

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **UPTON HEATH CHURCH OF ENGLAND CONTROLLED PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Chester

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 131684

Headteacher: Mrs Glenys Owen

Reporting inspector: Mrs Christine Field  
OIN: 9479

Dates of inspection: 19 – 23 March 2001

Inspection number: 230806

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Upton Lane Upton-by-Chester Chester Cheshire CH2 1ED
Telephone number:	01244 380027
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Sheila Longdin
Date of previous inspection:	Not applicable

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
9479	Mrs C A Field	Registered inspector		The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning Key Issues for action
9428	Mrs J Butler	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes and values and personal development Partnership with parents and carers Pupils' welfare, health and safety
15414	Mr D Carrington	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Physical education Equal opportunities	Leadership and management
2818	Mr G Warner	Team inspector	Special educational needs Art and design Design and technology	
1189	Mrs S Brown		English Religious education	
6752	Mrs J Dickins	Team Inspector	Science Provision for children in the Foundation Stage History Geography	
22856	Mrs K Campbell	Team inspector	Music Mathematics	Quality and range of opportunities for learning

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school which serves its local community, opened in 1998 following the amalgamation of two separate schools. There are 420 pupils on roll: 212 boys and 208 girls aged between four and eleven years. Most children's attainment on entry into reception is above average. Two per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is low compared to the national average. There are two pupils who have a statement of special educational needs; the proportion of pupils in school with special educational needs is well below average. There are no pupils currently on roll who learn English as an additional language. About seven per cent of pupils come from a local army regiment that will leave the area in November 2001. The school's mission statement is 'to give children a lifelong love of learning and to encourage a spirit of co-operation and mutual respect within a stimulating and nurturing environment'. The inspection of the school included a detailed inspection of its provision for pupils with special educational needs as part of a national survey conducted by OFSTED.

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

Upton Heath C of E Primary School is a highly effective school that places children at its heart. It provides a very good quality of education for its pupils and enables them to achieve very good standards in most of the subjects they learn because of good, and often very good, teaching. The strong and determined leadership provided by the headteacher ensures that the school strives for excellence in all that it does and this is reflected in the staff's shared commitment to give the very best to all pupils. Parents are very supportive of the school and many give much-valued contributions to both teaching and learning through regular voluntary help. Children join the school with above-average attainment and make good progress over the time at school. Pupils aged eleven years leave very well prepared for the next stage of their education. The school gives parents and tax-payers very good value for money.

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

- Excellent leadership is given by the headteacher who knows exactly what she wants to achieve and leaves no stone unturned in her pursuit of the highest level of quality in all respects.
- The very good provision made for children in the Foundation Stage enables them to make a good start to their schooling.
- The standards achieved in English, mathematics, science, art and design and religious education are very good by the end of Key Stage 2, largely because of very effective teaching from 7-11 years.
- The provision made for pupils with special educational needs is very good and ensures that these pupils make good progress, especially in their basic skills.
- Very good provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development, and outstanding cultural development ensures that pupils are very well prepared to take their place as responsible future citizens in an ethnically diverse society.
- Pupils are a real strength of the school; they have excellent attitudes to learning, show great respect for one another and teachers, and take full advantage of the very good opportunities provided for them to learn successfully.

### What could be improved

- Teaching and learning at Key Stage 1 though effective could be enhanced by taking on board some of the very best features that enable pupils to achieve the highest standards found elsewhere in school.
- Assessment and target-setting work to support pupils' making the best rates of progress in all years is not sufficiently effective.
- The role of most subject co-ordinators in leading improvements throughout the school is a weakness.

*The school has many more strengths than areas for improvement though the above will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

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

The school has not been inspected previously. Since 1998 all procedures associated with the amalgamation and opening of a new school have gone well. Managers have the full confidence of staff; parents and community in pursuing an effective action plan that is driving forward school improvement at a good pace. The school has very good capacity to sustain continuous improvement.

### STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			Similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	N/A	A	B	C
Mathematics	N/A	A*	A	A
Science	N/A	A*	A	B

<b>Key</b>	
Very high	A *
Well above average	A
Above average	B
Average	C
Below average	D
Well below average	E

Similar schools are those with up to 8% of pupils eligible for free school meals.

The school's results have remained above the national average overall in all tested subjects since it opened. Results in SATs are well above average in mathematics, above average in science and average in English when compared to similar schools. The school has analysed pupils' achievements from the test papers and highlighted areas for development. Extra attention is currently being given to improving pupils' writing skills. In order to maintain high standards, the school has set rigorous targets for attainment in Year 6. Target setting in other years to support this process is inconsistent, and this is a shortcoming. The very good additional support provided for pupils with special educational needs, a significant proportion of whom are from army families, enables them to do well. Pupils with particular gifts or talents are generally set challenging work to do; though this depends to some degree on individual class teachers and is inconsistent. Gifted musicians achieve very well.

The quality of work seen in pupils' books is impressive, particularly in the amount and quality. This does not come by accident. It is carefully planned and stems from teachers' enthusiastic teaching and infectious enjoyment in passing on their knowledge to pupils. A good range of carefully chosen resources is positively supporting boys' good achievements contrary to the national picture.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils maintain their enthusiasm for learning throughout the school and make the most of the very good opportunities provided for them to learn successfully.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most behaviour at play and in lessons is very good, self-controlled and harmonious. Occasionally, in a few lessons in Key Stage 1, behaviour can be rather restless and noisy. There have been no exclusions since the school opened.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. All members of the school show care and respect for one another. The pupils show high self-esteem and confidence and are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.
Attendance	Very good. Pupils are very rarely absent and then only when ill. Punctuality is very good.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

*Aged up to 5 years refers to the Foundation Stage*

*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.*

Ninety-eight lessons were observed during this inspection, 97 per cent featured teaching of at least satisfactory quality with 82 per cent good or better including 43 per cent very good or excellent. The quality of teaching is good overall. The proportion of good or better quality teaching is much higher than typically found in primary schools. Three per cent of lessons, all in Year 2, were unsatisfactory or poor because insufficient attention was given to pupils' unsettled behaviour and, as a result, most did not get enough good quality work completed. Teaching, though satisfactory in Key Stage 1 is not focused sufficiently well on challenging all pupils, especially the higher attainers, to achieve to the maximum level. Exceptionally high expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving together with highly effective teaching methods are the key reasons for the very good teaching in reception, Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, that results in pupils' making very good rates of progress in these years. The very best lessons went at a cracking pace and teachers showed great skill in questioning pupils to tease out what they knew and, through the use of challenging follow-on questions, deepened pupils' thinking skills, knowledge and understanding. Teachers in junior classes constantly demand and receive more high quality work from their pupils. Because teaching is exciting pupils work hard in lessons, concentrate well and make good progress. They work successfully independently or in collaboration with others. There is consistently very good teaching of basic skills throughout the school that enables pupils to become highly literate and numerate. Exceptional teaching in religious education and art and design leads to pupils attaining very high standards in these subjects. Pupils make very good progress in design and technology (DT) across the school because of the very worthwhile experiences provided. Good teaching in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT), physical education (PE), geography, history and music enable pupils to make good progress over their time at school.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. All subjects are taught and learnt successfully and there is considerable enrichment to pupils' education from the creative (art, drama) and musical experiences provided. Excellent links with the community add considerable value to the quality of the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. An effective team of staff works well together and ensures that pupils' special educational needs are appropriately met through perceptively planned provision.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school promotes pupils' social, moral and spiritual development extremely successfully. Pupils grow into caring individuals who understand what is special in life. Excellent provision for pupils' cultural development ensures that they have a deep understanding of the cultural richness and ethnic diversity of the world.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The pastoral care of pupils is central to the school's excellent, inclusive ethos. Academic guidance, while good overall, is an area for improvement, particularly in Key Stage 1, where a few high-attaining pupils do not make the maximum gains in their learning because too little is expected of them. Procedures for assessment though satisfactory are inconsistently applied and this is a weakness.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Very good. The school has been successful in supporting parents through the anxieties of amalgamation. Parents are highly valued for the support they give, both at home and in school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. Strong and assertive leadership is provided by the headteacher who is supported by able deputies who have good insights into the demands of the key stages. All staff have a shared commitment to high standards. Less well developed is the role of subject co-ordinators in leading on improvements throughout the school in the subjects they manage.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors have full involvement in the strategic planning process. They give critical input to monitoring and evaluation work and are very involved in the application of Best Value principles. They make sure that most legal requirements are met, but the annual report to parents and the school prospectus have a number of important omissions.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school is not complacent and looks to see where improvement can be made. However, there is insufficient rigour in tracking pupils' progress and setting and reviewing targets for their pupils' future achievements.
The strategic use of resources	Good. There is an excellent accommodation and range of resources. All forms of resources, including finance and staffing, are put to good use in providing very effective education for all pupils. The school gives very good value for money.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Children like school and are enthusiastic learners.</li><li>• The school has high expectations of what pupils can achieve and is well managed and led.</li><li>• Teaching is good and pupils make good progress.</li><li>• Pupils' behaviour is good and they are helped to become mature and responsible.</li><li>• The strong home school partnership is a positive feature.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The information provided about how well children are learning and what they need to do to improve, is inconsistent.</li></ul>

Fifty-one parents attended a meeting with the Registered Inspector and 76 per cent of parents responded to the questionnaire. The inspection team agrees with all the above views expressed by parents.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

#### The school's results and achievements

- ☐ Children's attainment on entry is above average.
- ☐ The standards achieved in English, mathematics, science, art and design, and religious education are very good by the end of Key Stage 2.
- ☐ Pupils make good gains in all the other subjects they learn and by the age of eleven attain good standards across the board, though more could be expected of some pupils in Key Stage 1.
- ☐ The quality of work seen in pupils' books is impressive, particularly in the amount and quality. This does not come by accident. It is carefully planned and stems from teachers' enthusiastic teaching and infectious enjoyment in passing on their knowledge to pupils.
- ☐ Target setting is usefully supporting pupils' learning in Year 6 but its practice is not yet widespread enough to ensure the maximum is expected from all pupils in every year. This is an area for improvement.

1. The school's results in National Curriculum tests (SATs) have remained above the national average overall in all tested subjects since it opened. The school's results also compare well against those of similar schools, though there is room for the average showing in English, in particular, to be improved. Inspection findings indicate that current standards are good at the end of Key Stage 1, and very good by the end of Key Stage 2, in English, mathematics, science, art and design and religious education. Standards are satisfactory in information and communication technology (ICT), physical education (PE) and music at Key Stage 1 and good in these subjects at Key Stage 2. Standards are good throughout the school in design and technology (DT), geography and history. There is good reason for standards being high. The school's leadership enthuses everyone, both staff and pupils, to continue to improve on personal best, so that standards continue to reach high levels. Teaching is good overall and very good for pupils in the junior phase of education and this results in many making accelerated progress as they get older. Pupils' work is carefully planned and the good quality of work seen in exercise books stems from teachers' enthusiastic teaching and infectious enjoyment in passing on their knowledge to pupils. The very good additional support provided for pupils with special educational needs, a significant proportion of whom are army children, enables them to do well. Pupils with particular gifts or talents are generally set challenging work to do; though this depends to some degree on individual class teachers and is inconsistent. The next task for the school to tackle in its bid for excellence in standards is to set challenging targets for pupils in all years, especially high attainers at the end of the infant phase of their education.
2. Pupils aged seven years achieved well above average standards in writing and above average results in reading and mathematics in the tests last May. Results in 2000 in mathematics were not as high as results in 1999. The use and application of mathematics was the weakest tested area of mathematics. Proportionally fewer pupils than seen nationally or in similar schools reached the higher level 3 in reading. Boys' performance has consistently outperformed girls in school and nationally. Teachers' assessments of science show well above average results.
3. The standards attained by eleven-year-olds in the 2000 SATS tests were well above average in mathematics, above average in science and average in English when compared to similar schools. Pupils achieve above average results in English at the higher level 5 and well above average results in mathematics and science. The gender difference flagged up at Key Stage 1 is similar: boys continue to achieve exceptionally well in the tests. The school has analysed pupils' achievements in the test papers and highlighted areas for development. Extra attention is currently being given to improving pupils' writing skills. The school has not been able to put its finger on exactly why boys do so well in the tests. In lessons, inspectors observed boys and girls working with equal enthusiasm. They also noted the very positive impact that male members of staff have on the motivation and interest levels of older boys. All teachers are keen to use resources that appeal to both boys and girls, and inspectors saw excellent choice of materials. For example, text such as *The Wreck of the Zanzibar* was

observed to stimulate boy's sustained application and enthusiastic learning especially, and resulted in both boys and girls writing creative and original pieces of a good length.

