

INSPECTION REPORT

LOCKING STUMPS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Glover Road, Birchwood, Warrington

LEA area: Warrington

Unique reference number: 111204

Headteacher: Mr Roger Parker

Reporting inspector: Ian Nelson
2220

Dates of inspection: April 29th to May 2nd 2002

Inspection number: 242902

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

© Crown copyright 2002

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Glover Road
Birchwood
Warrington
Cheshire

Postcode: WA3 7PH

Telephone number: 01925 819076

Fax number: 01925 838863

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Janice Bloomfield

Date of previous inspection: October 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2220	Ian Nelson	Registered inspector	History Geography	How high are standards? The school's results and achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9928	Alan Dobson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
1189	Sharon Brown	Team inspector	Equality of opportunity Special educational needs English as an additional language English Art	
12172	Wendy Knight	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology	
19765	Pauleen Shannon	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Music Religious education	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
10204	David Vincent	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

The Schools Inspection Unit
University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham B15 2TT

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

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	18
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	19
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	22
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	23
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	27

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Number on roll	259 (average)
Pupils entitled to free school meals	15% (broadly average)
Pupils with English as an additional language	0.4% (low)
Pupils on the register of special educational needs	19.7% (below average)

Locking Stumps is a primary school for pupils aged from four to eleven years old. It serves an area of local authority and private housing on the edge of Warrington. The majority of the pupils come from the local authority housing. The local community have the use of the buildings outside school hours. There is a private nursery on site and a room in the school is let to the playgroup. There are few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. Few pupils leave or join the school during the school year. The head and deputy headteachers are both fairly new to their posts. Over the last two years five teachers joined the school and four left. Attainment on entry is around average overall.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Locking Stumps is a good school, well placed to improve further. Standards are consistently high in the annual national tests for seven and eleven-year-olds because teaching is good overall. The head has a very clear vision for the future of the school. He is developing effective management systems to identify where improvements are needed and to make sure they happen. However, pupils do not progress as fast as they could in all areas of the curriculum because of the way subjects are planned and timetabled. Overall the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The school achieves consistently high standards in English and mathematics
- The head and senior managers have a very clear vision for the future of the school
- Teaching is good overall
- Good provision for the moral and social development of pupils ensures that they behave well, have very good relationships and positive attitudes to work
- The school integrates pupils with disabilities into the everyday life of the school very well
- Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good

What could be improved

- The way subjects are planned and timetabled
- Standards in geography and information and communication technology (ICT) by the time pupils are eleven
- The school does not make the most efficient use of the special needs coordinator (SENCO)

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in October 1997. Since then improvement has been good overall. The school has tackled the key issues from the previous inspection, although it has not yet fully addressed the issue of withdrawing pupils from class for extra support in small groups. The school has also improved standards in the national tests, provided a new computer suite and raised the quality of teaching. Standards of reading at seven are much improved. Leadership and management are better than at the time of the last inspection and the provision for children in the Foundation Stage has improved.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	C	B	B	B
Mathematics	C	B	A	A
Science	B	C	A	A

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

The table shows that in the 2001 national tests for eleven-year-olds the pupils attained standards that were above average in English and well above average in mathematics and science compared to all schools and compared to similar schools. Standards have improved over recent years and are rising as fast as standards nationally. Standards in the tests for seven-year-olds were well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics compared to all schools and to similar schools. They have improved over recent years. At both seven and eleven an above average number of pupils attain the higher levels in the national tests. Pupils make good progress through the school, although this is more consistent in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 than in the junior years. As the current Year 6 pupils, who will take the tests soon after the inspection, include more pupils with special educational needs than in previous years, the results are unlikely to be as good as last year's. This is why the school's targets for the tests are slightly lower than last year. Overall the standards of the eleven-year-olds are judged to be above average in English and mathematics but only around average in science. In ICT and geography standards are below what is expected of eleven-year-olds. In all other subjects standards are broadly average. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Most pupils achieve well, with the infants and those at the top end of the school achieving more consistently than those in Years 3 and 4.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils have positive attitudes to school. They enjoy their lessons and work hard at the tasks the teachers set them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. They are polite and well mannered.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils get along very well with each other and with the adults in the school. They are particularly caring for those with disabilities and ensure that they are included in all their activities.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Attendance has been unsatisfactory but the trend this year is improving because of the monitoring systems the school has introduced.

