention in recent years. Since the last inspection, the school has continually improved behaviour to a creditable level. Pupils know and understand the difference between right and wrong, act accordingly, understanding well the impact of their actions on others. This contributes a great deal to the positive and fruitful learning environment in the school.

12. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are very good, with mutual respect very much in evidence. Teachers set good examples, which are emulated by pupils. Pupils are confident about speaking to staff about their work and personal issues if necessary.
13. Personal development is satisfactory. The system of rewards encourages pupils to respond to all the opportunities provided by the school. They are eager to demonstrate their success to adults. However, pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to use their own initiative in class, especially in Years 3 to 6, where progress is not always as good as it should be. The caring attitude of the staff ensures that all pupils receive a high level of support. Consequently, pupils who take longer to learn respond very well to the tasks and challenges presented by the teachers. These pupils take a full and active part in the discussions and debates in classrooms and show well-developed social skills.
14. Attendance levels are close to the national average. Too many pupils are arriving late for school. The school recognises that good attendance and prompt arrival have a positive impact on the quality of academic standards and staff work hard to improve both.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. Overall, teaching is good in the school. There are variations, however, between classes. Teaching is good for children in the nursery and reception. It is very good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory overall in Years 3 to 6. The quality of teaching is continuing to improve and is now significantly better than when the school was previously inspected. The amount of unsatisfactory teaching has dropped significantly and there has been a considerable increase in the amount of good and very good teaching. However, despite the improvements, there is still some way to go in Years 3 to 6 to bring the quality of teaching in those classes up to the better standards elsewhere.

Strengths in teaching and learning include:

- well-prepared lessons with pupils clear about what they are learning and why;
- making sure that pupils behave well and concentrate on their learning;
- a good spread of interesting activities for children in the nursery and reception years;
- making pupils think hard and ensuring that the work set is not too hard or too easy;
- teachers knowing their pupils well and having good relationships with them, which enable better learning

In less successful lessons, areas for improvement include:

- not slowing the lesson down too much, as this results in some pupils getting bored;
- ensuring that no work is too hard or too easy for all pupils in every lesson.

16. Teaching was judged to be very good in over a third of lessons, all of them in Years 1 and 2. Good teaching occurred in under half of lessons seen, with the remainder being largely satisfactory. There was a very small percentage of unsatisfactory teaching and far less than at the time of the previous inspection.
17. Teaching is good for children in the nursery and reception overall. There are many examples of very good teaching in reception. All the areas of learning are covered well in lessons that challenge and stimulate children's interest. Sessions are planned well so that children receive a wide, broad and balanced diet. Basic skills in numeracy and literacy are taught effectively. Children soon learn to express themselves after entering the nursery, through the good attention paid to listening and to repeating sounds. Children begin to understand number and, by the time they are ready to start the National Curriculum as they begin Year 1, they can sort into groups and most can count to 20. Children also begin to learn the important skills needed in ICT; for example, finding out how to compile a pictogram and then show this as a bar graph using computers as an aid to learning.

18. In Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good and often very good. Resources are used effectively in subjects such as mathematics, design and technology and music, in order to stimulate interest and help to raise standards. Pupils acquire basic skills in all subjects very well due to thorough preparation and a strong emphasis placed on developing these skills – numeracy, literacy, ICT, map work and physical education, for example. Pupils are organised and managed very well. Teachers have a wonderful rapport with pupils, who are keen to please and very eager to learn. The support staff are deployed effectively, helping in the organisation and delivery of all lessons.
19. In Years 3 to 6 much of the teaching is satisfactory and the learning in these lessons is similar. However, due to staff absence and to many of these pupils not having benefited from learning basic skills effectively in the past, progress over time has been too slow. Pupils' behaviour is generally well managed, but they become a little restless when the pace slows down, as in a couple of lessons in geography and music, for example. When teachers explain the aims of the lesson, they move pupils into small working groups, giving them ample time to work on their own or in groups. When the work is ideally suited to their needs, progress is better. This occurred in science in Year 6 and in English across the four years. The teachers make good use of their support assistants, who work effectively with small groups of pupils. This was particularly effective in Year 5 ICT.
20. Literacy and numeracy are generally taught well across the school. More progress in learning is being made in Years 1 and 2, due largely to the fact that older pupils have missed out on learning essential skills. This is historical, in that these pupils were not taught as well as they are now in the past; as a result, staff in Years 3 to 6 have to spend a lot of time going over older ground to ensure that pupils understand things before they can move on. This slows down the rate of learning, even though it is very necessary to consolidate this learning. Teachers have used the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies effectively in planning their English and mathematics lessons. They do not always give pupils enough opportunities to use their literacy or numeracy skills in other subject areas.
21. Pupils with learning difficulties are given appropriate work in the main subjects of English, mathematics and science. Progress is good towards the targets on their individual education plans. Through careful planning and with frequent opportunities to work individually with one of the support staff trained in special educational needs, pupils effectively learn, for instance, basic skills of sentence construction, sounds of initial words and comprehension. In classrooms, small groups work effectively with the teacher or assistant to learn and consolidate their numbers. In other subjects, pupils with learning difficulties are expected to do much the same work as the rest of the class, which in areas such as physical education or music is satisfactory. However, in subjects such as geography and history, the work is occasionally too hard for them and it is not specifically matched to their needs. Progress in lessons is not as good as it could be.
22. Assessment is good in the main subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT. Teachers use a range of data and information to inform the planning of the next stages of their work, including tests and knowledge of how well pupils perform in lessons. In one Year 5 and 6 lesson, the teacher made good use of this knowledge to go over previous work a second time. This ensured that all pupils had fully understood the concept of the properties of shapes. It also resulted in much better learning of a difficult concept later in the lesson. In other subject areas, the work is more general, with some instances of work matched to learning needs. This enables better progress to be made. Where the work is more general, not all pupils make as good progress as they might. Marking of pupils' work is sometimes inconsistent and in the books insufficient guidance is given on how to improve. Adequate amounts of homework were set during the inspection.

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

23. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development forms a good back-cloth for learning all subjects of the curriculum. The learning environment is positive and supportive with a strong emphasis on raising standards.
24. The curriculum overall is broad, balanced and relevant and meets statutory requirements. The curriculum provided by the school has improved since the previous inspection, with more attention now being given to using ICT across the curriculum. The main strengths of the curriculum include:
- very good provision for pupils' moral development, together with good provision for their spiritual, social and cultural development;
 - a good curriculum for the all pupils up to seven, including nursery and reception;
 - good subject action plans to develop the curriculum and raise standards;
 - good use of the Literacy Strategy to enhance the English curriculum;
 - good use of resources to support the curriculum, including educational visits.