4. Children are admitted to the school at the start of the school year in which they become five years old. Many children have more advanced skills in literacy, numeracy and personal and social development than children of the same age in other primary schools. The very good provision made for children in the Foundation Stage ensures that they learn at a brisk rate all the time in all six areas of learning as set out in the Early Learning Goals curriculum. The result is happy, hardworking children who make good gains in their knowledge and understanding. Many of them are already working at National Curriculum level 1, and a few at almost level 2 in English and mathematics, by the time they enter Year 1. Very careful records are maintained in reception classes, and work is regularly assessed and annotated so that the progress children make is thoroughly recorded. Currently the school does not use this detailed knowledge to predict individual children's likely attainment at the end of Key Stage 1. This is a missed opportunity, as it would help teachers in Years 1 and 2 to set suitably challenging work for the different pupils they teach, especially high-attaining pupils.
5. Inspection evidence shows that standards in English, mathematics and science are above average at Key Stage 1 and well above average at Key Stage 2. Strengths in teaching basic skills ensure that all pupils make very good progress in literacy and numeracy and good progress in ICT during their time at school. Throughout the school there has been very good impact on the achievements of pupils from the successful implementation of both the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies. Teachers make very effective use of mental warm-up time to improve numeracy skills and use sessions at the end of lessons well to assess pupils' levels of understanding. Literacy sessions typically begin with the sharing of text, and most teachers engage pupils' good working habits very early on by asking probing questions and not settling for anything less than full and thoughtful answers. It is usually the case that group activities are purposeful and productive times in which the majority of pupils get on well with their independent tasks. It is evident that measures to improve the level of staff expertise and confidence in ICT have been successful. The school has also built up good quality hardware and software to support the development of skills and knowledge in the subject and to enhance work in other subjects such as English, mathematics, art and design and history. At the age of seven years, pupils attain average standards in ICT and above average standards at eleven years. This demonstrates steady learning overall that builds up to pupils' making quicker progress in the junior phase because of consistently good teaching.
6. Pupils are provided with worthwhile experiences in all subjects that enable them to gain in their knowledge and understanding. Standards in DT are above average at the end of both key stages. It is clear that pupils build skills, knowledge and understanding at good rates on the whole. This applies to the planning, designing and evaluating stages of the work as well as the making stage. Pupils experience the range of factors that make up DT, not just the excitement of making a successful end product. In so doing, pupils make very good progress in developing their skills. A strength of provision is in how the experiences pupils gain in design work are dovetailed into work in other subject areas. The school's approach to promoting cross-curricular skills is a very positive feature.
7. Standards in geography and history, by the age of seven and eleven and in the school as a whole, are above average. Pupils' good speaking and writing skills are used effectively in geography lessons and this is one reason why standards are higher than seen typically. Good choice of material in a Year 6 history lesson about the coming of the railways ensured that all pupils, and especially boys, worked diligently in researching key information and developing their own arguments as to why certain things occurred. Teachers try very hard to provide interesting topics for pupils to learn about, and because learning is made enjoyable the pupils achieve well.
8. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make steady progress and achieve average standards in music for their age. Pupils of all abilities make good progress throughout Key Stage 2 and reach above-average standards by the age of eleven. Instrumental string, brass and woodwind tuition, together with choir, recorder and guitar groups have a positive impact upon the standards of the most able. These pupils achieve well and demonstrate maturity and a genuine love of music.

9. Over their time in school, pupils develop not just good skills and knowledge in PE but also confidence and poise. The youngest children show promising signs of these qualities in their physical development activities, and infant pupils build expertise steadily in games, gymnastics and dance. As the curriculum broadens in junior classes, pupils attain above average standards in all the elements of PE because teachers expect good progress and pupils respond enthusiastically.
10. Standards in religious education are above average at seven years and well above average by 11 years. A very good curriculum ensures that pupils learn in good detail about Christianity and other major world faiths. Some outstanding teaching about Buddhism brought learning to life for Year 5 pupils who also gained immeasurably from the spiritual opportunities created within the lesson.
11. In order to maintain high standards, the school has set rigorous targets for attainment in English, mathematics and science in Year 6. Target setting in other years to support this process is inconsistent, and this is a shortcoming that requires improvement. The statutory targets set with the local education authority are challenging but well within the school's grasp. The current Year 4 were working at very good levels and inspectors judge their attainment will be A\* in 2002 SATs if the educational quality is maintained at the very good level seen during inspection.

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

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pupils have excellent attitudes to school, they have very high levels of personal and social skills and they make the very most of the exciting learning opportunities provided for them.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Overall behaviour is good but there are occasions when pupils are fussy and the level of chatter is too high.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Relationships throughout the school are excellent and positively support the successful learning taking place in most classes.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Attendance and punctuality are very good, however some class teachers are not sufficiently rigorous in recording reasons for absence when completing registers.</li> </ul> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
12. The pupils' excellent attitudes to school underpin their high standards in lessons and are a very real strength of the school. They are delightful children who are friendly and polite to visitors, and they make the very most of all the exciting learning opportunities provided for them. From the very youngest in reception to the members of Year 6, they demonstrate an infectious desire to discover and to learn. They listen attentively, often hanging on the teacher's every word, as in the lesson about the rituals surrounding the passage to the afterlife in Ancient Egypt in Year 4. They absorb information readily and can recall facts accurately when answering questions. Their observation skills, curiosity and desire to achieve high standards are a credit to them, their families and the school.
  13. Children in the Foundation Stage have got off to a flying start to their education. They show confident attitudes to work, to one another and to adults. They work with very good effort and for prolonged periods, and show immense pride when they are told how well they have done something. By the time they are five most collaborate well with one another, co-operate successfully and behave very responsibly.
  14. Pupils with special educational needs work hard. They listen carefully in the main. They show increasingly good levels of concentration, as they get older. Their behaviour improves rapidly in many instances. The general calmness of the school permeates their learning and enables them to make secure advances in the targets they are set in literacy, numeracy and for behaviour.
  15. Overall behaviour is good. Most of the behaviour at playtimes and in lessons is very good, self-controlled and harmonious. In their free time, pupils make very good use of the extensive playgrounds and are able to run simultaneous ball games, organised football, tig and other activities without disturbing others, and with respect for the rights of all. Pupils treat property and learning resources with care. On a 'mini hunt' in the woods, reception children demonstrated real respect for the living creatures which they discovered. There have been no instances of exclusion from school.

However in a few lessons, particularly in Key Stage 1, behaviour can be rather restless and noisy when the pupils are insufficiently challenged by the lesson content, and the teacher does not have the pupil management skills to keep them focused on the lesson.

16. Relationships throughout the school are excellent. Not only do all pupils and adults treat one another with mutual care and respect, but there is also an ethos in which pupils are encouraged to develop empathy and understanding for those of different views, beliefs and backgrounds. Pupils respond extremely well to the opportunities provided for them in this regard both in religious education and in assemblies. In discussion in class pupils revealed a remarkable level of acceptance and understanding of the different problems faced by individuals in their midst. There is complete integration within the school population of pupils from both civilian and military family backgrounds and those from minority ethnic backgrounds.
17. The personal development of pupils also has excellent features. As they move through the school, pupils grow in confidence, self-esteem and social awareness, with a willingness to undertake responsibility. This begins with the youngest children, who already look around to see if they can help, and who make choices in selecting their own styles of work. Older pupils often take the initiative in lessons, and this helps to push standards of achievement higher still. Pupils clearly believe in themselves and in their innate ability to achieve success. They are concerned about the needs of others around the world, and respond willingly to charity events. The recent school links with Soweto that have involved reciprocal staff visits and pen pal letters, have had considerable impact on their understanding of life in less-developed parts of the world. Overall by the end of Key Stage 2 the pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.
18. Attendance and punctuality are very good and well above the national average. Parents are fully supportive of the school's attendance policy and inform the school of all reasons for absence. Unauthorised absence is extremely low. However, some class teachers are not sufficiently rigorous in recording reasons for absence when completing registers.

#### HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- ☐ Teaching in school is good overall; the proportion of very good teaching is much higher than typically found in primary schools.
- ☐ Teaching is very good in reception, Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 and leads to pupils' making the best rate of progress in all areas of their learning in these years.
- ☐ Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for and in consequence make good progress against their individual literacy, numeracy and behaviour targets. They gain maximum benefit when withdrawn from class to work with a specialist teacher.
- ☐ Exceptional teaching in religious education, and art and design, leads to pupils attaining very high standards in these subjects.
- ☐ Teaching in Key Stage 1 does not expect sufficiently high levels of work from the more able pupils. A small minority of lessons observed in Key Stage 1 was unsatisfactory or poor because insufficient attention was paid to pupils' unsettled behaviour and, as a result, most did not get enough good quality work completed.
- ☐ Managers have yet to establish rigorous monitoring systems to identify and promote the very best features of teaching and learning throughout the school.

19. Ninety-eight lessons were observed during this inspection, 97 per cent featured teaching of at least satisfactory quality with 82 per cent good or better including 43 per cent very good or excellent. The quality of teaching is good overall. The proportion of good or better quality teaching is much higher than typically found in primary schools. Three per cent of lessons, all in Year 2, were unsatisfactory or poor because insufficient attention was given to pupils' unsettled behaviour and, as a result, most did not get enough good quality work completed. Teaching, though satisfactory in Key Stage 1 is not focused sufficiently well on challenging all pupils, especially the higher attainers, to achieve to the maximum level. Exceptionally high expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving together with highly effective teaching methods are the key reasons for the very good teaching in reception, Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, that results in pupils' making very good rates of progress in these years.

20. Teachers in junior classes constantly demand and receive more high quality work from their pupils. Because teaching is exciting pupils work hard in lessons, concentrate well and make good progress. They work successfully independently or in collaboration with others. There is consistently very good teaching of basic skills throughout the school that enables pupils to become highly literate and numerate. Exceptional teaching in religious education and art and design leads to pupils attaining very high standards in these subjects. Pupils make very good progress in DT across the school. Worthwhile experiences in ICT, PE, geography, history and music enable pupils to make good progress over their time at school.
21. Children in the Foundation Stage are both nurtured and developed as highly effective learners because of very good teaching and very effective support that is well founded on realistic expectations of what different children can achieve, and ensures that innovative methods are used to capture the children's imagination. Good planning results in highly effective teamwork, which ensures that children are learning at a brisk rate all the time. Very careful records are maintained in Year R and work is regularly assessed and annotated so that the progress children make is thoroughly recorded. This means that work is set at the right level of challenge for all. The result is happy, hardworking children who make good gains in their knowledge and understanding. Many of them are already working at National Curriculum level 1, and a few at almost level 2 in English and mathematics, by the time they enter Year 1.
22. Teaching in most of the infant classes is usually of satisfactory or better quality. There are no unsatisfactory features, though lesson planning, assessment, teaching methods and management of pupils are not carried out to the same high standard as in junior classes. Teachers in junior classes inspire and challenge pupils to give always of their best. This is not the case in Key Stage 1 classes where occasionally too little is demanded of average and potentially high achievers. Relationships in most classes are excellent; teachers want to do their best for the pupils and vice-versa and this shows in the very good outcomes. The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. It is directly aligned to the carefully constructed individual education plans. These plans have clear and precise targets. They contain readily achievable goals. The plans are monitored on a regular basis before they are evaluated in the formal reviews that are attended by specialist staff and parents and at which targets are revised as appropriate.
23. Teachers overall are reflective about their practice and keen to make improvement. There is a very good team spirit amongst staff, who are positive about sharing ideas in the interest of giving the best to pupils. Classrooms at Upton Heath primary are exciting places to be. These positive features lead to most pupils' acquiring good knowledge, improving skills and secure understanding in all the subjects they study and very good gains in their learning in English, mathematics and science. Older pupils are enthusiastic learners and work with very good application and perseverance. Both young and older pupils are immensely proud of their achievements and are well motivated by the positive reward systems operating in classes. Most teachers have very good understanding of the needs of the range of pupils in their class and set work that is based on what they expect pupils to achieve. In some of the lessons observed, however, the written lesson plans confused *learning objectives* with *teaching activities*, and some were very sketchy in the detail covered. In the better lessons, skilful teaching compensated for these shortcomings but this is one aspect that requires improvement to ensure consistently good practice from Year 1 to Year 6.
24. Teachers use mark books to record pupils' achievements at regular intervals and these are a good feature of practice. There is less recording of more immediate learning gains and this is one aspect that the school is aware it needs to refine. There is good use of target setting in the upper juniors that drives pupils to improve on their personal best and, in so doing, achieve higher standards in academic work. When talking to inspectors, Year 6 pupils showed good levels of self-knowledge about what they were good at and where they needed to improve their work. The good practice in target setting and self-review has yet to be exploited to the full elsewhere in school. There is limited use of the clear objectives being set to drive learning at the start and during the lesson being returned to in the plenary session. Teachers' assessments of how well pupils are doing are inconsistently used to inform their planning in non-core subjects, and this weakness shows up where teaching is less strong. Parents are keen to play their part in helping pupils make the very best rates of progress

possible and help realise the individual targets set. Teachers generally make good use of homework to extend learning, though less so for providing extension work for the high achievers. Parents give very good support to assisting pupils with their homework.

25. The very best lessons went at a cracking pace and teachers showed great skill in questioning pupils to tease out what they knew and, through challenging follow-on questions, deepened pupils' thinking skills and demanded that pupils work quickly and productively. This was characterised by the mental mathematics component of a very good numeracy lesson in Year 4 in which pupils were looking for lines of symmetry. Pupils very quickly and accurately identified where the lines were in regular and irregular shapes. Pupils responded confidently in explaining to others how they could identify the lines starting from various axes and how they could test for reflective symmetry by using mirrors and showing the image to be *identical*. By the end of the session, the higher attainers were working with 16-sided shapes. In this numeracy lesson, all pupils used good vocabulary to explain their strategies, all achieved well, and most worked at a much higher level than expected for their age.

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

- ☐ There is a very good curriculum that fully meets requirements, and provides enrichment to all pupils' education.
- ☐ Extracurricular provision is good. Many parents were rightly appreciative of the interesting range of high quality academic, sporting and musical activities offered to their children.
- ☐ There are excellent links with the community and very good links with partner institutions that widen the experiences being provided for pupils of all ages.
- ☐ Very good provision is made for pupils' personal, health, spiritual, moral and social development, and outstanding cultural development ensures that pupils are very well prepared to take their place as responsible future citizens in an ethnically diverse society.
- ☐ Very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs.
- ☐ Subject co-ordinators are very well informed about the quality of the curriculum in their own key stage but they do not have sufficient knowledge about provision or standards throughout the school. This leads to inconsistencies and is an area for improvement.