Although pupils have positive attitudes and behave well in lessons there are occasions when some are less settled. This is generally in lessons where the quality of teaching is not as good as pupils are used to.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Overall teaching and learning are good. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 are consistently good and some lessons are very good. Teaching and learning in the junior classes are good overall, but they range from excellent to less than satisfactory. The best teaching among the junior classes is with the older pupils. Teachers plan their lessons well and tell pupils what they are about to learn at the start of each lesson. They use a good range of teaching methods in most lessons, particularly with the infant and reception age pupils. Teachers clearly understand the need to provide different activities for the two age groups when reception and Year 1 are taught together and they make good use of the learning support assistants. As teachers interest the pupils and set a good pace in most lessons behaviour is good, pupils are interested and they learn effectively. In the weakest lessons however teachers accept behaviour of a lower standard and learning slows as a result. Teachers integrate pupils with disabilities into their lessons very effectively and with very good support from learning assistants strike a proper balance between supporting them and allowing some independence. English and mathematics are taught well with a good emphasis on basic literacy and numeracy skills. This is why pupils do well in the national tests.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. The school plans to cover all the subjects it should. However, the way the classes and the lessons are organised makes it hard to ensure that pupils learn as much as they might in all those subjects. Geography does not meet statutory requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Pupils are well supported within their lessons. However, taking them out of lessons for such long sessions is not as effective.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall. Provision for the moral and social development of pupils is good. They learn what is right and wrong and have good opportunities for working together and caring for others. Provision for their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good overall. The school looks after the pupils well. It has very good systems for monitoring attendance levels. Pupils feel that their teachers care well for them. The school has improved procedures for child protection which was a key issue in the last inspection.

Although the school plans for all the subjects it should it does not provide well enough for geography and pupils do not learn enough. It has few formal systems for assessing pupils' progress in subjects other than English, mathematics and science. There are not as many after school clubs and activities as most other schools of this size provide. The school has satisfactory links with parents. It provides high quality information to parents on what their children are learning in school and how well they are doing but it is less successful at helping all parents appreciate its vision for the future of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The head has a very clear vision for the future of the school which he has shared with staff. He is developing a good range of management systems to turn that vision into a reality.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors fulfil their responsibilities satisfactorily and are largely aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However they rely too heavily on the head for information on how well the school is doing.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The head has taken stock of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has set clear targets for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The head and the governors allocate the resources available to the school effectively. They make sure that grants for specific purposes are properly used.

The school has a satisfactory number of suitably qualified staff. It has good systems for supporting new teachers. The open plan accommodation makes life difficult as people have to walk through lessons to move around the school. The lack of walls means that quiet lessons are often disturbed by those which are inevitably noisier, like music. Resources for all subjects are satisfactory except for art where they are good. The head and governors have a satisfactory understanding of the need to make the best use of the resources they have.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children work hard and achieve their best • They are making good progress in school • Their children like school • Teaching is good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of after school clubs • How closely the school works with parents • The information on how well their children are doing • The leadership and management of the school

The inspectors agree with what pleases the parents most. Children do work hard because they like school. They make good progress because they are well taught. They also agree that the school provides fewer clubs after school than most schools of this size. They disagree however with the parents on the other areas of concern. The inspectors think the school does try to work closely with parents. It provides good information on how well children are doing in school and leadership and management are good overall.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 Children enter the school with a very wide range of ability. The tests that teachers give them when they start school show that overall they are broadly average but the latest tests showed a significant minority of children were below average in reading and writing skills. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage so that by the time they leave reception and start Year 1 attainment is a good solid average overall. Children are well on target to achieve the standards expected of them in language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and physical development. Because of the good progress they make they are above average in their speaking and listening skills, in their creative development and in their personal and social development.

2 In the 2001 tests for seven-year-olds pupils attained well above average standards in reading and writing and above average standards in mathematics. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection when attainment was judged to be average overall but with many pupils below average in their reading. When the results are compared with those of schools with similar pupils they are also well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics, indicating good levels of achievement from pupils at this school. This good achievement also shows in the proportions gaining the higher than expected level 3 in the national tests. Compared with all schools the numbers gaining the higher level in reading, and science were well above average. An above average number gained the higher level in writing and an average number did so in mathematics. Compared with similar schools the numbers gaining the higher level were well above average in reading and science and above average in writing and mathematics. Although the 2001 results showed a very slight dip compared with the results for the previous year the trend is one of continuous improvement over recent years.

3 In the 2001 national tests for eleven-year-olds standards were above average in English and well above average in mathematics and science. This shows good improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be average overall. Although the previous inspection reported standards of the eleven-year-olds to be average the test results at the end of that year showed standards to be below average in English and well below in mathematics and science. When compared with similar schools standards in 2001 were also above average in English and well above average in mathematics and science showing good levels of achievement. The proportion gaining the higher level 5 in the tests was well above average in all three subjects when compared with all schools. When compared with similar schools this proportion was only average. Although those results appear to represent a dip on the previous year the current standards indicate very good improvement in the test results since the previous inspection and standards are rising in line with standards nationally. The current Year 6 classes include a large proportion of pupils with special educational needs and the findings of the inspection indicate that test results in 2002 are unlikely to be as high as last year but are likely to be above average in English and mathematics and average in science.