Areas for improvement include:

- updating policies for some subject areas;
 - provision for more investigative work in mathematics and science;
 - provision of a grassed area for games activities.
25. The school provides a good ethos for learning and a good range of learning opportunities for its pupils. Provision for spiritual development is good. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to reflect and think across a range of subjects. Prayers are said or sung at the end of morning and afternoon sessions. Assemblies contain strong moral and spiritual messages. There is generally equality of access to the curriculum for all its pupils, including those with special educational needs.
26. The curricular provision for children in the nursery and reception classes is good. Appropriate emphasis is placed on developing essential skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT. This is balanced effectively with good provision in scientific, creative, personal, social and physical areas. The planning of the curriculum throughout the rest of the school is satisfactory, as is the effectiveness of the strategies for teaching numeracy within the mathematics curriculum. However, there is insufficient focus on problem-solving or graph work in the mathematics and science curriculum provided for the pupils in the juniors. The strategies in place for teaching literacy are good, but there is not an up-to-date policy for this area of the curriculum. The curriculum provision for physical education suffers because there is no on-site grassed area to use for games activities. Curriculum co-ordinators review their subject areas each year, and clear action plans are produced to develop the quality of the curriculum offered and to raise standards. This works well.
27. The governing body shows a keen interest and gives added support, with governors linking with curriculum co-ordinators. Throughout the curriculum, there is a strong and effective focus on moral education. Staff have high expectations of behaviour and foster positive attitudes to work. The effective behaviour policy is applied consistently and indeed reinforced in the curriculum through, for example, personal and social education, so that learning is better. The provision for children in the nursery and reception in personal and social skills is particularly effective in improving learning.
28. Overall, pupils with learning difficulties are well provided for throughout the school. The needs of those with specific learning difficulties are effectively fulfilled through additional support both in and out of class. Learning is effective. Lessons in the main subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT have been specially adapted so that pupils might learn more effectively. In other subjects, provision is satisfactory, but there is not yet a consistent approach to providing work that has been modified appropriately. In subjects such as physical education and music, all pupils play a full and active part. Statutory requirements in relation to pupils with learning difficulties are met in full.
29. The school provides a good range of educational visits in support of the curriculum. Visits over the past year include:

- Stockley Farm for infant pupils, with a focus on science and improving writing;
 - Formby and Tatton Park;
 - Victoria Park for sports activities;
 - Ellesmere Port Boat Museum;
 - Conway Centre, with a geography bias;
 - Quarry Bank Mill, with a focus on history, and design and technology.
30. Such visits, enhanced by some visitors to the school, help to provide pupils with some awareness of their cultural surroundings. Provision in this area is now good. In geography and history, pupils are familiarised with the cultures of other countries as well as our own. Music lessons provide opportunities for pupils to experiment with instruments from all over the world. Religious education contains a strong link to Islam and Judaism, helping pupils to understand better the traditions and beliefs of others. There are satisfactory links with the high school to which most pupils transfer.
31. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities offered by the school, especially considering the small numbers of staff. The additional interest and commitment offered by the caretaker, who provides training and competition for pupils in 'tag-rugby', are a valuable addition to the range of extra-curricular activities offered. The uptake of interest and participation for extra-curricular activities is high, with nearly half of pupils in the school taking part at one time or another. This has a good impact on learning and is especially valuable in enhancing social and cultural skills.
32. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. There is a school council that works effectively and is valued highly by the pupils. The school provides health education appropriate to pupils' ages. Pupils learn about personal hygiene and safety, and are encouraged to eat a healthy diet. The school now has a sex education policy, which is being looked at by governors currently. The provision for developing social skills is good. In many areas of the curriculum, pupils are provided with opportunities to co-operate in small groups, as well as to learn independently. A school council manages a small budget effectively and pupils learn the skills of decision making through this provision. Through the extra-curricular provision and the personal and social education programme, pupils are provided with opportunities to enhance their communication skills, and to understand the needs of others and the importance of helping others. As a result, the school deals with anti-racism appropriately through the curriculum.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS

33. The school provides a caring and safe environment for pupils, with overall provision being good. Procedures for ensuring that all aspects of pupils' welfare are good, with the following strengths:
- procedures for child protection are good;
 - monitoring, support and guidance of pupils' academic performance and personal development are good;
 - procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour, including eliminating threatening behaviour, are very good;
 - procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress and personal development are good;
 - there is good provision, support and guidance for pupils with learning difficulties.

There are no significant weaknesses affecting the welfare of pupils, but areas for improvement include:

- to continue to develop the attendance policy;
 - to ensure that assessment is used more rigorously in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.
34. Health-and-safety reviews and risk assessments are carried out for every aspect of school life both on and off site. Teachers are active in promoting good safety practice and a member of the

governing body supports the school by conducting an independent risk audit. All equipment is regularly checked for safety. As a result, pupils work and learn effectively in a safe environment.

35. The school places great emphasis on positive reward, self-discipline and high self-esteem. This is a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Parents have a very positive view of behaviour and believe that the school helps their children to become mature. In collaboration with parents, the school is taking steps to optimise the time available for teaching and learning, as follows:
- it is encouraging all pupils to arrive on time;
 - in line with the policy of the local education authority, the school is discouraging parents from unnecessarily taking their children on holiday during term time.
36. In recent years, very good progress has been made to ensure that the school provides a caring environment, especially by creating and developing new behaviour policies. All staff have high expectations of behaviour and adopt a consistent approach to behaviour management. Teaching assistants are well deployed to support the small number of pupils who have behavioural difficulties. This results in the need to spend only the minimum amount of time on inappropriate behaviour in lessons, resulting in less disruption and more learning and higher standards.
37. The 'School Council' functions very successfully and helps pupils learn in a number of ways. Using its own modest budget, pupil-councillors sponsored an educational visit from the 'Bug Man', who fascinated the whole school by demonstrating and explaining the nature of a wide range of insects, and contributing effectively to pupils' learning. Other pupils have shown initiative; for example, organising fund-raising activities. The school supports a 'Breakfast Club' and a good range of after-school clubs, all of which add significantly to pupils' social skills development effectively.
38. The school has worked hard since the previous inspection to ensure that teachers keep good information on how pupils are progressing. These improvements are helping to ensure that pupils' learning is better. The procedures are now of a good standard in English, mathematics, science and ICT. The school tracks and records pupils' individual performances, using various tests throughout Years 3 to 6, and all staff keep good records of how well pupils are progressing in these subjects. In other subjects, however, these methods of helping pupils improve are at an early stage. The subject co-ordinators are aware that they have some way to go to develop these further in order to raise standards even more. There are good procedures being developed for recording pupils' progress in physical education.
39. Pupils with learning difficulties are well provided for through support and good-quality guidance. Work in English and mathematics, where most pupils experience their individual problems, has been appropriately modified in order to help pupils make the maximum progress. Pupils who need extra help have good support in and out of classrooms. Parents are kept fully informed of their progress and any statutory reviews that take place. The school has made good provision for the new regulations, which soon come into force for provision in this area.
40. The curriculum is appropriately enhanced by visits, including two residential visits and visitors. Good links are maintained with the parish and community at large. For example, an independent crèche uses school premises. Business partnerships include local shops. The school welcomes help from other sources and uses it to promote learning wherever possible. For example, during the inspection, two high-school students on work placement were helping in classes, thereby providing additional support in organisation of lessons.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is satisfactory and parents' views of the school are very positive. The great majority of parents believe that their children make good progress. Inspectors agreed with parents for pupils in Years 1 and 2, but judged that progress could be better in Years 3 to 6. Almost all parents accept that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. Positive contributions to the partnership are as follows:

- the quality of information provided for parents, particularly about pupils' progress is good;
- the parent-teacher association, 'the Friends of St Augustine's, is active in raising funds for the school.