26. The broad, well-balanced curriculum fully meets statutory requirements. It is very relevant to the needs of all pupils and it provides rich opportunity for pupils to acquire a good breadth and depth of knowledge across the whole curriculum. The school is effective in ensuring that all pupils are receiving equality of opportunity to succeed, though occasionally more could be expected of high achievers in Key Stage 1. Religious education conforms to the locally agreed syllabus and makes a particularly strong contribution towards pupils' all round development. Pupils with special needs are involved in all of the activities of the school. A major strength of the school's provision for pupils with special needs is that the whole spectrum is recognised. Those who have difficulties in learning have, at times, their talents recognised. For example, in art and physical education lessons their skills are sometimes presented to other pupils as exemplars of good practice. Those identified as talented pupils have their knowledge and skills extended by challenging tasks in many lessons, though this is not always the case in Key Stage 1.
27. The curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage is very good. Planning for these young children already incorporates the Early Learning Goals for children under five as set out in the recently published curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. Lesson planning is detailed and the children have access to a wide range of suitable activities and learning experiences which prepare them very well for studying the subjects of the National Curriculum when they are ready.
28. Since amalgamation much has been done to encourage a whole-school approach towards the curriculum. Subject policies have been systematically updated and appropriate guidelines have been incorporated into schemes of work as part of the review process. Recent curriculum initiatives that focus on able and talented pupils have also had a very positive impact on pupils' learning. The appointment of curriculum partners from each key stage was used effectively in the early stages of amalgamation to maintain staff morale and to make best use of expertise. There is now a recognised need for further development. Although co-ordinators are very well informed about the quality of the



curriculum in their own key stage, they do not have sufficient knowledge about provision or standards throughout the school. Consequently, there are some inconsistencies, most notably in standards of planning, variation between key stages in the quality of provision for more-able pupils and the use of homework to support their learning.

29. English and mathematics receive higher than average teaching time allocations. Strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are being used very effectively and pupils have ample opportunity to use their skills widely across the curriculum. Displays celebrate an outstanding richness of language that permeates all the work of the school. Time allocated to other subjects is organised well to ensure pupils receive a rewarding, worthwhile learning experience.
30. Extracurricular provision is good. Many parents were rightly appreciative of the interesting range of high quality academic, sporting and musical activities offered to their children. By contrast, a few parents expressed concern that some pupils were not offered as many opportunities. The school is aware of parents' views and is already in the process of developing activities specifically targeted at particular age groups. Very good use is made of residential visits to develop social skills, build self-esteem and enhance learning.
31. The school has given high priority to personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship. Provision is very good and its quality contributes strongly to the outstandingly positive attitudes shown by most pupils. The programme of work is carefully structured to ensure a sensitive but informative approach. Sex education and drugs awareness are taught within the science curriculum, whilst feelings, relationships and various other topics concerned with citizenship are taught by the PSHE co-ordinator. Pupils develop an understanding of increasingly complex issues in a secure and supportive environment. Class teachers also deepen pupils' understanding through drama, extended writing and art. By the time pupils reach Year 6 they have developed a high level of independence and maturity.
32. The school has forged excellent links with the community. Examples are too numerous to mention. The choir participates in many local events, such as a collaboration workshop with Onyx Brass. It recently donated part of a £750 prize to charity. Many other pupils are also involved in fund-raising activities; they support the local church and participate in Upton Carnival. Local community groups, such as the Parish Council, the Embroiderers' Guild and the Cubs, are actively encouraged to use the school's facilities. The community rightly holds both the headteacher and the school in very high regard.
33. The school has very good links with its partner institutions. Pupils from Year 2 visit the playgroup at the United Reform Church and playgroup children make reciprocal visits. There are strong links with Upton High School where pupils have access to a range of sporting facilities not available in their own school. They receive visits from instrumental players and members of the drama group, and past pupils return to talk with current pupils about transfer to secondary education.
34. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. Acts of collective worship and religious education lessons make a very strong contribution to the sense of community that permeates the work of the school. In an excellent lesson about Buddhism, there was an overpowering feeling of stillness as pupils prepared to meditate. It was a spiritually moving experience. Displays strongly reflect feelings and beliefs and pupils use poetry exceptionally well as they get older to demonstrate mature insight and depth of feeling. 'Spirit of Spring' poems and contributions of personal importance to 'The Magic Box of Thoughts' are particularly poignant examples. As pupils progress through the school, they not only learn about their own and others' beliefs, but they develop an understanding of the impact such knowledge has upon their lives. They write prayers for moments of reflection at various times of the day.
35. The provision for moral development is also very good. Teaching and support staff provide very good role models for pupils. Adults encourage pupils to behave responsibly because they care about pupils in their charge and want them to succeed. Pupils of all ages distinguish very clearly between right and wrong. The structure for rewarding good behaviour and effort through stickers, certificates and celebration assemblies makes a strong contribution towards promoting good behaviour. The

school's supportive approach is very successful in helping the vast majority of its pupils to become self-disciplined. On only a few occasions, when some older pupils were moving around the school or in lessons where behaviour management was an issue, did standards of behaviour fall short of expectations.

36. The provision for pupils' social development is very good. Relationships are of the highest quality and are at the heart of this school's success. Pupils undertake an increasing range of responsibilities in the classroom and around school. They involve themselves in numerous fund-raising activities including helping children in developing countries. Extracurricular activities are used well to extend social skills, and group work in lessons frequently shows an impressive level of co-operation. There is good opportunity for pupils to acquire independent learning skills through a variety of activities. The school's strong commitment towards ensuring that pupils from army families are totally integrated is very successful. Future initiatives to enhance provision for social development include the introduction of a School Council.
37. The quality of provision for pupils' cultural development is outstanding. Pupils gain an extraordinary depth of knowledge about other beliefs in their study of world faiths. Art, music and literature are used very effectively to heighten pupils' curiosity, their thirst for knowledge and aesthetic awareness. Displays in every area of the school exemplify the richness and diversity of both Western and Eastern culture. African masks and artwork in the style of Lowry and Van Gogh all have pride of place. Visits to museums, art galleries and other places of interest supplement and enhance provision. The school recognises the powerful positive impact of its links with Sindisiwe Mathebula from Soweto upon the development of pupils' multicultural understanding. Pupils at Upton are being very well prepared to take their place as responsible future citizens in an ethnically diverse society.

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

- ☐ Pupils always come first at Upton Heath and the school makes very good provision for their health, safety and welfare.
- ☐ School procedures to promote good behaviour, good attendance and pupils' academic and personal development are effective in the main, but there are inconsistencies in the completion of registers that require attention.
- ☐ Procedures for assessment though satisfactory are inconsistently used to inform planning and these together with target setting are weaknesses.

38. The provision for the welfare of pupils is very good overall. The pastoral care of pupils is central to the school's organisation and the support and guidance for their personal development is a high priority. The high standards achieved by pupils both in their personal and academic development are the result of dedicated teaching and very good support by all other adults in school. Child protection procedures are very effective and follow the locally agreed guidelines. The teaching and non-teaching staff are vigilant towards matters of health and safety, and teach the children safe practice.
39. School procedures to promote good behaviour and good attendance are effective and, to a large extent, unobtrusive. However the best practice in pupil management and motivation is not yet consistently applied throughout Key Stage 1. While satisfactory, the monitoring of records of absence is not sufficiently rigorous as some class teachers are not consistent in recording reasons for absence when completing registers. One of the strengths of the pastoral guidance is the planned programme of anti-bullying plays written and performed each year by the house captains in Year 6. This is a very effective approach which makes all the pupils think about oppressive behaviour and how to deal with it. The lack of harassment or anti-social behaviour in the school is a testimony to its effectiveness. The inclusion of all groups of pupils within the school, whatever their social or learning needs, is very good.
40. Academic support and guidance, while good overall, is an area for improvement. Class teachers know their pupils well and give them oral guidance, including a readiness to resolve any difficulties a child might have in grasping a new concept, for example in mathematics. Informal systems work effectively by and large but this is a weakness in Key Stage 1 where a few pupils do not make

sufficient progress because their prior attainment is not fully recognised and they are not sufficiently challenged by new work. In various classes throughout the school, pupils are not always clear about their own levels of attainment and what they need to do to improve. There is some use of individual targets but this is inconsistent. The best practice is in the Foundation Stage, English and for pupils with special educational needs, where individual targets are used carefully when planning lessons, and are frequently reviewed. The school is now using the results of a wide range of assessments, including Baseline (start of school) tests, SATs results, nationally recognised schemes and teacher's own assessments to collect information on how their pupils are performing, to spot trends and compare Upton Heath's achievements with other schools. The actual quality and range of assessment does however vary between subjects and teachers. English, particularly in years 5 and 6, is the most sophisticated and successful, closely followed by mathematics and science. Assessment of other subjects such as art, history, geography and physical education is very variable. However a weakness of the current situation and systems is that the school is not, in the majority of subjects, using the information, which it gathers from all its assessments, to make, monitor and revise plans for individual pupils education and general development.

41. The exception is the very good provision for pupils with special educational needs that helps them to make good progress. . The school has good systems for tracking the progress of pupils with special educational needs. The individual education plans are regularly reviewed and fresh targets set. Support staff regularly record the day to day progress that pupils with special educational needs are making, particularly in literacy lessons. The most able are identified early and their needs are met well. They are encouraged to reach their true potential by the age of eleven through a combination of extension activities in lessons and the opportunity to broaden and deepen their experience through extracurricular clubs.

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

- ☐ There is a very good partnership between the school and parents.
- ☐ Information is of good quality, though some parents would like to know more about how well their children are making progress in all the subjects they learn and what the next target for improvement should be. The inspection team agrees that this would be useful.
- ☐ Parents are highly valued by the school for the support they give to their children's education, both at home and in school.
- ☐ Overall, the impact of parental involvement on the work of the school is excellent.

42. There is a very good partnership between school and parents which forms the foundation on which the pupils' learning experiences are built. Pupils and their families have high expectations from education and these are met by the school in ways which serve to strengthen and encourage the partnership. The school has been very successful in supporting the parents through the anxieties of amalgamation, and it now enjoys the full support of parents who think very highly of Upton Heath.
43. The strong home-school relationship is based on good quality information which has some excellent features. In particular, the termly information about the topics which will be covered, something about how they are taught and any useful resources is a very valuable tool for enabling parents to give appropriate reinforcement to lessons in their home life. Letters and parents' evenings provide a regular stream of information about school events and pupils' progress, although some parents would like to know more about how their children are getting on. In this regard the inspection team tends to agree with parents, who would benefit from a shared knowledge of their child's targets for improvement. The annual written progress reports are better in Key Stage 2 than Key Stage 1, where there is less detail in the reporting of levels of attainment in different subjects, and few instances where targets for improvement are set out. The school is aware of this and already has plans to revise the format that all teachers will use.
44. The governors' formal information found in the school prospectus and annual report to parents is lacking in various legal requirements, of which the school is now aware.

45. Parents are highly valued for the support they give to their children's education both at home and in school. A large number of parents make a very effective contribution to the work done in school by volunteering to work with small groups, particularly in Key Stage 1. The smell of lemon meringue pies baking and the sight of modelling Easter chick eggcups in clay were very memorable features of the high calibre support provided by these parents. The school also enjoys the voluntary assistance of retired members of the community who give skilled classroom support. At home, parents support their children by hearing reading, supporting their homework tasks regularly, and extending the breadth of their educational experiences. Parents of pupils with special needs are as equally well supported as the pupils. They are involved in all the reviews arranged to discuss their children's needs. A particular strength of provision is the *open door policy* of the two co-ordinators and learning support teacher. This gives parents the opportunity to come and ask questions or talk about their children's needs at any time beyond formal review times.
46. Overall the impact of parental involvement on the work of the school is excellent.

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

- ☐ The headteacher gives excellent leadership and management.
- ☐ Senior managers give very good support.
- ☐ There is very strong and shared determination to pursue excellence.
- ☐ Subject co-ordinators do not yet have enough chances to monitor standards, teaching and learning in other classes.
- ☐ Governors are a very strong, positive and supportive influence on the school.
- ☐ There are good and improving procedures to check the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- ☐ All forms of resources are used very effectively to produce very good quality education.
- ☐ The principles of *Best Value* are applied very well.

47. Upton Heath C of E Primary School is led by a headteacher with vision, determination and absolute conviction. She sets high expectations of all staff and pupils and high quality is *de rigueur* throughout the school. The headteacher leads and manages the school very effectively and is responsible for the very many strengths outlined in this report. She is not afraid to identify weakness and to tackle it successfully, but she also celebrates success and motivates people to even better things. Her key priority has been in building a cohesive school in which team-work can flourish. Her number one goal, following the decision to amalgamate, has been to unite two very different schools into one new school in which all staff share a sense of common purpose and have the same goals. Building good relationships has been crucial to the process, winning the confidence of staff and parents a key priority. In the short time since amalgamation both tasks have been successfully completed and the school is now ready to move onto the next challenges and opportunities that face it in its bid for excellence.
48. Over the last two and a half years, the headteacher has unified the school. There is very much a sense that, as a primary school, all go forward with improvement. There are one or two places where the separate past of the infant and junior parts of the school still intrude, not in a divisive way but as a legacy of what went before. Senior managers are alert to this and are taking the necessary steps to underline the singularity of purpose shared by all staff.
49. The school has two deputy headteachers, one each for the infants and juniors. They work in very good partnership with the headteacher and have complementary skills as senior managers. Their role as managers of the whole school is shaping up well, as they both have good things to offer colleagues in all years. The shadowing of one another for a day and opportunity to work in different areas of the school is a positive feature.
50. Subject co-ordinators are also paired in the same way. In general this is an appropriate arrangement and subjects are led and managed effectively. Senior managers acknowledge that the next stage in management is to devolve more responsibility to co-ordinators to monitor teaching, learning and standards across the whole school. This will enable them to pick up inconsistencies and imperfections earlier than at present. The staff are ready for the additional responsibility that

increased managerial duties will bring, and they show in their own teaching and general approach to their tasks that they are ready to be counted as effective whole-school managers.