4 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their work. The individual education plans that contain their work programmes are satisfactory. Teachers match work carefully to individual needs through their planning. Most pupils make good progress towards the targets set within these individual education plans. Given that their

attainment is well below the national average in many cases, the achievement of these pupils is good.

5 Standards in English are above average at seven and eleven. They are particularly good in reading at seven and this is a very good improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are above average throughout the school. Pupils speak confidently, fluently and articulately about things that interest them and they have a good vocabulary. This was demonstrated in the various discussions between pupils and inspectors as well as in the course of question and answer and discussion sessions within their lessons. Pupils' reading is above average. They enjoy reading and discuss the books they like with enthusiasm. They have a good grasp of basic reading skills so that they can tackle unknown words with confidence. Standards of writing are above average at seven and eleven. Pupils have the chance to produce a wide range of writing including stories, poems, letters and accounts of events. They write interestingly with increasingly accurate use of punctuation like speech marks. Although handwriting and presentation are good overall some of the work in the Year 3 and 4 classes is less tidy and well laid than in other year groups. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy has helped to raise standards.

6 Standards in mathematics are above average at seven and eleven. The good emphasis on basic skills and the rapid recall of number facts ensures that pupils learn these well. This helps them to make good progress as they move through the school and use this knowledge in their calculations. It also helps them when they collect numerical information to present in graphs and charts. Pupils learn the names and properties of shapes well and become increasingly proficient in measuring accurately. They make good progress in their learning as they move through the school, building effectively upon earlier learning. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has helped to raise standards and speed the progress of pupils' learning.

7 Standards in science currently are average at both seven and eleven. This is lower than the standards reached in last year's national tests, partly because of the proportion of pupils with special learning needs at Year 6. Another reason however is because pupils at both seven and eleven are acquiring scientific knowledge at an appropriate level but they are less secure in scientific investigations. This is partly caused by mixed age classes but is also affected by the quality of teaching of different classes and how much teachers expect their pupils to be able to cope with.

8 Standards in ICT are below average at seven and eleven. Standards in geography are below average by the time pupils are eleven. The regular use of the computer suite is already helping to raise standards in ICT but progress would be faster still if teachers systematically included the use of these skills when teaching other subjects. In geography the emphasis in lessons with the juniors is on learning facts rather than developing geographical skills in a structured way. Standards in all other subjects are average by eleven. In art there is some good work in some aspects but the school does not do enough three-dimensional work like clay modelling.

9 Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress throughout the school. Progress is particularly good at the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 and for the eleven-year-olds. It is rather more satisfactory than good for pupils at Years 3 and 4. The same pattern applies to how well pupils achieve. Achievement is good overall although it tails off at Years 3 and 4 and accelerates again as pupils enter Year 6. The child with English as an additional language makes good progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10 The pupils have a positive attitude to school and their behaviour is good. Relationships within the school are very good. These judgements represent an improvement since the previous inspection.

11 The vast majority of pupils are enthusiastic about going to school. They think that Locking Stumps is a good school and value the friendships formed there. Once in lessons, most pupils settle down quickly and are keen to participate. They enjoy learning about most subjects although geography has yet to spark many pupils' interest. When given a task to do, most pupils work hard and are proud to talk about what they have learnt. Speaking skills throughout the school are very good. In a few classes, skilful teaching is required to motivate small groups of pupils who show a lack of interest in learning.

12 Behaviour overall in the school is good. Pupils have been involved in the formulation of the rules and think they are applied fairly. Most lessons are orderly and free from any disruption. A few classes suffer at times from pupils whose behaviour is inappropriate. Mostly, but not always, the teachers use methods that are effective in curbing any problems. In certain classes, the open plan arrangement does not help discipline by allowing pupils' attention to be distracted far too easily. Movement around the school is orderly. Behaviour while dining is good, although the poor acoustics of the hall make conversation at times difficult. This reduces the social value of lunchtime. Table manners are generally good. Behaviour is very good in assemblies where pupils are attentive, sing well and show respect during prayers. Playgrounds have a friendly atmosphere and no signs of oppressive behaviour or gangs were observed during the inspection. Pupils generally report that bullying is not a problem and that staff sort out any problems speedily. There have been no exclusions since the present headteacher arrived.

13 Relationships in the school are very good. Pupils get on well with each other and the many adults in the school. They are courteous and polite to visitors. It is common for pupils to hold doors open and to say 'please' and 'thank you'. In lessons pupils collaborate very well and are happy to listen to each other's views and ideas. The way pupils with physical disabilities are involved in daily school life is impressive, for instance a pupil in a wheelchair was very well supported by other pupils in a Year 6 English lesson when role playing an extract from *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.