The main area for development is:

- to continue to encourage parents to take a full and active part in helping in their children's education.
42. Parents consider that this is a good school and the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated that almost all of them are pleased with all aspects of its provision. Parents hold the headteacher in high regard and consider that the many changes that he has introduced since he arrived have been for the better. Inspectors agree fully with this judgement.
43. The school provides good information for parents. Annual pupils' progress reports provide an insight into the performance of individual children during the current academic year. At parent-teacher meetings, teachers are responsive and helpful and try to involve parents in their children's learning.
44. Parents are also welcome to visit the school on an informal basis to discuss any concerns that they might be having about their children's academic or social development. To help parents to understand the curriculum, the school has organised special courses. Some parents became so interested that they decided to continue with further education and gain some qualifications of their own. The contribution of parents to children's learning at school and at home is satisfactory. During the inspection no parents were seen helping in school and they do not regularly help with after-school activities. The school has recognised the lack of involvement and is putting plans in place to encourage greater support. For instance, there is now a parent and toddlers group running successfully with good parental involvement, encouraging parents to take a more active interest in their children's education and development.
45. Since the last report the school has consulted parents and endeavoured to encourage them to come into school. Parents continue to be well informed about school life and pupil progress

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46. The quality of leadership in the school is very good and a significant strength in moving the school forward, following its period of weakness. This is a noticeable improvement since the previous inspection, with the present headteacher being appointed shortly after. The main strengths include:
- the reflection of the school's aims and values in its work;
 - the very good leadership of the headteacher, with good support from the senior management team;
 - very good support from the governing body;
 - good overall management with a very good system for seeing how well the school is doing in order to raise standards;
 - an effective plan for moving the school forward – the school development plan (SDP);
 - a good system for tracking pupils' achievement.

Areas for improvement include:

- improving the role of the subject co-ordinators to include observing more teaching;
 - checking how well the SDP is progressing and sharing the successes with the staff.
47. The school is very effectively led. The headteacher has set clear goals and targets for future development and is supported in this vision by the senior management team, governors and staff

at the school. The aims of raising standards in the nursery and reception years, followed by the infant classes has been extremely successful. This very good practice is now being extended into the junior classes, although the overall benefits have not yet been reflected in the national test results. Inspectors saw considerable evidence of improvements in teaching and learning, as well as in overall curricular provision. The good SDP focuses appropriately on raising standards and ensuring that there is a broad and balanced curriculum for all its pupils. However, at present, there is not a system in place to share the progress and achievement of the targets in the plan with the staff. Each subject co-ordinator has an important input into the SDP and each year they draw up a subject action plan. This is further evidence of the commitment of the school to raise standards for its pupils in which it is currently being successful.

48. The governing body is very knowledgeable and experienced and offers very good support to the headteacher, the staff and the pupils. They have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are very clear about the attention needed for pupils in Years 3 to 6, and are tackling the problem very effectively with the senior management. Governors have a very clear understanding of their role. Many of the governors have taken on a supportive role for areas of the curriculum and school life. One governor, in support of the catholic tradition, accompanies pupils to Sunday mass. The governing body fulfils its statutory roles effectively, including the production of a good annual report to parents.
49. Observing and seeking ways of improving teaching are satisfactory overall. The headteacher has taken a leading role in this area of management. Following observations, there are discussions with individual staff and agreed targets to develop or improve teaching are set. The subject co-ordinators for subjects other than English, mathematics and science do not yet look at the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. This is an area for development within their overall roles in order to raise standards further.
50. Finances are under good control within the school. All money is earmarked for future spending. Governors appreciate very well the need for appropriate considerations regarding obtaining the best value for money when spending funds. The impact of spending is an important aspect of this, especially the way in which it might raise standards. This is currently the case with the new interactive white-board in ICT, whose use and effects on progress and standards the school is carefully monitoring. The school is generally well resourced, with no major problems other than the lack of a playing field. Alternative arrangements have been made to use a neighbouring site when practical. The children in the nursery and reception classes benefit from good resources, including their own well-resourced outdoor play areas.
51. Accommodation is adequate throughout the school, with major changes for the better in the grouping of reception and nursery together and the provision of a new entrance and foyer. Further refurbishments are continuing or are in the pipeline. The school is exceptionally well cared for, with the interior particularly clean. Many areas, especially in the nursery, reception and Year 1 and 2 classrooms, are considerably enhanced through good displays of pupils' work and achievements. The management of the school has made good use of space linked to the organisation of classes.
52. The school is adequately staffed and the use of resources and the deployment of staff are good in all areas of the school. Appropriate professional development is well established and the governing body has set realistic and agreed targets for the headteacher. Support staff in particular play an important part in raising standards. They are deployed to lead groups of pupils in work designed to match their needs and they do this well. Finances are used well to support this. Given the past history of the school and its high proportion of pupils requiring additional support, expenditure per pupil is high. Nevertheless, standards are rising for pupils across the school and significantly so up to the age of seven. The school overall provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

In order to raise standards and improve educational provision further, the school should now:

(1) raise standards in English throughout the school by:

- giving greater guidance to staff through an updated policy for teaching English throughout the school;
- producing a handwriting policy, so that there is greater consistency achieved in the quality of writing across the school;
- ensuring that more pupils are provided with more realistic challenges, especially in writing;
- providing more opportunities for pupils to use fiction books in the library;
- tracking pupils' progress in reading in Years 3 to 6 more consistently and effectively;

(paragraphs 1, 3, 6, 62, 65, 68)

(2) raise standards in mathematics by:

- ensuring that greater emphasis is placed on learning how to do investigative work and how to solve problems in Years 3 to 6;
- ensuring that pupils have more opportunities for handling data and for drawing graphs in Years 3 to 6;
- using ICT more consistently to support learning throughout the school;
- ensuring that work meets pupils' needs more concisely when planning lessons in Years 3 to 6;

(paragraphs 1, 3, 6, 73, 77)

(3) raise standards in science in Years 3 to 6 by:

- improving the quality of investigative work consistently across the school;
- monitoring teaching and learning more effectively;
- providing pupils with more opportunities to become involved in collaborative work;

(paragraphs 1, 3, 6, 79, 80, 81, 83)

(4) raise standards by Year 6 in art and design, and design and technology, by:

- giving pupils more experience and practice at using instruments such as paint-brushes and tools;
- encouraging pupils to experiment in their designs and art work in order to develop their creativity further;

(paragraphs 1, 3, 6, 85, 86, 92, 93, 94)

(5) continue to improve the quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 by:

- matching work more closely to pupils' needs;
- making sure that pupils are kept on track and interested by keeping the pace of lessons brisk;

(paragraphs 15, 21, 70, 75)

(6) improve the role of subject co-ordinators by providing them with opportunities to look at the teaching in their subject areas with a view to raising standards.

(paragraphs 33, 46, 49, 91, 97, 103, 109)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	38
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	21

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	14	17	6	1	0	0
Percentage	0	37	44	16	3	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than two percentage points.