51. Governors have astute knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They adopt a challenging, yet supportive, role to ensure that the school is on track to meet its targets and priorities. The governing body is an efficient group of people who undertake most of their statutory duties well. One or two exceptions (concerning minor omissions in the prospectus and annual report) were indicated during the inspection and received immediate acknowledgement and the promise of prompt attention. Governors have the necessary insights into school performance to ensure that the principles of *Best Value* are applied effectively.
52. Processes to evaluate the successes and shortcomings of the school work well. Much successful effort is put into the analysis of academic results, especially SATs. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is charted very well. The provision for special educational needs is very good. The two co-ordinators are very aware of what their responsibilities are. They fulfil their roles as competently as possible. They do not have non-contact time, so much of their input to management tasks is given in their own time. They recognise the vital link that is provided by the learning support teacher who works part time but across both key stages when she responds to pupils' individual needs by teaching them in small withdrawal groups. The learning support teacher compiles pupils' individual education plans at the beginning or end of terms when the headteacher releases individual class teachers to carry out this task with her. The special educational needs co-ordinators then make an input before retaining copies of the individual education plans for on-going and review purposes. The effective team of staff works well together and ensures that pupils' special educational needs are appropriately met through perceptively planned provision
53. The attainment of pupils from different backgrounds is tracked carefully. The school works hard to ensure best possible practice in educational inclusion<sup>1</sup>, and is very successful in this. Pupils from army families do very well in school because staff monitor their personal and academic development effectively. The current regiment is getting a good deal from the school because these pupils settle well, make good progress and achieve at the same level as other, more established pupils. Nearly a quarter of pupils in school from army families have special educational needs and they are benefiting from very good provision in meeting their specific needs.
54. The school is broadening its target-setting procedures effectively. The targets set for attainment in the English and mathematics SATs at the age of eleven have been met during recent years. These are realistic targets as they reflect accurately the progress that pupils *should* make. They do not yet take enough account of the strengths of the school and how these can boost progress. Managers accept the validity of measuring *added value* in this way and are working actively for excellence in standards. The process of setting targets for individual pupils is at a fairly early stage of development. There is already some good practice, though the sharing and reviewing of targets for learning with pupils is inconsistent.
55. The school does a very good job of helping staff new to the school to settle and be able to work effectively in the interests of all pupils. It is also a highly effective training ground for new entrants to teaching. It has an excellent reputation for the work done to train new teachers, and this is fully justified. Because staff are a united team and the commitment to improvement is very good, the school's good set of aims, values and priorities is met wholeheartedly. A policy for performance management is newly in place and sets clear targets for improvement that all staff have signed up to. A timetable for action has been established, and the school is on track to meet the deadlines.
56. Priorities of the school are also very well supported by financial planning and management. The available funds are spent very wisely and grants intended for particular purposes are targeted directly for the benefit of the pupils concerned. Such instances include the very good use made of funds for pupils with special educational needs and for those pupils whose attainment is to be boosted to meet their targets.

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<sup>1</sup> Judgements on educational inclusion indicate the effectiveness of the school's provision for all pupils, regardless of background. They especially refer to the way the school promotes racial harmony.

57. The school has excellent accommodation and learning resources. These are put to very effective use in providing very good quality education. The strengths and talents of all staff, both teaching and non-teaching are celebrated and used very well in the interests of all pupils. The caretaker and his staff work diligently to provide a safe, clean and exceptionally well maintained environment. The secretary is a pivotal member of staff who not only gives highly effective support to the headteacher in administering the finances and ensuring the smooth running of the school, but also gives high calibre support to children who become ill during the day. Everyone in school, from the cook to headteacher is determined to give of their best to the pupils.
58. At the heart of the school are the pupils. They are cheerful, productive and purposeful learners. The reputation of the school is built squarely on the standards that they achieve. This reputation is justified. The pupils themselves show just how effective, caring and committed is the management of the school.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59. The school is highly effective in providing a good education for pupils, achieving very good standards, turning out well-rounded individuals and giving very good value for money. The headteacher has led the successful amalgamation of two schools, so that today the school is a cohesive and happy place in which relationships are excellent, and everyone is ready to take on the new challenges and opportunities that have been identified.
60. As it continues to promote cross-phase links within school, and in its pursuit for excellence, senior managers and governors should give priority to the following:

**1. Identifying and promoting the features of the very best practice in teaching and learning to be found in school, and taking effective action to eliminate weaker aspects by:**

- ❑ undertaking systematic and rigorous monitoring that is aimed at raising the quality of teaching and improving the rate of learning, especially for high attaining pupils in Key Stage 1;
- ❑ using the information gathered from monitoring and the instances of very good or better teaching illuminated in this report to highlight the features of what the best teaching involves;
- ❑ finding ways for teachers to share and exchange the very best practice with other colleagues.

Paragraphs 15, 19, 22, 23, 25, 26, 39, 40, 55, 72, 74, 80, 83, 85, 123, 141

**2. Continuing to develop the role of subject coordinators so that they gain deeper insights into the quality of teaching and learning and standards being achieved and can use the information to lead in supporting improvements.**

Paragraphs 28, 40, 50, 84, 96, 102, 114, 120, 124, 129, 142

**3. Rationalising and extending assessment practice and the use of target setting so that:**

- ❑ managers explore ways of setting school targets aimed at increasing the performance of the very able pupils in English, mathematics and science and assessing their on-going progress;
- ❑ teachers use pupils' individual targets more consistently in the planning of lessons, to inform the direction of lessons, to support group-work, to review what has been learnt in the plenary session and to guide their marking of work;
- ❑ pupils are involved in setting and using targets regularly to support their learning and are encouraged to review their progress against the targets, so that they are more directly involved in realising their personal goals;
- ❑ parents are enabled to play a full part in supporting target setting and on-going review.

Paragraphs 1, 4, 11, 24, 40, 43, 54, 82, 95, 100, 102

Two additional aspects that governors should give attention to in their action plan is to ensure that the annual report to parents and the school prospectus meet statutory requirements.

Paragraph 51

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	98
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	29

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	38	39	15	2	1	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	420
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	10

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	50

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	28
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	25

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.3
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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



### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	28	27	55

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	27	28	27
	Girls	27	26	27
	Total	54	54	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (95)	98 (98)	98 (100)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	27	27
	Girls	27	26	27
	Total	55	53	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (98)	96 (96)	98 (96)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	32	31	63

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	30	30	31
	Girls	26	26	28
	Total	56	56	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89 (90)	89 (90)	95 (96)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	30	30	31
	Girls	26	27	29
	Total	56	57	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89 (87)	92 (90)	97 (96)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

**Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	4
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	412
Any other minority ethnic group	2

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

**Exclusions in the last school year**

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

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	18
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.3
Average class size	30

**Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	85

**Financial information**

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	688,172
Total expenditure	689,096
Expenditure per pupil	1,653
Balance brought forward from previous year	75,022
Balance carried forward to next year	74,098

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	420
Number of questionnaires returned	320

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	38	2	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	54	41	3	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	60	38	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	47	7	1	1
The teaching is good.	63	33	4	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	45	13	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	30	5	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	31	2	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	46	41	11	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	63	33	2	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	41	3	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	38	11	3	12

**PLEASE NOTE THAT SOME ROWS MAY NOT TOTAL 100% DUE TO ROUNDING**

**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**

- ☐ Most children have above average attainment when they start in reception classes.
- ☐ Provision for the children in the Foundation Stage is very good because of good leadership and consistently high quality teaching.
- ☐ Good planning results in highly effective teamwork, which ensures that children are learning at a brisk rate all the time.
- ☐ Very careful records are maintained and work is regularly assessed so that the progress children make is thoroughly recorded. This means that work is set at the right level of challenge for all.
- ☐ The children are happy, hardworking and make good gains in their knowledge and understanding in all aspects of their early learning.

61. Children are admitted to the school at the start of the school year in which they become five years old. During the inspection, there were sixty children in the two reception classes. Attainment on entry is assessed using the Cheshire Local Education Authority baseline scheme. The school's analysis of the data indicates that many children have more advanced skills in literacy, numeracy and personal and social development than children of the same age in other primary schools.
62. Provision for the children in the two reception classes is very good. There are many reasons for this but three stand out above the rest. Firstly, the leadership provided by the Foundation Stage manager is very good. She has clear insights into the quality of education being provided and standards being achieved and is constantly seeking to make both even better. Secondly, teaching is of a consistently high quality because it is well founded on realistic expectations of what different children can achieve, and ensures that innovative methods are used to capture the children's imagination. Thirdly, good planning results in highly effective teamwork, which ensures that children are learning at a brisk rate all the time. Very careful records are maintained in Year R and work is regularly assessed and annotated so that the progress children make is thoroughly recorded. This means that work is set at the right level of challenge for all. The result is happy, hardworking children who make good gains in their knowledge and understanding. Many of them are already working at National Curriculum Level 1, and a few at almost Level 2 in English and mathematics, by the time they enter Year 1.

**Personal, social and emotional development**

63. Children are helped to become confident, friendly, and very well behaved. A prime example of their maturity was seen in a lesson in the small hall. The teacher expected her class in a dance lesson to find a partner and they did so without the slightest fuss. This is typical of both teachers and children. Teachers have consistently high expectations for the behaviour, attitudes and independence of the children, and the children consistently meet them. Children listen very well to their teachers, are keen to answer questions, know how to take turns and tackle the work provided for them confidently. Children know and can give a detailed explanation of how the take-home reading scheme operates and have the confidence to teach each other computer skills. They relate very well to each other and are keen to share their work with adults and visitors. Children move confidently in the classroom and playground, change their clothes for physical activities, and have very well developed personal self-help skills. The children who listen well to the story about a duck on her nest are sensitive to the feelings of the boy who thinks the ducks are lost. Later there is great excitement when the children see a pair of mallard ducks on the school pond. The children with special educational needs are gaining in confidence and independence and integrate well with the rest of the class because staff support them very well. Most children make good progress in this area of their development, and have already achieved the level of personal development expected by the Early Learning Goals by the end of the school year; with about a third exceeding it.

## **Communication, language and literacy**

64. Children are very confident to speak to the rest of the class and to visitors because they are given frequent opportunities to do so. Many provide detailed explanations; for example they explain about the seeds they have planted and are excited to see new growth. Teachers foster reading and writing skills very effectively because they are taught in a way which reinforces both skills. This was seen very well when they worked on '*Jasper's Beanstalk*' together. This was the book of the week during the inspection and literacy skills were developed incrementally day by day. By the end of the inspection week, the most-able children had written postcards to Jasper, which demonstrated their ability to read, write and spell simple words and their good understanding of basic punctuation. A few children are already producing written work which approaches National Curriculum level 2. Basic reading is developing equally well. Teachers make learning high frequency words fun, provide regular reinforcement, and are good models of how to read aloud with expression. When children read to inspectors, they did so with confidence, enthusiasm, expression, and accuracy. The most-able readers know how to tackle new words and talk confidently about the book and other stories and information books with which they are familiar. Even the least able reader was confident and tackled his book with enthusiasm. Many children know the high frequency words and all the letter sounds; some are beginning to blend initial sounds to build up words to use in writing. Most make at least good progress in developing communication, language and literacy skills and the majority has already exceeded the levels expected by the end of the school year.

## **Mathematical development**

65. Most children count confidently backwards and forwards to twenty and enjoy this oral activity with their teacher. Some can count higher and recognise numbers to ten with confidence. The teachers use techniques, such as 'whisper counting', very effectively to increase children's concentration. In a series of very good lessons, their knowledge of shapes was extended considerably. By the end of the week the most-able children can sort shapes by three properties and recognize other shapes such as hexagon and octagon. They can name the key features of shapes they know by reference to the number of sides and corners. Less-able children identify simple shapes such as square, triangle and rectangle and are clear about their properties. Children work in the sand, filling and emptying containers, and use terms correctly such as *full* and *empty*, *more* and *less*. They thread beads or print shapes to make repeating or alternate patterns and can talk about the patterns they create. One reason why the children are so successful at mathematics is because the staff build children's knowledge and understanding step by step. This means that no one fails and the most able achieve high levels. The staff work closely together and teachers make sure that support staff and the many parent volunteers are very well briefed. Therefore in mathematics lessons, children can work in very small groups with well-informed, skillful adults and this is one important reason why children make such good gains and achieve above the levels expected for their age.
66. The special needs support teacher was an active observer in the first part of mathematics lesson and was then very well placed to reinforce the work with children who needed her help. Records show that this is having a very beneficial effect on these children, as there is very good evidence to demonstrate that they make good progress.

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

67. Teachers provide children with practical opportunities to learn directional and positional language. On a cold but bright day the children donned their boots and coats and went to explore the attractive school grounds. The teachers had prepared 'puzzle cards' which they read to their enthusiastic learners who quickly interpreted the direction they should take. With much fun and laughter, the children are developing a range of geographical skills. Near the school pond, they identified signs of new life and the male and female duck. There was some litter near the pond and the teacher made effective use of this to discuss care for the environment with the children, who responded very positively. Children have very good ICT skills, they are confident, skillful users of new technology. They can handle the computer mouse and move the cursor around the screen. Boys and girls display equally good skills. Lesson planning makes clear what learning teachers intend, and

guidance notes provided for support staff or parents who may be working with children supplement this. Children make good progress in their general knowledge about the world around them and have already achieved the expected levels.

### Physical development

68. The school is fortunate in having a good range of spaces in which to promote physical development and these are well used by staff and children. In the small hall, movement and dance are well developed. A physical development lesson observed benefited from the fact that the children had already listened to and responded to the same music in a music lesson. Therefore, they already had some good ideas about interpretation and appropriate movement. Teachers are very careful about the safety of the children, who are taught safe ways to climb, travel, and jump down from the large apparatus in the main playground. Children learn these lessons well and put this into practice when working on the large apparatus both outside and in the large hall. In the small playground, they continue to develop their control skills and awareness of space when riding bikes. Access to a wider range of wheeled vehicles and a more structured approach to playtime would increase their opportunities for skill development, problem solving, and creativity. Children develop their fine motor control skills steadily and many work neatly with pencils, crayons and scissors. Most children have made good progress and already achieved the expected levels and have good control over their bodies by the time they move into Year 1.

### Creative development

69. Children work vigorously with paint and produce bright, bold pictures of themselves and '*Jasper and the Beanstalk*'. Work of a high standard is also seen when children look carefully at the designs of Vincent Van Gogh, and then create their own designs. Children enjoy music-making and singing, and are very attentive in music lessons. They rise to meet their teacher's expectations and show very good self-discipline. They do not fuss with the instruments or play when they should listen, they can repeat quite complex clapping patterns correctly, and they learn the words to new songs quickly. They can organise themselves quickly into three circles ready for a new activity. Very good control by the teacher and good self-discipline by the children means that time is never lost in lessons. Standards in creative development are better than expected because teachers have high expectations and provide interesting and challenging activities for the children, who achieve well as a result.
70. The overall quality of provision for children in the reception classes is consistently at a very high level and the positive impact on attainment is very evident. The school adds measurable value to children's knowledge, skills, and levels of understanding during this stage of the children's education at Upton Heath School.

### ENGLISH

- ☐ The standards achieved in English overall are very good by the end of Key Stage 2.
- ☐ Standards in speaking and listening are well above average throughout the school.
- ☐ Reading and writing skills are in need of a boost at Key Stage 1, especially for higher attainers.
- ☐ Teaching is good overall, more consistently so from 7-11 years and pupils make accelerated progress because of this. Occasionally, outstanding teaching was observed in Key Stage 2.
- ☐ Boys achieve particularly well in English at Upton Heath due to well-chosen topics and very positive male role models working in school.
- ☐ Management of English is effective. The next challenge for managers is to identify and promote the very best practice in teaching and learning in English to be found in school so that at least consistently good quality in all classes. There is good capacity for English to continue to improve

71. Results in the 2000 SATs show that standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were above average in reading and well above average in writing. Fewer pupils reached the higher level 3 in reading skills compared to the national average and also when compared to similar schools. Standards reached in the 2000 SATS at the age of eleven were above average in English. When compared to similar schools results at eleven were average. Results in English in 1999 were well above average. For the

last two years the school's performance has been higher than average. Standards in speaking and listening are well above average throughout both key stages. Boys in school tend to achieve higher results than the girls in SATs and when compared to boys nationally. The very positive male role models presented by teachers and adults who work in school, together with a curriculum that takes very good account of boys' interests, are factors which contribute to their successful achievements.

72. Inspection findings show that children enter the school with above-average standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing. In the Foundation Stage, teachers build effectively on these early skills to enable the children to make good progress. Standards are maintained throughout Key Stage 1 and early gains are consolidated, though insufficient attention is paid to ensuring that pupils who are capable of achieving very high standards in English do not always make the maximum rates of progress. In Key Stage 2, pupils' learning is accelerated through very effective teaching in many classes, so that pupils achieve very well and by the age of eleven standards are well above average.
73. Throughout the school, pupils speak with a high degree of confidence and fluency. They articulate clearly, employ an extensive vocabulary and have a good grasp of Standard English. Pupils in Key Stage 1 listen carefully to one another, take turns to speak in discussions and are eager to respond to questions or contribute to discussions. Pupils in Key Stage 2 successfully adapt speech to suit occasions. Pupils acquire and extend their vocabulary, for example in Year 4, when reading a non-fiction text aloud. They deal with unknown words such as *platelets* and *capillaries*, and make very good use of dictionaries to check for accuracy. Pupils are confident when expressing their ideas or opinions as in a Year 6 lesson on a non-fiction text about sharks. Pupils demonstrated clear understanding of the meaning of bias and presented a balanced argument to show this. They suggested a very good range of alternative words for *terror*, and many voiced their opinions confidently to express their point of view about why sharks might attack.
74. Although pupils make a good start with reading, they do not build on the early reading skills as well as they could. Most pupils have a good grasp of letter sounds and tackle unfamiliar words, but many lack fluency and expression because they do not have enough opportunity to practise purposeful reading to their teachers. Although volunteers give good support for hearing reading, teachers in Key Stage 1 rarely listen to pupils read to assess reading skills, comprehension and attitudes to books. Consequently the skills acquired in phonic work are not practised and extended and there is insufficient emphasis placed upon fluency, expression and reading for meaning. Some younger pupils have good technical skills in reading but are not exploring beyond the surface of the text to gain maximum pleasure from their reading. The school is aware of the need to give more attention to reading for meaning and has set this as key target for Key Stage 1 within its performance management policy.
75. In Key Stage 2, pupils read with improving fluency and accuracy so that most are confident, independent readers by the age of eleven. They are able to discuss reading preferences and favourite authors, giving good reasons for their choice. Many visit the public library regularly and read a range of poetry, fiction and non-fiction. A weakness is the lack of knowledge about how books are classified to aid quick reference. Pupils are unaware of the Dewey system although, once a book is located, pupils are quick to extract relevant information. The reading skills of the average and above-average pupils are very well developed. They cope confidently with texts presented to them. The reading skills of lower attainers are generally accurate, although more hesitant.
76. Writing standards are above average at Key Stage 1. Pupils' writing skills progress well and reach well above average standards by the end of Key Stage 2. The majority of pupils achieve well. They write for an increasing range of purposes and with an increasing awareness of the intended audience. Higher-attaining pupils in Key Stage 1 are not always challenged sufficiently through demanding tasks and there are few examples of pupils' extended and creative pieces of writing. Anthologies of poems, though appealing, do not demonstrate the high levels of spoken language some pupils should be using in their written work. Potentially, a higher proportion of pupils in the current Year 2 could be targeted to achieve at the higher level 3. Pupils' spelling skills are good and they successfully use their knowledge of grammar and punctuation in constructing sentences. Most pupils have a good knowledge of story structure, with higher attainers using imaginative vocabulary to describe

characters and events. Although letters are not joined in most cases, handwriting is generally neat and legible.

77. In Key Stage 2, exciting work is produced in many classes as a result of very high expectations, and some inspirational teaching. By the age of eleven, pupils have a good knowledge of grammar and punctuation. Writing is often sustained and stories have exciting plots and characters. There is much evidence of extended writing in other areas of the curriculum, such as science, geography and history, where pupils show a good understanding of different forms of writing. In Year 6, for example, when writing about *'The Wreck of the Zanzibar'*, good links are made to geography as pupils use mapping skills to explore the Scilly Isles and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of living on an island. In both key stages there is a good focus on multicultural stories. Additionally, the strong links with Soweto are used to enhance learning about different cultures in story telling. In Year 4, for instance, the story of *'The Fallen Elephant'* is used as the basis for sensitive poetry writing, showing mankind's destruction of the world. Poetry writing and appreciation is a strength throughout Key Stage 2. Exciting writing in Year 5 based on *'The Misty Mountains'* involved pupils' using very good adjectives to give powerful descriptions: *'Up, up I go along the icy path of boulders.... The howling winds and great storms freeze me as they do battle.'* Often work in English is stimulated by very good art work; for example studies of Lowry in charcoal evoked strong imagery for pupils to use in their writing. ICT is used well to support work in English, for example pupils are confident to use word processing software as a drafting or finishing tool in creative pieces of writing. The close proximity of the mini-suite to Year 6 results in most pupils using the computers quite often (and naturally) to assist in written work and independent research.
78. Average and above average attaining pupils in Key Stage 2 have very well-developed writing skills. Lower attainers use descriptive vocabulary successfully to describe characters and create suspense. All pupils make very good gains in learning because they are well motivated by challenging and exciting tasks.
79. Standards of handwriting are very good by the age of eleven. Younger pupils practice letter formation. Older pupils soon develop their personal style, writing in ink, in a fluent cursive style. High expectations by teachers are reflected in the standard of presentation. The majority of pupils take great pride in their work. Spelling is strong throughout the school. Pupils have a good range of strategies to enable them to spell confidently.
80. Teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 1. It is very good in Key Stage 2, with outstanding teaching observed on several occasions. Teachers in both key stages have a good understanding of how to teach basic skills in reading and writing. One unsatisfactory lesson was observed in a Year 2 class when the pupils looked at the story of *'Mamba'*, and then were set tasks that involved looking at opposites and verb endings. The tasks were well matched to pupils' abilities and most should have been stimulated by the story. However, noise levels were high, many called out and demanded attention, which affected the learning of others. Because insufficient attention was given to reinforcing positive behaviour, unsatisfactory conditions for learning resulted and insufficient good work was achieved. Teaching in English in Key Stage 1 has strengths in the exciting topics that are chosen to engage pupils' interest and good application. For example, in the re-telling of the tales of *'Cinderella'* and *'Little Red Riding Hood'* in Year 1 and the shared text about *'Why snake has no legs'* in Year 2. Most teachers use skilful questioning to elicit good responses from the pupils who mostly recall earlier learning well and are eager to learn more. In some lessons however, the pupils' natural exuberance is allowed to bubble over and noise levels get to an unacceptably high level before they are checked by the teacher. Most teachers provide helpful strategies to support slower learners and take care to choose resources that will assist them make good progress when working independently or as part of a group. The level of challenge set in the work for higher attainers is not always sufficient to ensure they achieve top full potential. Teachers often ask a range of pupils to share with other what they have learnt and this is a positive feature in enabling pupils to assess the gains they have made. However, in some lessons observed the plenary was rather rushed, and this was a missed opportunity to set targets for the next steps in learning.
81. In one Year 4 class, teaching was observed to be exceptional. This was demonstrated in an excellent lesson using robots to develop pupils' writing of a fantasy adventure. In the shared text of



'*Planet of the Robots*', pupils talked confidently about cliff-hangers. They selected powerful adjectives to describe the robot and incorporated these into well-sustained stories, which were exciting and very well structured. Many pupils know how to use language to very good effect, for example one pupil wrote: '*An unknown face appeared behind a rock.....out of the shadows emerged a girl.*' Such choice of vocabulary and quality of language reflects the excellent teaching in this class. Teachers build very successfully on previous learning as seen in another outstanding lesson in Year 5 based on the text of '*The Iron Man*'. In this lesson pupils developed descriptive and increasingly complex sentences, using dictionaries confidently to help increase their word power. The teacher included pupils with special educational needs fully in the lesson by setting well-matched work and challenging them to write at length and depth by asking open-ended questions, to help deepen their knowledge and insights into character and plot. The teacher drew upon examples of pupils' efforts to share the excitement created by the author. As one pupil wrote, for example: '*The shiny, silent iron man looked up into the inky black sky.*' A very good plenary session pulled together the key learning points of the lesson and also ensured that pupils went away with a sense of real enjoyment of Ted Hughes's story. Pupils of all ages have very positive attitudes to English and this supports their successful learning.

82. Occasionally, teachers share learning objectives with pupils at the outset of lessons which ensures that all pupils are clear about what is expected. This is not yet consistent practice in the school. Teachers link work very effectively to other subjects of the curriculum, so that literacy skills are constantly reinforced in lessons other than English. Many teachers provide very good role models for pupils, using a rich and exciting vocabulary which promotes pupils' interest in language. Pupils express their ideas accurately and precisely because teachers have such high expectations of them. In Year 6, when discussing the text, '*Street Child*,' an able pupil said (of the story) '*the writer is creating a powerful image of sadness and depression in the chapter*', and then used extracts from the text to support his views. Following a debate on fox-hunting, Year 6 pupils' poetry included vibrant images and spiritual thoughts. In stories, phrases create suspense and excitement, for example in studying '*The Wreck of the Zanzibar*', pupils wrote, '*lightning tearing the sky apart and the teeth of the gale chewing the wreck up.*' Teachers ensure that pupils write for a variety of purposes, developing confidence in the various forms of writing. As a result, pupils have a very good understanding of formal and informal letter writing, persuasive writing and narrative form, as well as constructing well-written factual accounts and a range of writing in report form. Pupils use redrafting skills to improve their writing. Plenary sessions in literacy time are used effectively by most teachers to reinforce teaching and learning, to assess what has been learnt and to encourage pupils to think about the next steps in learning, but practice is inconsistent. The best marking provides excellent guidance to help pupils improve their work, but marking is not consistent. Target setting is rarely reflected in marking so that pupils are mindful of where they need to improve.
83. Pupils with special educational needs have detailed individual education plans. Targets are specific and are reflected in class lessons. As a result, teaching is usually clearly focused to meet their needs. These pupils are well supported by classroom assistants and make good progress overall. Provision for the most-able pupils is well addressed in Key Stage 2 through challenging tasks. These pupils also make good progress. In Key Stage 1, they make satisfactory progress, because work is not always demanding enough and the pedestrian pace of some lessons does not result in a good enough coverage of work.
84. Management of English is effective and leads to high standards being achieved at the end of Key Stage 2. The joint co-ordinators work well together to ensure that there are consistent approaches to teaching and learning in English and are fully aware of the shortcomings in reading at Key Stage 1. Writing has been highlighted as an area for development at Key Stage 2 and very good progress has been made in making improvement. The next challenge for managers is to identify and promote the very best practice in teaching and learning in English to be found in school so that at least consistently good quality in both is the norm. There is good capacity for English to continue to improve. Excellent quality resources are used well throughout the school to enrich learning. English makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Assemblies provide good opportunities for role-play and promote speaking and listening skills well. The quality of display in many areas of the school considerably enriches learning in English.

## MATHEMATICS

- ❑ Generally good teaching enables most pupils to make good progress in mathematics so that the standards achieved are very good by the end of Key Stage 2.
- ❑ Levels of challenge at Key Stage 1 are not as consistently high as at Key Stage 2, and this dampens down the achievement of high attainers. The school is already taking effective action to remedy this situation.
- ❑ The National Numeracy Strategy has had a positive impact on assisting the development of pupils' numeracy skills that are very strong.
- ❑ The two co-ordinators have a strong commitment towards raising standards and provide effective leadership. They do not however have a clear enough overall view of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning, and this is a shortcoming.