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)	12	98
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	25

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	26

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	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence

%

Unauthorised absence

%

School data	5.7
National comparative data	5.6

School data	0.8
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 2 (Year 6)#

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	7	9	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	11	10	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	69 (50)	63 (33)	63 (58)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	10	10	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	63 (50)	63 (33)	69 (50)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

no figures for Key Stage 1 as numbers less than 10

* numbers too small to be reported individually

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	97
Any other minority ethnic group	1

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	2	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)	5.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19
Average class size	24.5

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	77.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	12
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	347,240
Total expenditure	349,727
Expenditure per pupil	3,238
Balance brought forward from previous year	31,289
Balance carried forward to next year	28,802

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0

Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0
--	---

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	108
Number of questionnaires returned	36

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	31	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	72	17	3	0	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	64	33	0	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	58	36	0	6	0
The teaching is good.	78	19	3	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	67	22	11	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	81	17	0	0	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	83	17	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	69	22	8	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	72	28	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	64	31	3	3	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	64	22	6	3	6

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

52. The provision for children in the nursery and reception classes is good overall.

Strengths are:

- good teaching, with examples of very good teaching in some lessons;
- good progress in all areas of learning for young children;
- an interesting range of learning opportunities which engage children's interest quickly;
- good management of the nursery and reception.

The area for development is:

- to continue to encourage better physical development, especially by improving the outdoor facilities and hand control.

53. The children have a good start to their education in the nursery and reception years, with good overall management and leadership. Children enter the nursery with standards that are well below average with poor skills in speaking and hand control. The level of attainment for children when they start in the reception year is average. Children make good progress overall in the nursery and reception year, but there is very good progress in the reception year. Their skills in personal, social and emotional development progress at an excellent pace and they are above average in this area of learning by the time they are ready to start in Year 1. Skills in other areas of learning are about average, although slightly below in physical development, especially in hand control. Certain aspects of communication, language and literacy and mathematical development, especially in recognising simple words and manipulating numbers, are developing well.

54. **There is good teaching overall in the nursery and reception classes.** There are many examples of very good teaching in reception and a good range of interesting activities for the children. The better lessons contain a faster pace, with children being made to think harder about their learning. Lessons are well prepared in both classes. Teachers make children think hard so that learning in literacy and numeracy is very good. Children work effectively through the good variety of enriching and well-presented activities. The staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the curriculum for young children and teach basic skills very effectively. The standard of planning is very good and there are high expectations for what the children can achieve. The teaching is set at a good pace and the children's effort and knowledge of what they have achieved are good. There are good methods employed in teaching. The management of the children and their behaviour is good and resources are used well. Support staff are deployed effectively and make a positive impact on the children's learning. Procedures for recording how well children are doing are good overall; there is good use of this information to judge what the children can do and understand in order to set good-quality work for further learning. There are plans to include summaries of the children's progress in the six areas of learning. There is a good range of resources and the accommodation is suitable both indoors and outside. The outdoor area is due for development; for example, adding appropriate safety surfaces for physical development and using the environment to support learning. Teaching is observed effectively to ensure improvement.

55. **The curriculum offered is good,** with good learning opportunities which build effectively from the nursery to reception and then to Year 1. Personal, social and emotional development is a strength of the curriculum and there is a wide range of challenging and interesting activities which support learning effectively. The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant, with a good emphasis on communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. The areas for learning and the expected levels to be achieved are clearly identified and the curriculum is appropriate for the age of the pupils, with good provision for children with learning difficulties.

Personal, social and emotional development

56. The children are learning to behave well, feel secure in their learning environment and have confidence and self-esteem. Most children in the nursery come into school without any signs of anxiety; those who still find settling difficult are comforted and supported well by the staff. Progress is good. Children in the reception class are confident, self-assured and keen to share their ideas and experiences. The children have very good attitudes and behave well, and relationships are very secure. They are enthusiastic, interested and motivated. Personal independence is encouraged effectively. The children enjoy tasks they have chosen themselves and take pride in what they achieve. They are learning to manage their own personal hygiene; for example, washing their hands after 'messy' activities, and they choose from a selection of activities and resources. However, some children lack initiative and have to be encouraged to be active participants in their learning, especially when they are very young. By the time the children are in the reception class, they are well-motivated and keen to be involved in the range of interesting activities provided. The children are learning a sense of community and, through the strong links with the local church, they experience traditions and customs. For example, they are aware of the ceremony for baptising a baby. Children are likely to be well above the expected levels in this area of learning when they start the National Curriculum.

Communication, language and literacy

57. The children's skills are being well promoted and progress is good. As a result, children are likely to reach the expected levels for starting to learn the National Curriculum in Year 1. The children do not speak very well and are not very skilled at using pencils and crayons when they first come into the nursery. However, their ability to express themselves and share ideas develops quickly in the reception class and they are given strong encouragement to offer suggestions. Sometimes, opportunities to share ideas and experiences are missed in the nursery; for example, when the children first come together as a group at the beginning of the morning. The children pay attention and listen to stories; for example, 'Mr Gumpy's Outing', and they enjoy songs and rhymes, such as 'Wind the Bobbin Up'. The older children enjoy stories and participate enthusiastically; for example, when listening to the amusing story, 'Clark, the Toothless Shark'. The children in both classes have good opportunities to develop their ideas in imaginative play, 'at the seaside', 'in the boat' and shopping. Older children are learning to use the sounds letters make in words to decipher print. They handle books correctly and several can recognise simple words. The children use the writing areas in both classes to make marks and symbols. However, hand control for older children is weak. Although they can write some simple words and sentences, the presentation of work is rather poor.

Mathematical development

58. Mathematical skills are developing well. Children are making good progress and are likely to reach the expected level in time to start the National Curriculum. The staff plan this area of learning very well and provide a good range of experiences through play, which enhance the children's learning about numbers and counting. For example, in the nursery good use is made of clothes pegs and coat hangers to illustrate how different groups of numbers can be added together. In the reception class, the children are developing good ideas about money, its values and change when shopping; for instance, giving the correct amount of change when re-enacting the number song 'Five Currant Buns'. The children are aware of two-dimensional shapes and are learning to identify them accurately. The older children are learning about patterns and this links very well to their creative work in music when they make sound patterns. The staff are skilled in reinforcing mathematical language with the children, which enhances their learning.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

59. The children's knowledge and understanding of the world are progressing well, although they have only limited understanding of the environment when they first start school. They begin to learn about living things through trips; for example, to 'Stockley Farm'. The children are encouraged to be inquisitive and to explore, especially in the reception class. Both age groups of children are

learning to design and make models and the older children have access to a good range of tools and equipment in their design work. The children use ICT effectively to support and reinforce what they have learned. Most children are confident in using computers and are developing good 'mouse' skills. They are becoming familiar with the environment; for example, of different types of transport and their use on the roads and waterways. Most children are likely to reach expected levels when they start the National Curriculum.

Physical development

60. This is progressing appropriately, although most children are unlikely to reach the expected level when they start the National Curriculum. The children can move about in both classes with due regard to space, obstacles and other children. They have regular opportunities to use the outdoor areas, although the designated space for the nursery is rather narrow. The older children use the larger space in the playground to practise using bikes and younger children also have this opportunity. During the inspection this area was not used much by nursery children. There are plans to develop the outdoor areas and how they are used in future. There are appropriate opportunities for the children to develop their skills in climbing, balancing and jumping and to experience using a range of equipment to practise skills for games, such as throwing and catching. Hand control is developing at a reasonable pace, even though the children are not good at using their hands when they first come into the nursery. However, they have a good range of experiences to develop the strength in the small muscles in their hands; for example, using malleable materials, sand and water.