85. At the age of seven, standards are above average in comparison with all schools and average when compared with similar schools. The number of pupils reaching higher levels is above average. Results in the 2000 SATs were not as high as results in 1999 and boys in this year group outperformed girls. Inspection findings confirm that numeracy skills are very strong and pupils have very good understanding of shape, space and measures. By comparison, pupils' strategies for problem solving are not as secure and they do not always have sufficient opportunity to develop skills further when this aspect of mathematics is not an integral part of lessons. In addition, although high-attaining pupils make progress, teachers in both year groups do not always have high enough expectations and, consequently, this group does not achieve as well as it should. The school is aware of the need to challenge its younger pupils more and has started to address the issue by grouping Year 2 pupils according to ability.
86. By the time pupils reach the age of eleven, standards have risen to well above the national average and compared to similar schools, with a significant proportion of more-able pupils attaining higher levels. Two percent of pupils achieve very high standards. The consistently high quality of teaching in this key stage plays a significant part in raising standards. In lessons, both boys and girls achieve equally well but, once again, in the most recent tests, boys outperformed girls at this key stage. The school has analysed SATs test results since amalgamation to judge whether a pattern of boys' out performing girls is starting to emerge. Although standards in 2000 were slightly lower than 1999, the school maintained very high standards.
87. Pupils with special educational needs throughout the school receive a high level of good quality support and make very good progress. More-able pupils, identified as mathematically gifted and talented in Key Stage 2, receive very good provision and achieve well. Pupils of all abilities leave the school with a very secure breadth and depth of knowledge across the whole mathematics curriculum.
88. At the end of Key Stage 1 standards overall in mathematics are above average. The vast majority of pupils have secure numeracy skills. More-able pupils confidently order 3 and 4 digit numbers; some already understand equivalence in their fraction work and demonstrate developing knowledge of symmetry. Pupils of average ability count backwards and forwards in twos and tens. They understand odd and even, are confident with simple money problems and know how to find halves and quarters practically, but do not yet have a secure enough grasp of the concept to know that a quarter of 8 cubes is 2 cubes. Lower-ability pupils identify number patterns and are reasonably secure with simple addition but less confident with subtraction. They record information on bar graphs, tally charts and pictograms well but cannot yet interpret information without help.
89. By the end of Key Stage 2 more-able pupils apply knowledge to problem solving in a variety of ways. Their work is well organised and, in discussion, these pupils display maturity and mathematical precision in their reasoning. Pupils of all abilities are confident and secure with problem solving, shape, space and measures and data handling. Lower-ability pupils show some uncertainty with more complex fraction and shape work but they demonstrate good understanding when handling data.
90. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning in mathematics lessons and are given good opportunity to develop their mathematical skills across the curriculum. Year 4 successfully linked their music

lesson on composition to symmetry topic work. Year 6 pupils used line graphs to interpret information on temperature conversion and used information technology well to create a database on prediction. One younger pupil even managed to use probability in religious education. He worked out that the chances of Jesus being born on December 25 were 365 to 1. In many classrooms, particularly in Key Stage 1, information technology programs are used well to support pupils' learning and develop independence.

91. Pupils make very good progress in Key Stage 2, but only satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1. The rate of progress is closely linked to the quality of teaching. In all Year 1 lessons observed, teaching was good and in all Year 2 lessons satisfactory. In Key Stage 2 half of lessons were very good, five out of twelve lessons were good and one lesson was satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching in mathematics was observed.
92. The quality of teaching in mathematics is good overall. Teachers throughout the school are confident and secure with the National Numeracy Strategy. They make very effective use of mental warm-up time to improve numeracy skills and use sessions at the end of lessons well to assess pupils' levels of understanding. However, in both key stages, daily planning frequently lacks detail and often does not do justice to the quality of teaching. There are also weaknesses in marking. Although there is evidence of marking being used constructively to help pupils improve, particularly in a Year 1 work sample, other marking is not of the same good quality.
93. Throughout Key Stage 2, teachers' expectations are consistently high and the language of mathematics is promoted particularly well. The variety of teaching methods, skilful management of pupils and accurate match of work to ability stand out as key factors in the higher standards of teaching and learning. There is a rich variety of interesting, inspiring work for pupils of all abilities that provides very good coverage across the whole mathematics curriculum. Classrooms are hives of activity; lessons are purposeful and productive. Relationships are very strong and pupils are keen to contribute and do well because they know their work is valued. A very good Year 3 lesson on tallying and frequency charts was linked well to literacy work on the use of vowels in text. Time targets were used effectively to speed up the learning process. Pupils were confident, worked responsibly and produced a good amount of work. There were very high levels of concentration. Learning was exciting, homework extended pupils' learning further and pupils had good knowledge of their learning.
94. In a good Year 1 lesson on finding change from 10p, the teacher started the lesson in a lively way that created interest when pupils had to sort out which coins they needed to give change. There was a sense of fun and much humour. Group tasks were clearly explained and pupils worked on a range of practical and written activities, before coming together at the end of the lesson for a very effective session to speed up skills and revise familiar number rhymes. However, even in this good lesson, more-able pupils who were very secure with complex money problems wasted time completing tasks that were undemanding.
95. Secure assessment procedures make a positive contribution towards maintaining high standards. Effective baseline assessment is carried out at the beginning of the reception year. However, the school misses the opportunity to use this information to predict anticipated levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1. SATs are carefully evaluated, and numerous on-going checks are carried out to assess pupils' progress and levels of understanding. However, once again, this information is not yet used with any consistency to set individual targets for future development.
96. The two co-ordinators have a strong commitment towards raising standards and provide effective leadership. Subject knowledge is very secure and there is a clear sense of purpose. Good detailed monitoring of teaching and learning has resulted in helpful points for improvements. However, although co-ordinators are well informed about provision in their own key stage, they have insufficient knowledge about work in the rest of the school and they do not have a clear enough overall view of provision or standards. Consequently, there is a lack of cohesion, particularly about the way in which mathematics is taught. Some year groups are grouped by ability while others remain in class groups, different schemes of work are used in the two key stages and the use of homework is inconsistent. The school has more work to do to achieve a coherent whole-school approach towards the teaching of mathematics.

## SCIENCE

- ☐ Good, and often very good teaching in science, enables pupils to make good progress so that the standards they achieve are very good by the end of Key Stage 2.
- ☐ Standards are high by the age of seven but when children enter Year 1 many are already working at level 1 and more could be expected of high attainers by the end of the key stage.
- ☐ Pupils are interested in science and they have very good attitudes to learning. The school takes a *hands-on* approach to science that clearly stimulates the good achievement that shows results in science SATs above the other two tested subjects.
- ☐ The leadership of science is effective and the school has some useful strategies in place for monitoring teaching that has led to greater consistency in how science is taught. There is good capacity for science to continue to improve.
- ☐ Target setting in science is patchy and this is an area for improvement.

97. Standards achieved by eleven-year-olds in the 2000 SATs were well above average when compared to all schools and above average when compared to similar schools. Results are only available for 1999 and 2000 so it is not possible to judge trends over time. Seven-year-old pupils were also successful in tests last year, when many more of them, based on teacher's assessments, did better in science than other pupils nationally and than those at similar schools. Pupils' success is the result of good and often very good teaching, an interesting lively curriculum and their own enthusiasm for the subject. The school takes a *hands-on* approach to science that clearly stimulates the good achievement seen in SATs. A sample of pupils work in science suggests that results in this year's SATs are set to be sustained at the very good level seen to-date. There is good capacity for science to continue to improve.
98. There is much good and very good teaching and learning in science. Overall the quality of teaching is good and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. Most of the high quality teaching was seen at Key Stage 2 where three quarters of all lessons were very good. In these lessons teachers adopt a lively open teaching style which achieves a good balance between giving pupils information, teaching them the correct scientific vocabulary and providing good opportunities for them to experiment and record findings for themselves. Not surprisingly, pupils respond enthusiastically to the challenges set by their teachers. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils worked very energetically as they found out the effect exercise had on the heart. The teacher increased their knowledge and understanding because of the effective use of questions and examples which drew attention to the weaknesses in the testing regime and the links between pulse rate and fitness.
99. Year 6 pupils made their own force meters and measured in Newtons the impact friction has on the force required to move objects. Pupils in Year 4 were fascinated by some excellent resources provided for their work on the skeleton. As a result of their investigations, pupils in Year 3 are very clear that there is a gap between what advertisers say about the absorbency of their kitchen towels and reality. Pupils' books are full of good examples of their work and they have good recall of the work covered in previous terms. For example, pupils in Year 2 remember how to make simple circuits, insert switches and extra bulbs in the circuit and what the impact would be on the light levels, and could predict which circuit diagrams would work and which would not. Pupils in Year 1 understand well the conditions required to grow healthy plants. They have no difficulty in explaining how they will carry out the test so that it is fair. They are confident to predict that plants without light will not grow as strongly as those with light, even if both are watered and fed. Older pupils have drawn high quality diagrams of the heart and the circulatory system and they can explain how the system works.
100. Pupils are interested in science and they have very good attitudes to learning. However, there are some elements of teaching and learning which can be improved. Standards are high by the age of seven but when children enter Year 1 many are already working at level 1. Teachers often ask open-ended, challenging questions but the ease with which many pupils appear to answer them suggests their expectations need to be even higher. This also highlights a curriculum issue. Insufficient attention is being given to ensuring that the starting levels for the science curriculum in Key Stage 1

are correctly identified. Improving lesson planning to provide much sharper learning objectives to challenge pupils of all abilities would help staff pitch the work higher.

101. There are some effective links with other subjects such as ICT, geography, mathematics, and literacy; for example, observing changes in the weather and its impact on the environment and recording and using data in different ways. Pupils had to measure very accurately in the Year 4 lesson on the skeleton and there is extensive recording of experiments across the school. One general weakness, was their inability to explain fully and give scientific reasons for what they observed. For example, pupils in Year 6 understood that different surfaces provide more or less friction, which has an impact on the ease of movement, but most found it difficult to use this information to explain fully the implications of this for drivers. Teachers recognise this weakness and use plenary sessions effectively to consolidate and help pupils draw general conclusions. Teachers provide many useful opportunities for pupils to write and record in science lessons. For example, older pupils write extensively and accurately about pollution chains and the digestive and circulatory systems. The work, which results from the study of pond life, is of very high quality.
102. The leadership of science is effective and the school has some useful strategies in place for monitoring teaching that has led to greater consistency in how science is taught. To date there has been less emphasis on monitoring to ensure that learning is developing at the same good rate across the school. Target setting to support improved achievement in science is patchy and not undertaken to the same degree as in English and mathematics. This is a missed opportunity. Because the approach to teaching science varies between the three key stages in the school, this is an important area to address. The co-ordinators have yet to review the curriculum to ensure it meets pupils' needs fully across the whole school and that the very best practice in teaching and learning is identified, promoted and shared.

## ART AND DESIGN

- ☐ Art and design is a subject strength of the school.
- ☐ Very good teaching in art and design throughout the school, enables all pupils to make very good progress so that the standards they achieve are very good by the end of Key Stage 2.
- ☐ Pupils enjoy a wide variety of art and design experiences that exploits their many talents because of the imaginative, explorative tasks that are the focus of lessons.
- ☐ The subject is led enthusiastically and is well managed.
- ☐ The display of work is excellent and provides an enriching environment for pupils to work in, as well as showcasing their very good talents and increasingly developing skills.

103. Standards in art and design are above the level expected for seven-year-olds and well above average for eleven-year-olds. Planning for the subject is completed appropriately in all classes. Pupils enjoy a wide variety of art and design experiences. They have ample opportunity to use a growing range of materials that support their developing understanding of the skills and techniques involved in art. The learning is very good across both key stages because of the imaginative, explorative tasks that are the focus of lessons.
104. In Key Stage 1 classes, pupils build quickly upon the fruitful experiences that they have been given in the Foundation Stage classes. Pupils use a variety of materials successfully. They use a combination of crayon and paint to make paint wash pictures. They use curls of string covered with tissue paper as they make effective two and three-dimensional representations of a starry night. This is a thoughtful follow-up to a study of the painting by Van Gogh. There is also a particularly innovative use of a mixture of porridge oats and paint to give a superb two-dimensional effect to a version of the night sky. Pupils are inspired to give accurate line and depth to their observational drawings of objects from home such as a piano and chair, having studied Van Gogh's drawings. At the end of the key stage, pupils use colour wash again but add to it with silhouettes to support their study of Africa. With a visiting artist they make three-dimensional, large-scale masks. These describe their enjoyment of imaginative creativity they have experienced. All of these experiences combine to produce young pupils who have acute artistic vision.