Creative development

61. This is well promoted and the children's skills are developing effectively overall. Most are likely to achieve the expected level when they start the National Curriculum through the good progress made. The children explore media and materials in their creative work, recognising the differences in colours and making three-dimensional structures, such as models of vehicles and 'hot air balloons'. The older children use pencils and pastels to draw what they observe; for example, living things and still life. Younger children explore paint, but sometimes the size of paper they are offered is too small and restricts their creativity. However, the children have good opportunities to explore sound; for instance, in the reception class they try different patterns, using a drum to create sound effects, or clapping simple rhythms. The children's imaginative play is developing well. They are well-supported in this type of work and are learning to make up their own stories and ideas in the attractively-presented 'seaside scenes'. The children, particularly in the reception class, are interested in the world around them and respond in a variety of ways to what they see, hear, smell and touch. There is a good range of media and materials provided for the children to explore in their creative work.

ENGLISH

62. At the time of the previous inspection, standards when pupils left school at the end of Year 6 were broadly in line with the national average. At present, the standards are below average when pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6. The high number of pupils with moderate learning difficulties in this present age group, over a quarter, results in standards now being particularly low. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are as expected for this age. Reading and writing standards overall, when taking into consideration the number of low-attaining pupils in the age group, are below average. The school does not have a clear policy on handwriting. The handwriting skills for pupils of all levels of attainment are unsatisfactory. Overall, achievement by the end of Year 6 is unsatisfactory.
63. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress towards meeting the targets set in their individual educational plans. Progress is at its best when teachers take these children out of lessons and work with them individually. This allows them to make good, small, secure steps in learning basic skills.

64. Standards at the end of Year 2 are above the national average. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The main reason for this is the high quality of the teaching of the basic skills of speaking, listening and reading. The teaching of writing skills is sound and all pupils are now reaching the average standard required, but the higher attaining pupils do not reach their full potential. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress. Overall achievement by the end of Year 2 is good.

65. The main strengths in English are:

- the high quality of teaching and learning in the infant classes;
- the effective planning for English for all pupils through the use of the National Literacy Strategy;
- teachers' good knowledge and understanding of this subject;
- the use of a range of English tests to measure achievements and to set targets for pupils to raise standards;
- the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills in literacy lessons.

The areas for improvement are:

- to update the policy for teaching English throughout the school;
- the provision of a handwriting policy to contribute towards raising the standard of handwriting throughout the school;
- raising the levels achieved by the higher attaining pupils in writing;
- to provide library access for pupils to use fiction books;
- to track and record the reading progress of pupils in Years 3 to 6.

66. Overall, literacy skills are developed appropriately across the curriculum. Speaking and listening skills are at least satisfactory and often better in the school. Considering the level of communication skills on entry, the progress and achievement made by the end of Year 2 are good. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 provide good opportunities for pupils to talk and to respond to questions. These opportunities are taken in most lessons, but particularly in literacy lessons. Pupils in this age group are trained and encouraged to listen carefully to stories and instructions and to their classmates' views. As a result, the speaking and listening skills of pupils in Years 1 and 2 are being developed well. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 continue to develop their speaking and listening skills, but over-direction of pupils by teachers, particularly during discussions in the lower junior lessons, means that opportunities to develop skills are restricted. Older pupils in the juniors are encouraged and many take the opportunity to express their ideas and views. The teacher in a Year 6 lesson gave many opportunities for pupils to review the shared text they studied in their literacy lesson. As a result, pupils' interest and enthusiasm are maintained and opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills are enhanced.

67. Pupils develop their reading skills extremely well throughout Years 1 and 2. Reading is developed well as teachers ask pupils to read along with them in the shared-text phase of the literacy lessons. The teaching of phonics by teachers is very good. Pupils in one Year 2 lesson responded with tremendous interest and enthusiasm when challenged to identify a range of more complex sounds in a literacy lesson. Pupils take reading books home and parents enter progress and comments in a reading record. This again helps pupils to develop their reading ability. All these strategies are very effective and have contributed to the very high standards in reading achieved by the pupils in Years 1 and 2. The good progress in reading is not being maintained higher up the school and tracking and recording of pupils' achievements, in their own choices of reading, are inconsistent. Teachers do not give enough opportunities for pupils to read along with them in the shared-text phase of literacy lessons. There is a wide selection of reading books in classrooms, but there is no access provided for the junior pupils to select fiction books in the school library.

68. Writing standards are average by the end of Year 2. Higher attaining pupils do not achieve their full potential in writing. They use simple sentences and are now sequencing them when writing stories. However, apart from one higher attaining pupil, pupils tend to write brief stories restricted

to a few words. Pupils' handwriting tends to be consistent in size, but letters are not always formed accurately. There is some progression in writing higher up the school, but it is insufficient to meet the required standards by the end of Year 6. Due to the lack of a clear handwriting policy, pupils in Years 3 to 6 do not write in a consistent form and some of the work in the lower juniors is poorly presented. Older juniors are given a good range of experiences in writing for purpose. A few good examples of analysing previous work on letter writing were seen. A higher-attaining pupil in Year 6 wrote with expression and strong views when focusing on the litter in a play area. *"It is my opinion that this litter is a health hazard, for example yesterday a Year 4 boy fell over and cut his knee on a broken bottle. The boy in question needed four stitches"*.

69. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall; it is very good in Years 1 and 2.

70. The strengths of teaching in the best lessons are:

- good use of the National Literacy Strategy in planning English lessons;
- teachers' very good knowledge of how to teach the sounds of words in Years 1 and 2;
- sharing what is to be learnt and why with the pupils at the start of lessons;
- very good class management and use of resources;
- making pupils think hard about what they are doing in literacy lessons.

Teaching is less effective when:

- the pace in lessons is slow and timings do not conform with planning;
- higher attaining pupils, in particular, are not pushed as hard as they might be;
- pupils do not get enough opportunities to work on their own or in groups;
- pupils cannot express their own views.

71. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory, but the lack of a clear policy for English is an unsatisfactory situation, leading, for example, to a lack of consistency in the way higher attaining pupils learn. The co-ordinator has planned to address this and it is included in a very clear and informative action plan to raise standards in English throughout the school. This action plan is part of the overall school development plan aimed at raising standards. Pupils' progress and achievement are being followed well by teachers, who set good targets for them. Additional classes are run with a view to raising standards in English further and these are meeting with some success.

MATHEMATICS

72. Standards are below average in Year 6. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection, especially for pupils in Years 1 and 2, who are now well above average.

73. Strengths are:

- good teaching and learning overall, with very good teaching in Years 1 and 2;
- good pupil achievement by the end of Year 2;
- effective use made of resources.

Areas for improvement include:

Overall:

- When re-writing the subject policy, incorporate more ICT into the learning process in all years.

In Years 3 to 6:

- raise standards for all groups of pupils;
- increase the amount of time devoted to problem solving and graph work;
- ensure that all groups of pupils are provided with suitably thought-provoking work.

74. Teaching and learning are good overall. However, there is some inconsistency between year groups. In Years 1 and 2, where the quality of teaching and learning is very good, pupils are challenged effectively and learn very well in lessons. In these infant classes, preparation is very good and pupils are given strong verbal challenges in their mental work. This is connected to what they learn later on in groups, so they then continue and reinforce their learning effectively in the same lesson. There is a strong focus on problem solving and investigative work. This ensures that all pupils, including those with learning difficulties, learn in a practical way. When checking out answers in Years 1 and 2, for example, the teacher ensured that each pupil had a clear explanation for their answer. The teacher also prompted higher-attaining pupils to think of another way of solving the problem. As a result of these good challenges, all pupils make very good progress and achieve very well by the time of their national tests in Year 2.
75. Teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 are satisfactory overall. Teachers tell pupils what the lesson aims to achieve and try to ensure that work is matched to their needs. This is not always one hundred per cent successful, as occasionally tasks are too hard or too simple. This adversely affects progress in parts of lessons. Mental sessions are not always related to what is to occur in the next section of the lesson, so that learning does not always build effectively on what has gone before. However, pupils are generally managed effectively and there is a satisfactory pace to lessons overall. Inspectors found standards to be improving, despite the unsatisfactory achievement in the junior classes. Given the low starting point of pupils, overall achievement is satisfactory.
76. Teachers use resources effectively. All pupils have 'number fans' for displaying their answers in mental sessions and this is effective in checking out accuracy. They use number squares and blocks as an aid to counting; pupils also have opportunities to reinforce their learning by answering questions at the end of lessons when staff summarise learning. Classroom assistants play an important part when working with small groups in lessons and helping them gain better understanding when problems arise. Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported and their progress is good overall, especially in number work.
77. Standards are not yet high enough for the oldest pupils in the school. There are a number of reasons for this:
- Older pupils do not get sufficient opportunities to undertake problem-solving or investigative work. There is a very strong emphasis on understanding number, with pupils reaching average standards overall, but they often experience difficulties when solving problems, due to a lack of practice, both oral and written.
 - There is insufficient emphasis on looking at data and producing graphs. Pupils' work shows some basic skills in drawing line graphs, but there is little evidence of more-complex and challenging work on pie-charts, bar graphs and interpreting the data presented in this form.
 - Overall, ICT is not used as effectively as it might be as an aid to learning. While some pupils consolidate their learning by using various activities based on numbers on computers, there is very little evidence of computers in use to support learning in the two areas above, namely data-handling and problem-solving.
78. There is satisfactory use of numeracy in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils effectively relate their sorting skills when placing instruments into long or short sound categories in music lessons; younger pupils begin to link mathematics with ICT as they learn how to compile a picture graph. Measurement and accuracy form part of the teaching in science and in design and technology. Co-ordination of the subject is good, with good levels of observation of teaching in order to help improve learning. Through classroom observations, areas for development, such as the clearer focused learning objectives, have been highlighted and introduced as standard practice. Very importantly, work is now being matched to the needs of different groups of pupils, even though this is not consistent across all year groups. The policy is out of date and does not conform to the latest national guidance on numeracy. One result of this is the lack of consistency in the use of ICT as a means of raising standards.

SCIENCE

79. Standards in science are well below average for pupils at the end of the current Year 6. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2, which is a similar picture to the standards assessed by teachers in 2001. Standards as judged by inspectors are above average by Year 2, but well below average towards the end of Year 6.

80. The strengths in science are:

- good attainment and progress for pupils in Years 1 and 2;
- good behaviour and attitudes to science in lessons;
- very good educational direction and good overall leadership and management of the subject;
- good use of ICT and other resources to promote learning, such as an interactive screen and microscope.

Areas for development are:

- improving the standards among eleven-year-olds;
- providing more opportunities for investigative work consistently across the school;
- looking at teaching more critically in order to raise standards;
- providing further opportunities for collaborative and co-operative work in groups.

81. Achievement is good by Year 2, given the low starting point of most pupils. However, achievement is unsatisfactory towards the end of Year 6 and older pupils' standards in science are well below average by the time they leave the school. Good progress is achieved in Years 1 and 2, including those pupils who are identified as having learning difficulties. Work is often specially modified for them and this helps them to make better progress. The older pupils in Years 5 and 6 are learning about earth and the solar system, forces, evaporation and keeping healthy, but this work tends to be at a very basic level, as the pupils have little previous knowledge on which to build their understanding due to poorer teaching in the past.

82. Younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 are learning about parts of plants and how seeds grow to form new growth. There is good emphasis on investigative work for these year groups and a good range of topics to broaden the pupils' understanding. For example, these include the human body, mini-beasts, materials, electricity and electrical circuits. Behaviour in these year groups is good and the pupils have positive attitudes to their learning in science. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have good opportunities to go on schools trips, for instance to Lower Moss Wood, where they have valuable experiences, for instance pond dipping.

83. Teaching and learning are good overall. The staff have secure subject knowledge and plan effectively. In Years 1 and 2, planning, expectations, management and use of time, resources and support staff are very good. Planning and use of assessment are satisfactory for the older pupils. Learning is good overall, with a good quality curriculum and good equality of opportunity. Pupils participate well in lessons and they have good attitudes to science, although there is too little investigative work to encourage social skills.

84. Resources for science are good, well-organised and used effectively in lessons. New procedures for assessing what pupils know and understand are in use. The school has not yet begun to look at these critically enough to ensure that all teachers are using them effectively. Leadership and management of science are good. The co-ordinator has excellent educational vision and motivation to lead the subject forward. However, there is no observation of teaching by the co-ordinator as yet, but this is clearly identified in the action plan as a means of improving science in the school in the future.

ART AND DESIGN

85. Standards in art and design are average for pupils by the end of Year 2 and below average for pupils at the end of Year 6. This is similar to the judgements at the previous inspection.

86. The main strengths of art and design are:

- very good teaching in Years 1 and 2;
- good leadership and management of art and design in the school.

Areas for development are:

- improvement of display in the school to inspire creative work;
- better experiences for older pupils in the school to use tools and equipment in their art work;
- more opportunities to experiment to develop creativity further;
- more opportunities to practise essential skills and techniques.

87. Pupils overall make satisfactory progress, given their low starting points. They progress very well in Year 1 and are learning a range of skills and techniques, using a variety of media. The older pupils are being introduced to an interesting variety of techniques. However, their lack of previous knowledge and experiences impacts adversely on the standards they can achieve. Inspectors noted that standards were rising, especially in the use of sketchbooks and model making.

88. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are learning to observe living things, materials and features in the environment to inform their art and design work. For example, in Year 1, the pupils used pencils and pastels to sketch their observations of a mackerel fish. The results were detailed and accurate representations of what they had observed, with artistic flair, due to the very good teaching they received. The pupils' attitudes and responses to art and design are good and those pupils identified as having learning difficulties make good progress.

89. Teaching and learning of art and design are very good in Years 1 and 2, lessons are well planned with effective management of pupils and good methods to teach the subject in a systematic way. The staff have very secure subject knowledge, very high expectations for what the pupils can achieve and basic skills and techniques are taught very carefully. Teaching was not observed during the inspection in Years 3 to 6, due to timetable arrangements, and therefore it is not possible to judge the quality of teaching. However, in other lessons, for example in history, art and design are used well to sketch observations of artefacts such as irons.

90. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, are learning to work with different types of materials, for example to use plaster of Paris when making plaques and cartouches, related to work in history on Egypt. They have produced interesting patterns to decorate the playground using mosaic tiles. In Years 3 and 4, the pupils use malleable materials, such as clay in their three-dimensional work. All pupils in the school have sketchbooks and these are being used effectively to record their observations, for example on a trip to Conway. These sketchbooks are beginning to provide an effective record of the pupils' progress. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 use their sketch-books very well, and the results are attractive, detailed and inspiring. Other trips, for example to 'Quarry Mill', are used effectively to provide the pupils with first-hand experiences in art and design work.