105. Pupils in Key Stage 2 classes show in consequence great measures of confidence when they are given opportunity to enrich their artistic experiences. Having already worked with clay, they use glazes skilfully to extend their knowledge and understanding of the process of making pottery. The use of clay is linked meaningfully to other areas of learning as they make Roman pots when they study this period of history. The cross-curricular links to other subjects are a strong feature of the use of art at this key stage. At the same time the techniques and skills of art and design are not allowed to be submerged in the process. Artists such as L.S. Lowry are studied in Year 3 before pupils produce effective work in pastels, chalk and charcoal. Pupils also began to make use of the computer program 'Paintbox' to develop their skills appropriately. Perspective is introduced to them successfully in Year 4. In an excellent lesson, skills were much enhanced by the accuracy with which pupils considered photographs that had different vanishing points. A visiting artist made beautiful willow woven creatures with Year 5 pupils as a further example of the comprehensive range of activities provided for them. The skilful use of the computer is developed well in Year 6 as pupils make a study of Impressionist artists such as Matisse. The use of the 'Art Dabbler' program supports pupils appropriately in this study.
106. Pupils' attitudes are very good because they are so interested in such enjoyable tasks. They work with care and accurate attention to detail. Their personal development is much enhanced by the creativity within their tasks. Behaviour is very good in art lessons in consequence. Pupils, including some with special educational needs, are regarded as having special artistic talent. They are highly encouraged to take part fully in art activities.
107. Teaching is very good across both key stages. There is thorough planning and resourcing of tasks. Discussions are led skilfully. Open-ended questions are well distributed among pupils. Efforts are supported through careful monitoring with perceptive intervention made to encourage pupils to develop their skills. The best teaching ensures that there is challenge in the tasks. Teachers make good use of some outstanding support that is given by a group of parents, particularly with Key Stage 1 pupils.
108. The subject is led enthusiastically and well managed by the headteacher and one of the deputy headteachers. The display of work is excellent and provides an enriching environment for pupils to work in, as well as showcasing their very good talents and increasingly developing skills. The subject leaders have good insights into the range and quality of teaching and learning in art because of the high profile given to its display. There is not a systematic portfolio of work established nor is there the use of sketchbooks in all classes. These are missed opportunities to support the development of rigorous assessment in the subject.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- ☐ Good teaching with some very good features, throughout the school, enables all pupils to make good progress in design and technology so that the standards they achieve at seven and eleven are above average.
- ☐ A strength of provision is in how the experiences pupils gain in design work are dovetailed into work in other subject areas. For example, with history studies when they research, design and make large-scale models of Tudor houses.
- ☐ The subject is satisfactorily led and managed by two co-ordinators who have recognised the need for both to learn more about the work in each other's key stage. There is, however, no allocation of time for this to happen successfully. Nor has there been appropriate opportunity for monitoring developments in the subject so far.

109. Standards in design and technology are above average at the end of both key stages. It is clear that pupils build skills, knowledge and understanding at good rates on the whole. This applies to the planning, designing and evaluating stages of the work as well as the making stage. Pupils experience the range of factors that make up design and technology, not just the excitement of making a successful end product. In so doing, pupils make very good progress in developing their skills. A strength of provision is in how the experiences pupils gain in design work are dovetailed into work in other subject areas.

110. In Key Stage 1 classes, pupils use their profitable experiences gained in the Foundation Stage as a good starting point to enhanced learning. They work with a group of nursery nurses and volunteer parents to plan, design and make a clay pot after their teacher has talked to them about the range of differently sized pots that she has brought into school. The good variety captures the interest and imagination of pupils so that they are keen to produce their own end product. This feature of learning is well developed in Year 2 as pupils use clay again as a medium. They work enthusiastically and skilfully at making a clay duck from a basic pot shape. This work is accurately supported by nursery nurses, and volunteer parent helpers. However, as pupils have a design presented to them by teachers, their own and design flair is not advanced nor are skills as sufficiently progressed as they might be.
111. The acquisition of skills is quickly and successfully developed in Key Stage 2. In Year 3 pupils work in pairs and small groups to design and make a plastic cup holder. This has to fulfil appropriate criteria that have been agreed between teacher and pupils. They have to be light, cheap to produce and easy to stack. A good range of materials is made available for pupils to make their own choices in order to complete the task successfully. In Year 4 pupils plan and design a prototype of a devourer effectively. They work in pairs or small groups to carry out this task that arises from their history study of ancient Egypt. This extra stage of design gives a clear signal about the progress in understanding about design as they get older. By the end of the key stage, pupils are using a number of these skills together successfully. They do so as they make large-scale models of Tudor houses; again this are closely linked to history study.
112. Pupils' attitudes to learning in design and technology lessons are very good. They often become absorbed in the exciting activities presented to them. Pupils' personal development is enhanced as they are all, including those with special educational needs, given opportunity to take the lead in forming designs and making objects. As a result of the high levels of interest, behaviour is invariably very good.
113. The quality of teaching is at least good across both key stages. Tasks are planned carefully and resources are provided that enrich pupils' learning opportunities. Activities are developed that stretch pupils' responses. Teachers generally have secure understanding of both the subject and the pupils' abilities to respond to the task appropriately. Many teachers make good levels of interventions that continually challenge pupils and support the raising of standards. At the same time they have the skill of ensuring that pupils are making the final decisions.
114. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed by two co-ordinators. The Key Stage 1 based co-ordinator has held the responsibility only since the beginning of the term, whilst the Key Stage 2 co-ordinator is more established in the role. There is recognition of the need for both to learn more about the work in each other's key stages. There is, however, no allocation of time for this to happen successfully. Nor has there been appropriate opportunity for monitoring developments in the subject so far. Resourcing of the subject is satisfactory.

## GEOGRAPHY

- ❑ Good teaching in geography throughout the school, enables all pupils to make good progress so that the standards they achieve at seven and eleven are above average.
- ❑ Carefully chosen topics that promote good cross-curricular links brings learning alive in geography and pupils gain a wide range of knowledge about the world in which they live.
- ❑ There are two subject co-ordinators for geography who together provide satisfactory leadership, one located in each key stage. While this provides for mutual support, it means that there is no whole-school perspective of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and this is a shortcoming.

115. Standards in geography by the age of seven and eleven, and in the school as a whole, are above average. Teaching is good and some very good teaching was seen particularly at Key Stage 2. Pupils' good speaking and writing skills are used effectively in geography lessons and this is one reason why standards are higher than seen typically.
116. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have developed a good appreciation of some of the technical aspects of the subject, such as how man impacts on the environment through an in-depth comparative study of Upton Heath and Burwardsley. Teachers in Year 5 use this study to enable pupils to apply their knowledge and understanding of maps, symbols and different categories of use to make detailed comparisons. Teachers also make effective use of residential visits to help pupils to study the countryside at first hand. Later this gives rise to an understanding of conflicting demands and priorities and these are explored in greater depth when pupils debate the proposed use of a piece of open land for building. Pupils in Year 6 visit Point of Ayr and some very high quality detailed studies of the natural environment and birdlife result. Pupils in Year 4 study Chembakoli, a village in India, and use it to make a comparative study with the village of Upton. While much of this work is of good quality there are few examples to indicate that pupils have identified the positive features of living in an Indian village.
117. There are some good links with other subjects that increase pupils' knowledge and understanding effectively. For example, in Year 2 pupils study the rainforest that promotes their historical, geographic and scientific skills as well as an appreciation of the cultural diversity of the world. In discussion it is evident that they know in which countries this particular habitat is to be found, they can find them on the globe and know they are situated around the equator. They can look at a very large and attractive collage of the rainforest and talk about the different layers of habitat. They know that trees absorb carbon dioxide and that the rainforest is an important resource of plant and animal life. In their enthusiasm, they forget to mention the rain!
118. Map work skills seem more mixed. Pupils are introduced to maps and plans in Key Stage 1. Walking in the local area develops some of the directional and land use skills and pupils are introduced to maps of the United Kingdom in Year 2. In Year 5 some pupils were not expected to classify land use in general terms, such as *residential* and *industrial*, but were allowed to use terms such as *houses* and *church*. One of the maps they were given to work with was unsuitable for this type of activity which suggests not all teachers have sufficient subject knowledge or high enough expectations to develop map work to a high level. The best map work was seen in Year 3 in a very good lesson when the teacher very skilfully captured the pupils' full attention because of the problem-solving way in which she introduced the topic. However, map work does not seem to be studied to the same depth as other aspects of geography and there is less evidence in teachers' planning, termly work plans and pupils' books of this area of work.
119. ICT is used effectively in geography, particularly at Key Stage 2, and the school makes very good use of day and residential visits to improve geographical knowledge and understanding. The emphasis on practical work is one of the reasons why pupils enjoy the subject and make good progress. Pupils learn how to list similarities and differences, and how to extract information from diagrams and books. Teachers and support staff work closely together to ensure that pupils with special educational needs achieve a similar rate of progress to other pupils. Marking to help pupils improve their work is very mixed. In many books the only marking seen indicated the level of work being achieved, but did not



provide any feedback to pupils (or parents) at all. This is a missed opportunity to improve standards still further.

120. There are two subject co-ordinators for geography who together provide satisfactory leadership, one located in each key stage. While this provides for mutual support, it means that there is no whole-school perspective of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and this is a shortcoming.

## HISTORY

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❑ Generally good teaching in history throughout the school, enables all pupils to make good progress so that the standards they achieve at seven and eleven are above average.</li><li>❑ Lessons are typically lively and interesting, and teachers make good use of artefacts and the local area to stimulate pupils' successful learning. There is no doubt that pupils enjoy the exciting topics chosen, such as the Greeks and Egyptians, and they show good recall of detail.</li><li>❑ There are two subject co-ordinators for history who together provide satisfactory leadership, one located in each key stage. To-date their monitoring activities have been limited and this is a shortcoming that is impeding subject improvement.</li></ul> |
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121. Standards in history by the age of seven and eleven are above average because teaching overall is good and promotes pupils' good achievement. Teaching was unsatisfactory in one Key Stage 1 lesson. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge, lessons are lively and interesting and teachers make good use of artefacts and the local area. The work of pupils with special educational needs shows a similar rate of progress to other pupils. They have good access to the subject because of the effective support they receive from class teachers and well-briefed support staff.
122. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a good grasp of the lives of the Victorians because teachers not only provide information but provide opportunities for pupils to understand what it felt like to live then. Pupils demonstrate their insight and use their good literacy skills effectively to compare and contrast the lives and expectations of a weaver and a mill owner. Year 4 pupils study the Ancient Egyptians and the Greeks in depth and this exposes them to a variety of sources of information. These topics link well with work in art and design and literacy as pupils study different texts. One very good history lesson seen in Year 4 began with a very quick pre-test to find out what pupils already knew about the life of a slave. This lesson was successful because it demonstrated to the pupils the importance of evidence as opposed to opinion. Pupils' good speaking and writing skills were used to good effect in this lesson and this is one reason why standards are higher than seen typically. In Key Stage 1, pupils begin by walking round Upton and comparing old and new buildings, looking at building materials and how the area has changed. By Year 5, pupils can draw highly detailed drawings of Speke Hall which demonstrate the growth in their observation skills and knowledge and understanding of life in those times. In Year 2, pupils study the plague and the Great Fire of London. There is no doubt that pupils enjoy these topics and they show good recall of detail.
123. History teaching is good overall and teachers' enthusiasm means this is a popular subject with many pupils. However, in the one unsatisfactory history lesson the teacher did not use the resources effectively to make sure pupils developed a good understanding of how we know about the past. This lesson lacked pace, and pupils soon became fussy and inattentive. Discussion with other Year 2 pupils demonstrated weaknesses in their knowledge and understanding of evidence. In response to questions about how we know about past events, the initial answer was 'video' followed by 'books'. There are time-lines in classrooms and pupils knew that the plague was over 400 years ago. One boy knew the exact date. However, pupils found it very difficult to say whether this was before or after the Victorians, which they had also studied and they did not refer to a timeline in trying to reach an answer.
124. There are two subject co-ordinators for history, one based in each key stage, who together provide satisfactory leadership. They are both very committed to the subject but this does mean that no one has a whole-school overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject. There is some effective marking which helps pupils' (and parents) know how to improve work. But most work is merely levelled without any further comment. This is a missed opportunity to improve standards still further.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- ❑ At the age of seven years, pupils attain average standards in ICT and above average standards at eleven years. This demonstrates steady learning overall that builds up to pupils' making quicker progress in the junior phase because of consistently good teaching.
- ❑ Pupils use ICT to support their learning across the curriculum; excellent art work in the styles of Van Gogh and Monet, were produced with a paint program.
- ❑ All strands of the ICT curriculum are covered in appropriate depth. There is increasing use of the Internet to explore this important means of communication.
- ❑ The two co-ordinators have given good leadership in moving the subject on and have been successful in raising levels of staff confidence. They know that the next priority for the subject is increased monitoring activities, and the creation of a manageable, yet rigorous, system of assessment.

125. It is evident that measures to improve the level of staff expertise and confidence in ICT have been successful. The school has also built up good quality hardware and software to support the development of skills and knowledge in the subject and to enhance work in other subjects such as English, mathematics, art and design and history. At the age of seven years, pupils attain average standards in ICT and above average standards at eleven years. This demonstrates steady learning overall that builds up to pupils' making quicker progress in the junior phase because of consistently good teaching.
126. Reception children are confident users of computers and they handle the mouse with considerable dexterity. There are satisfactory opportunities in infant classes for pupils to learn more about the use of the computer to process text and information and as a reference tool. By the age of seven, standards are as expected for their age and pupils are making satisfactory gains in their learning. The rate of learning accelerates in junior classes and it is good overall. By the age of eleven, standards are good. This is shown in displays around the school that include excellent art work in the styles of Van Gogh and Monet, produced with a paint program.
127. Over the course of their time in school, pupils learn at a good rate. Pupils attitudes are good. They concentrate well, work hard and enjoy their studies. Behaviour is good overall, though it can be a bit restless in some lessons. Most teachers demand that their pupils listen carefully, wait their turn to speak and sit still, but this is not consistent. In other respects, teaching has many strengths and is judged to be good overall. It is evident that skills and knowledge are taught effectively; teachers use ICT well in other subjects and there is also ample opportunity for pupils to practise and extend their knowledge of, for example, the power of desk top publishing to set text in interesting formats. In most lessons, expectations are good and the work set challenges all pupils. In junior classes particularly, the highest attainers are set work that stimulates curiosity, research and enquiry. This is shown clearly in the very good standard of writing based on the use of multi-media encyclopaediae, dictionaries and other information sources. During the week of inspection two boys took a video recording of inspectors at work and digitized the image onto the screen, inserted appropriate text before printing off copies ready for inclusion in the school magazine. Inspectors were presented with souvenir copies which were well received!
128. All strands of the ICT curriculum are covered in appropriate depth. There is increasing use of the Internet to explore this important means of communication. Those aspects of the curriculum that rely on special resources, such as computer-based modelling and monitoring, are developed satisfactorily and word and data processing, graphics and information handling are covered in depth. ICT makes a strong contribution to the development of basic skills in literacy and numeracy because of the quite intensive use of computers in these lessons.
129. The management of the subject is in safe hands. The two co-ordinators have given good leadership in moving the subject on and have been successful in raising levels of staff confidence. They know that the next priority for the subject is increased monitoring of teaching, learning and standards in lessons and the creation of a manageable, yet rigorous, system of assessment. Given the successes

achieved to date, and with the implementation of these priorities, there is no reason why standards in ICT should not go from strength to strength in the coming years.