91. Resources for art and design are good and used effectively in lessons. Leadership and management are good, although there is no observation of teaching as yet to try to raise standards further.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

92. Standards in design and technology are average for pupils at the end of Year 2 and below average for pupils at the end of Year 6. However, pupils progress at a satisfactory rate over time and inspectors found standards to be improving, although not yet up to national averages. These are similar findings to those of the previous inspection.

93. The main strengths of design and technology are:

- good attitudes, behaviour and relationships in lessons seen in Years 3 to 6;
- good progress for pupils identified as having learning difficulties.

Areas for development, particularly in Years 3 to 6, are:

- more frequent opportunities to practise using equipment and tools and control technology to develop the pupils' skills;
 - better opportunities to develop their creativity, initiative and be innovative;
 - more opportunities for working co-operatively and collaboratively in groups;
 - building more effectively on what pupils have already learnt.
94. The older pupils are learning to design and make models as part of a team. They use construction kits and solar panels in their design and technology work and work on designs of vehicles, for example making a chassis. They make good progress in lessons, due to a collaborative and co-operative approach, and there are good levels of interaction between staff and pupils to promote language. Learning and standards are improving. However, their attainment is below the expected level for Year 6, due to lack of previous experience of working in this way, which has affected the pupils' progress over time, especially in accuracy when designing. Also, older pupils do not get sufficient opportunities to develop their imaginative or creative skills when planning designs.
95. In Years 3 and 4, the pupils are learning how to plan a design, using a diagram to illustrate the different parts and how these are to be put together. Plans indicate that they study structures and textiles and use torches and alarms in their design and technology work.
96. Overall, teaching and learning are good in design and technology in Years 3 to 6 and pupils learn well in lessons. Teaching was not observed during the inspection in Years 1 and 2, due to timetable arrangements and, therefore, it is not possible to judge the quality of teaching in this part of the school. However, in Years 3 to 6, the staff have developed their knowledge, they plan and teach basic skills appropriately, with reasonable expectations of what pupils can achieve. Teaching methods, management of pupils and use of resources and support staff are good, although in Years 3 and 4 there is sometimes not enough variety in the tasks to match the range of ability in the class. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 cover a good range of work. They are learning to use equipment, for example to weave on a loom and they use levers and other mechanisms to move models, such as when making Incey Wincey spider move up the water spout! The provision for pupils with learning difficulties is good. All pupils are expected to be active participants in design and technology activities. The subject is used effectively to promote the pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, pupils are taught to behave properly and with consideration for others during lessons, especially for reasons of safety.
97. Resources for the subject are good and used effectively in lessons. Keeping track of the pupil's progress is adequate, but is not used consistently across school, and there is no observation of teaching as yet. Satisfactory improvements have been made since the previous inspection in that teachers' subject knowledge has been developed, although this has not had a significant impact so far on attainment by the end of Year 6.

GEOGRAPHY

98. Standards in geography are average throughout the school. As no specific judgement was made at the time of the previous inspection, no comparison in standards can be made.
99. Strengths in the subject are:
- good use of maps, atlases and globes to support teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2;
 - good use made of ICT (CD Roms, interactive whiteboard);
 - good support given by classroom assistants;
 - clear action plan to raise standards in geography.

Areas for improvement are:

- provision of activities to match the needs of individual pupils;
- checking to ensure that the planned curriculum is covered;
- use more geographical terms to extend pupils' vocabulary;
- management of pupils in lower junior lessons;
- increase the pace in lessons.

100. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. During the inspection, teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 were very good and in Years 3 to 6 it ranged from unsatisfactory to satisfactory. In Years 1 and 2, the teacher's planning, organisation and management of the lesson are very good. Pupils in one lesson were engaged in a wide range of challenging activities. They were provided with a good selection of resources that enabled them to learn new facts about the origins of chocolate as well as building on their geographical skills. They used atlases and a globe to find the continent of Africa and locate Ghana. The class teacher made good use of the classroom assistant to support pupils' learning. As a result of good teaching and organisation the pupils were very interested and enthusiastic, applying themselves well and making good progress in new learning.
101. In the less successful lesson in the juniors, all pupils were given the same task. They had to select areas from holiday brochures and answer questions from one worksheet. The lower attaining pupils struggled to read and understand the worksheet and they made little progress. The higher attaining pupils were not extended. Overall the attainment in this lesson was below that expected. Pupils lacked concentration and chose to discuss other issues outside the context of the lesson; this was left unchecked. In Years 5 and 6, better teacher organisation and management ensured that pupils made good progress in learning about the formation of coastlines. In one lesson, the good use of ICT by the teacher gave good support to pupils' new learning. However, the pace of the lesson was sometimes slow and pupils' geographical vocabulary was not extended enough.
102. Analysis of earlier work shows that, by the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average. The majority of pupils use Ordnance maps effectively, using four figure references to locate features and locations in their local study. They make good use of maps to locate more distant areas and can effectively plot routes between selected cities of the world. Most pupils can carry out surveys and record findings effectively; they did this well in researching into the amount of water they use, when they studied how water is routed to their school. Analysis of work in the lower juniors indicates that pupils are not writing in enough detail and that the coverage of geography is shallow. Pupils are not reaching expected standards for this age group.
103. The co-ordinator has drawn up a clear action plan to develop geography at the school. Planning ensures that pupils' needs are met within the mixed age settings. As there is no tracking of pupils' progress as yet, nor checking for curriculum coverage or monitoring teaching of geography by the co-ordinator, this area of management of the subject is unsatisfactory in helping to raise standards further.

HISTORY

104. Standards in the subject are average across the school. No comparison can be made with the findings of the previous inspection as no specific judgements were made.
105. Strengths in the subject are:
- good standard of planning;
 - very good use of resources, particularly in Years 1 and 2;
 - good use of plenary sessions;
 - the use of local history places to promote learning;

Areas for development are:

- critically observing teaching and pupils' learning;
- making all pupils work to the best of their abilities;
- to involve pupils more in discussions and to let them use their initiative.