## MUSIC

- ❑ At the age of seven years, pupils including those with special educational needs attain average standards in music and above average standards at eleven years. This demonstrates steady learning overall that builds up to pupils' making quicker progress in the junior phase because of consistently good teaching.
- ❑ Pupils who are talented musicians are enabled to develop their talents to the full because of the good opportunities provided.
- ❑ Music is an important part of school life for a large number of pupils; singing in assemblies is both joyous and uplifting.
- ❑ The school uses an appropriate scheme of work that ensures good balanced coverage across the whole music curriculum and gives appropriate guidance to non-specialists.
- ❑ The subject co-ordinators work well together, are enthusiastic and provide a good level of informal support for colleagues but do not have the opportunity to work alongside class teachers or monitor the quality of teaching. Consequently, they do not have a clear overview of how well music is taught or the standards achieved and this is a shortcoming.

130. Pupils, including those with special educational needs in Key Stage 1 make steady progress and achieve average standards for their age at seven. Pupils of all abilities make good progress throughout Key Stage 2 and reach above average standards by the age of eleven. Instrumental string, brass and woodwind tuition, together with choir, recorder and guitar groups have a positive impact upon the standards of the most able. These pupils achieve well and demonstrate maturity and a genuine love of music.
131. Younger pupils know an appropriate range of songs from memory and sing sweetly with great enthusiasm. They play simple rhythms accurately on a variety of percussion instruments. In a Year 2 lesson, most pupils recognised the high and low sounds of different chime bars. Music was linked very effectively to the history topic about the Great Plague and pupils fitted a simple accompaniment well as they sang '*Ring o' Roses*'. Some have already developed a sense of performance and all treated instruments with care and respect.
132. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils sing with good tonal quality and are developing controlled breathing techniques. Pupils in the school choir sing very musically in two-part harmony, with a mature sense of expression. Not only do they attempt ambitious projects such as '*The Sporting Chance*' but they also develop the ability to convey feeling effectively. During an assembly in preparation for their Easter service, they sang '*The Last Supper*'. Diction was good, commitment was high and there was a feeling of calm within the hall as others listened. Sadly, pupils are not always given sufficient opportunity to listen to a range of music and they do not know how to listen in a structured, purposeful way. In addition, although younger pupils always display very positive attitudes towards music, some older pupils, particularly boys, do not retain their earlier enthusiasm until the end of Key Stage 2. The school is aware of this loss of interest and is looking at a range of strategies to rectify the problem.
133. The school uses an appropriate scheme of work that ensures good balanced coverage across the whole music curriculum. The scheme provides appropriate support for non-specialists, and the vast majority of class teachers take their own lessons. They handle their subject insecurity well and provide pupils with a worthwhile learning experience. Teaching is always satisfactory and in a quarter of lessons it is good. The school is fortunate to have several members of staff with musical skills and a separate music room that is particularly useful for creative music.
134. Progress in creative development is good. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils worked together with good levels of co-operation to create an effective composition around the chant '*The Carnival of Life*'. In a good Year 5 lesson, pupils linked their compositions well to science work on the planets. They chose appropriate instruments and devised very effective and realistic interpretations to depict the different

characteristics of each planet. However, in some lessons, older pupils do not always take enough care when using instruments and have not established good routines for playing instruments correctly.

135. The subject co-ordinators work well together and provide a good level of informal support. Their enthusiasm for the subject comes across very strongly in the satisfactory leadership they provide. However, no recent training has taken place because the school has had to concentrate on the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, and co-ordinators do not have the opportunity to work alongside class teachers or monitor the quality of teaching. Consequently, they do not have a clear overview of how well music is taught or the standards achieved. Assessment of pupils' levels of achievement has only recently been introduced but this is a positive step forward.
136. Music is well resourced with an interesting range of familiar and more unusual multi-cultural instruments. All pupils have the opportunity to participate in concerts, class assemblies and other performances at different times of the year. Talented pupils are encouraged to join the Chester Primary Schools' Choir and other outside music groups, in addition to participating in high profile performances. Music is an important part of school life for a large number of pupils. Singing in assemblies was observed to be both joyous and uplifting.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- ☐ Standards in PE are satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 1 and good at the end of Key Stage 2.
- ☐ A wide range of high quality resources are pressed into very good use to give pupils every chance to build skills and knowledge across the whole PE curriculum.
- ☐ The overall quality of teaching is good, though better at Key Stage 2 than Key Stage 1 because expectations are higher and activities are physically and mentally demanding; this results in pupils' achieving well.
- ☐ Physical education is well managed by two enthusiastic co-ordinators. However, there has been no opportunity to monitor teaching, learning and standards in other classes. For this reason, shortcomings in teaching and some relative weaknesses in planning and assessment have not been pinpointed quickly enough.

137. Over their time in school, pupils develop not just good skills and knowledge in physical education (PE) but also confidence and poise. The youngest children show promising signs of these qualities in their physical development activities and infant pupils build expertise steadily in games, gymnastics and dance. As the curriculum broadens in junior classes, pupils attain good standards in all the elements of PE because teachers expect good progress and pupils respond enthusiastically. Standards in PE are satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 1 and good at the end of Key Stage 2.
138. The school has good accommodation for PE, including a broad expanse of playing field, good quality adventure play area and sizeable playgrounds. Indoors, there is a good sized hall and the dining hall is large enough to take infant classes for PE. There are no shortages of good quality apparatus and equipment. All these resources are pressed into very good use to give pupils every chance to build skills and knowledge across the whole PE curriculum. Where the school does not have the facilities, it endeavours successfully to give the necessary experience. So, for example, regular swimming tuition takes place at the nearby secondary school and outdoor and adventurous activities are undertaken during the residential visit that Year 6 makes to Fairbourne. Inspectors observed no difference in the standards achieved by the age of eleven in all six elements of PE.
139. Standards are good by the age of eleven because teachers emphasise the need to self-evaluate performance as well as polish it. In many lessons there are timely pauses for pupils to watch others demonstrate their skills and then to talk about the strengths and shortcomings seen in the movements. When doing these things, older pupils show good insights and they communicate their ideas clearly, expressively and with confidence. An observed Year 6 movement lesson was a very good example of such capability. In this session, pupils worked singly during the introduction and then progressively in pairs, trios and small groups to build very effective sequences to represent co-ordinated mechanical power. There was ample time to reflect individually and collectively on

performance and to influence its development. The lesson culminated with a combined sequence that swept around the hall as the machine was fired, accelerated to full power and ticked over with monotonous rhythm. This final mechanical *tour de force* made compelling viewing.

140. Teachers use PE lessons effectively for the personal development of pupils. Levels of independence and responsibility in learning are promoted well and pupils' energies and enthusiasms are channelled into productive and purposeful activity. Pupils are keen to take part and are competitive, but play well as part of a team. Behaviour is generally good, though in some lessons, especially in infant classes, some pupils are fidgety and talkative.
141. The overall quality of teaching is good, but is different in the two key stages. It is best in junior classes, and is judged to be very good here. It is satisfactory in infant classes, but some poor teaching was observed in this key stage. This was due to low expectations of behaviour and response as well as some shortcomings in procedures to ensure the safety of all pupils. This led to insufficient progress in learning. In other lessons, particularly in the juniors, teaching has many strengths. Subject knowledge, the teaching of basic skills, management of pupils and teaching methods all stand out as very well perfected. In the strongest lessons, expectations were high and activities were physically and mentally demanding.
142. Physical education is well managed by two enthusiastic co-ordinators. However, there has been no opportunity to monitor teaching, learning and standards in other classes. For this reason, the shortcomings in teaching outlined above and some relative weaknesses in planning and assessment have not been pinpointed quickly enough. The two co-ordinators are committed to improvement and are ready for the broadening of their role to make regular, systematic and rigorous checks on the outcomes of PE. They are also prepared for the task of developing a consistent programme for the assessment of skills, knowledge and understanding.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- ☐ Standards in RE are above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and well above average at the end of Key Stage 2.
- ☐ Teaching is good overall with some outstanding features that were seen to enthuse and motivate pupils to make huge leaps forward in their knowledge and understanding about major world religions, such as Buddhism. The school's very active links with a school in Soweto provides insights into the Christian world wide family.
- ☐ As a result of the very rich experiences offered and the quality of teaching received, pupils appreciate and respect the beliefs and values of different religious communities. They are able to share in celebrations and understand that although they are all different they are still very special.
- ☐ Religious education is a subject strength of the school and contributes very positively to pupils' excellent spiritual growth.
- ☐ The subject is soundly managed. The Key Stage 1 co-ordinator has only recently been appointed and has not yet had time to develop her role. The school is clear about the next steps for improvement.

143. Religious education is a strength of the school. The school's Church of England tradition is supported well in religious education. The very effective teaching in many classes relates learning well to pupils' day-to-day lives and is reflected very well in many areas of the curriculum, as well as underpinning the excellent ethos of the school and pupils' excellent spiritual growth. Standards at the end of Year 2 are above average. At the end of Year 6, standards are well above those expected for eleven-year-olds. These standards reflect the high profile given to religious education in school.
144. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is generally good in Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2. On occasion, outstanding teaching is reflected in the very high quality of learning taking place in Key Stage 2. Pupils in Year 1 build on their knowledge and understanding of belonging to a family, being special and their awareness of stories from the Bible. The very good links established with a school in Soweto extend pupils' understanding of the world-wide family and this is built upon very successfully throughout the school. Teacher visits, exchanging letters and charitable

fundraising, for example, to support the orphanage in Soweto, as well as helping to save endangered animals, strengthen this link very well. Pupils are able to express their feelings and respond in caring and purposeful ways to the values and beliefs of others. By the age of seven, pupils have a good knowledge of the Bible, know about the major festivals and celebrations in the Christian and other major world faiths and have a good understanding of the rites and rituals of the church. There is a good focus on other cultures as pupils compare the Christian versions of The Creation story with that of other faiths, for example. They have a good awareness of symbolism and artefacts from the Christian and Jewish faiths. Stories such as *'Pandora's Box'* and *'The Rainbow Fish'*, deepen pupils' understanding of moral issues of right and wrong, honesty and sharing.

145. In Key Stage 2, teachers build very successfully on pupils' earlier experiences. Pupils in Year 3 explore feelings through their knowledge of stories from the Bible, such as *'The Paralyse Man'*. They express their views clearly on friendship and respond thoughtfully to the question, *'What do you think an angel would look like?'* Pupils build on their good knowledge of the Bible and the way in which it is structured. Very good links are made to other subjects. For example, in Year 4, pupils learn about places of worship, the importance of the cross in Baptisms and they visit the local church, making observational drawings of artefacts. In a very good lesson on Judaism, pupils shared in a Passover celebration. The very good teaching enabled pupils to have first-hand experience of rituals such as washing of hands. There was a special atmosphere and sense of occasion as they shared the different foods. Pupils showed a mature understanding of the persecution of the Jews, making links to Hitler and World War II. All pupils participated fully and made very good gains in learning.
146. Pupils in Year 5 build on their knowledge when exploring the Buddhist faith. An outstanding lesson involved pupils in a Buddhist meditation. The excellent environment that had been created heightened pupils' spiritual awareness, as they sat in a circle before the shrine. Pupils were held in awe and wonder as the teacher shared beautiful artefacts such as the incense pot, a lotus flower, candles and Indian bells. Skilful questioning deepened pupils' thinking and helped them to understand about the importance of learning about different faiths. Pupils participated well, striking bells and offering the water. There was absolute silence as pupils sat in the meditation position. One boy commented afterwards, *'I feel new!'* Pupils were able to compare the Buddhists' simple lifestyle to that of Jesus. They made prayer flags and compared the way Catholics light candles and offer prayers to the Buddhist belief of prayers being carried on the wind. This outstanding lesson was teaching and learning at its very best. In Year 6, pupils extend their knowledge and understanding of Christianity. They explore and analyse The Lord's Prayer and write their own versions in the same style. An able pupil wrote, *'Holy is your name... Please help us to overcome the hardships of life,.....help the poor,....please forgive us if we ever do you wrong.'* There are very good opportunities for personal reflection and the development of personal beliefs and values. For instance, pupils listen to the song, *'The Streets of London'*, and explore issues of poverty and hardship, responding in their own way to the words of the song. The very good links to literacy extend these skills well as pupils' role play The Good Samaritan and conduct interviews with the man whose life was saved.
147. The curriculum for religious education fulfils the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils are encouraged to question, compare and contrast worship, prayer and celebration in Christianity and other world religions. As a result of the very rich experiences offered and the quality of teaching received, pupils appreciate and respect the beliefs and values of other religious communities. They are able to share in celebrations and understand that although they are different they are still very special.
148. Religious education is a strength in school because it permeates the curriculum and is reflected in the day-to-day lives of pupils and teachers. The sense of awe, reflection and celebration is very apparent. There are very good links between religious education and assemblies, each serving to strengthen the other.
149. The subject is soundly managed. The Key Stage 1 co-ordinator has only recently been appointed and has not yet had time to develop her role. The commitment of all teachers to the subject is one of its many strengths.

150. With its very good focus on different religions and cultures and the regular opportunity to discuss a range of spiritual and factual issues, the subject makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development.