106. Teaching and learning overall are good. Teaching of history during the inspection was never less than satisfactory and in Years 1 and 2 it was very good. Very good teaching is a result of the teachers' very good knowledge and understanding of each history area of focus, coupled with the use of a very good range of resources to support both teaching and pupils' new learning. In one lesson, pupils' interest and imagination was readily captured, by being able to handle and explore household items dating back to the early and middle twentieth century. Pupils were fascinated by coal scuttles and tongs, bed warmers and carpet beaters and were able to explain what people would use today. The majority of the pupils developed effective skills in comparing and contrasting different times in recent history and made good progress, achieving well. The very good use of review sessions at the end of lessons further consolidated pupils' learning. As a result of very good teaching and organisation pupils' apply themselves with interest and behave extremely well. Analysis of previous work shows that most pupils can use a time line to track the main events in the life of Louis Braille.
107. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 made steady progress in a lesson observed, as they discussed ideas to be used in a questionnaire about the immediate past. However, due to over direction by the teacher, the pupils are not able to use their own ideas and initiative. The pupils do show a good level of interest and the provision of appropriate worksheets/questionnaires means that pupils of all attaining levels make steady progress. Analysis of previous work, however, shows that too often pupils cover identical tasks. Much of it is copying out information without indicating any understanding of the work they do. In some instances very little or no work is seen in support of their history studies. Progress and achievement in this work is unsatisfactory and expected standards are not reached.
108. Upper juniors achieve well in their study unit of the Middle Ages and medieval towns. In one lesson good organisation and management coupled with good direct teaching and good use of an assistant to support group work in ICT, ensured pupils' interest and application were good and for the majority of pupils new learning occurred. However, in some lessons, lower-attaining pupils are not catered for when returning to the class, after receiving specific teaching on basic literacy skills. Analysis of work covered previously, indicates that most pupils have gained a sound understanding of the life and times of both the Ancient Egyptians and the Ancient Greeks. The majority of pupils show that they have gained a good knowledge and understanding of life for young children in Britain in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The visit to Quarry Bank Mill in Manchester and the opportunity to learn about the use of pauper children as apprentices extends their learning further. Pupils in the upper juniors make sound progress and achievement. This enables them to attain standards in line with expectations by the end of Year 6.
109. The subject co-ordinator gives a sound lead to her colleagues and has produced a clear plan to raise standards further. Resources for history are good and readily available for teaching and learning. A good range of visits to places of historical interest is organised to both support and extend pupils' learning in history. As there is no tracking of pupils' learning, nor any observation of teaching, these are areas of management for further development with a view to raising standards further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

110. Standards in ICT are average throughout the school. Provision is very good, with three computers in each classroom and a large interactive board in a dedicated room. These are significant improvements since the previous inspection.

Strengths are:

- great improvement in provision since the previous inspection, including tracking progress;

- standards that have risen to average throughout the school;
- good pupils' achievement, due to good teaching of basic skills.

The area for improvement:

- continue to build staff expertise and confidence through training.

111. The school has worked hard and invested a lot of money to provide its pupils with worthwhile and challenging opportunities in ICT throughout the school. There are now three computers in each classroom designed to enhance learning effectively across the whole curriculum. A separate teaching room with a large interactive white-board enables further progress and development to take place, as whole groups now benefit from presentations on the large screen. The school has successfully remedied the lack of monitoring and control reported on in the last inspection through introducing programmable robots across the school and using ICT in science when undertaking experiments.
112. The high level of investment in this field, plus on-going staff training, has resulted in improved standards. Pupils are showing appropriate levels of keyboard skills in all classes. Pupils know and understand how to switch on and load programs from an early age. They use the mouse with confidence. They understand the use of the digital camera and microscope as elements of technology. They use the Internet and web-sites for research. They use the computers in classrooms to support learning in many other subjects, including English, science, art and design and geography. Standards are now much better and skills much more advanced than when the school was previously inspected. A good system of recording and tracking pupils' progress is now in place and is partly responsible for the higher standards.
113. Teaching and learning new and basic skills are good. Teachers plan to use computers effectively in many of their lessons, which enhances learning across a range of subjects effectively. Pupils are taught the basic skills of controlling the mouse, using menu scrolls and how to import pictures and edit and enhance their text. Skills are built on progressively from Year 1 onwards. This results in good pupil achievement over time.
114. The decision by management to have three computers in each classroom has been very successful in encouraging teachers to seek ways of enhancing pupils' learning in other subjects of the curriculum. The school recognises that more staff training is needed to unlock these for the benefit of pupils' learning.

MUSIC

115. Standards in music are average throughout the school with satisfactory achievement overall. This is similar to the findings of previous inspection visits.
116. The main strength in music is:
- good teaching with a good focus on practical activities.
- The main area for development is:
- to use ICT more effectively in enhancing learning.
117. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers plan their lessons well and build good practical experiences into them. For example, in a Year 1 and 2 lesson and in a Year 5 and 6 lesson pupils had plenty of opportunities to play a wide range of instruments and to sing. These opportunities make lessons more fun for pupils and learning is enhanced. Pupils like to show what they know. Many have learnt to follow a beat or pulse and progress in this area is appropriate. Older pupils have some knowledge and understanding of the work of great composers; for example, that Tchaikovsky wrote ballet music and that Puccini wrote operas. This is good knowledge for their age.

118. Pupils make at least satisfactory progress over time. Progress is good when the pace of lessons is kept brisk and activities follow on from one another quickly. Pupils' quality of singing improves well when they practise in lessons. With rehearsal, pupils learn to sing sweetly with clearer diction. Good collaboration adds significantly to their developing social skills. A few pupils learn to play the guitar through an extra-curricular activity and these pupils play for the whole school in assemblies. Although restricted to a few pupils, this nevertheless makes a good contribution to raising self-esteem, as well as demonstrating that perseverance leads to success.
119. There is little done, as yet, to record and track pupils' performance in the subject, although the co-ordinator has good plans to introduce some procedures when pupils achieve certain tasks. Some pupils have used the Internet effectively to search for information on composers. However, this area of using technology to enhance learning is still not developed fully as training has not taken place.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

120. Standards in physical education (PE) are average across the school. No judgement was made at the time of the previous inspection and, therefore, no comparisons can be made.

121. Strengths in the subject are:

- the good preparation for games lessons;
- good direct teaching of games skills;
- good leadership given by the co-ordinator.

The areas for improvement and development are:

- increase the pace and involvement of pupils in lessons;
- using a grassed area for lessons.

122. One games lesson was observed in Years 1 and 2. This shows satisfactory attainment. Pupils make good progress during the lesson and achievement is good in developing essential skills in passing the ball and catching, for instance. Warm-up activities are good, but it takes too long to get into games activities and pupils lose the benefit of warming up. The teacher's demonstration of striking a ball with a hockey stick is effective and all pupils learn this skill well. Good guidance by the teacher on the safe use of hockey sticks ensures that pupils send and receive to each other with care. In the games lesson in the juniors, prompt changing and good warm up means that pupils are properly prepared for their activities. However, the pace of the lesson slips when the organisation of groups takes too long and when pupils have to wait too long to practise their skills. Good intervention by the teacher, who keeps a good record of how well pupils are progressing, ensures that all pupils achieve well.

123. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and in Years 1 and 2 it is good. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of games skills and the teaching of these skills is good. Teachers pick out elements of good practice and use it for demonstration. Pupils in the Year 1 games lesson had very good attitudes to learning and behaved very well so they are more focused and learn essential skills more effectively. Planning for lessons is clear. From assessments that are made in swimming, the majority of pupils are able to swim the required 25 metres by the end of Year 6.

124. The co-ordinator gives a good lead to her colleagues. In the two years she has been in post:

- a new policy has been produced;
- a nationally recognised scheme has been incorporated and adapted to fit into the school's own plan for learning;
- a detailed action plan has been put into place to raise standards in PE;
- a good quality strategy for recording and tracking achievement is to be trialled;
- good provision has been made for extra-curricular sport (games clubs, tag rugby, athletics, cross country). There is a high level of uptake for these activities.
- additional activities are being organised for pupils during dinner breaks;
- the school is submitting a claim to achieve the 'Activemark Award' for PE through Sport England.

125. The school's accommodation is satisfactory for most elements of the PE curriculum. The lack of a grassed area means that pupils are not able to put their games' skills into practice. The school does make use of a park and local secondary school field but these are situated well beyond the school site, resulting in some time being lost as pupils move.