14 Pupils' personal qualities develop well during their time at school. They respect their environment, for example, by tidying up classrooms after lessons and keeping the buildings and grounds free from litter. Pupils enjoy being involved in the running of the school, for instance, organising the library and operating equipment during assemblies. However the opportunities for taking extra responsibilities are limited mainly to a small number of pupils in Years 5 and 6. Pupils take homework seriously and show initiative in raising money for various charities. The lack of a range of school clubs is inhibiting opportunities for social development outside the classroom.

15 By Year 6, most pupils are confident, sensible and very articulate. They are developing into individuals with their own views and clear standards on right and wrong. They are interesting to talk to. Their positive attitudes to learning and their good behaviour are having a significant impact on the success of the school.

16 Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to learning and behave well, the same as their peers. The majority listen well in lessons. They are keen to answer questions, which teachers set to meet their needs. They enjoy the activities set and

participate fully in lessons. They want to succeed, take pride in their activities and have good self-esteem.

17 Attendance at the school is below that recorded at the previous inspection. The most recently published rate (2000/01) is slightly below the national average for primary schools. Attendance so far in the current year has improved and is now broadly in line with the national average. Unauthorised attendance although higher than normally found in primary schools is not a cause for concern. It reflects the school's rigorous policy of only authorising specific absences, particularly regarding holidays. Punctuality is good allowing registration to take place promptly and lessons to start on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

18 Teaching overall is good. Of the lessons observed during the inspection 50 per cent were good, 23 per cent very good to excellent, 24 per cent satisfactory and 4 per cent (two lessons) less than satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection when 18 per cent were judged less than satisfactory and teaching overall was judged satisfactory.

19 Teaching at the Foundation Stage is consistently good. Planning is based firmly upon the guidance for the Foundation Stage and teachers show a good understanding of what young children need to help them to achieve the early learning goals. Children are taught in the reception class and some are in a mixed Year 1 and reception class. One of the particular strengths of teaching here is the way activities are planned to ensure both age groups get what they need. This results in the two age groups often having separate tasks associated with the same topic. Very good support from the classroom assistant, who is very well briefed by the teacher, helps both age groups to achieve well. Because the reception age children are taught so well they all make good progress, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language. They enter school with only just average attainment and enter Year 1 with a solid foundation to build upon.

20 The teaching of the infant pupils is consistently good with nearly a third of lessons seen judged to be very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed in infant classes during the inspection. Teaching of the junior classes is good overall but is less consistent than in the rest of the school. In the junior classes teaching ranges from excellent to poor. Both the less than satisfactory lessons were in junior classes. In the infant lessons observed 95 per cent of the teaching was good or very good and 5 per cent satisfactory. In the junior classes 58 per cent of lessons were good or better with one judged excellent, while 35 per cent were satisfactory. The strongest teaching in the junior classes was with the oldest pupils while the satisfactory teaching was at lower junior level. Where teaching was less than satisfactory this was because the teachers did not manage their pupils well enough. Consequently the lessons were unsettled and pupils did not learn as much as they should have done. In both cases teachers did not have high enough expectations of pupils' behaviour. This was a feature of other lessons with lower juniors to a lesser degree but nonetheless pupils could have achieved more with firmer management by their teachers.

21 Where teaching is strong planning is good and says precisely what pupils will learn. Having told pupils what they are to learn the teachers then provide activities to ensure that effective learning takes place. This is particularly evident in literacy and numeracy lessons and the quality of teaching here has contributed significantly to the high achievement in the annual national tests at seven and eleven. Another contributory factor to good English results is the way the best lessons in other subjects provide opportunities to practice literacy skills. For example, in a Year 2 history lesson pupils were encouraged to write eyewitness accounts of the Great Fire of London based on examples the teacher read to them. In a Year

5 and 6 religious education lesson pupils were expected to cope with various versions of the Bible as they studied the story of the Garden of Eden. They showed good reading skills as they made sense of quite demanding texts. This lesson was also an example of very good teaching giving pupils the opportunity to work together on a shared task. This helped to develop their social skills as the individuals contributed to the group task. It also illustrated the way the school fully integrates into lessons the pupils with disabilities and ensures that they are included in all activities.

22 In the best lessons teachers tell pupils what is good about their work and how to make it better. For example, in a physical education lesson on football skills the teacher provided enough footballs for each pupil to have one each and practise their ball control. As a result of the feedback from the teacher during this session the pupils improved their skills and made good progress in learning how to control a ball better. However feedback in the form of marking in exercise books is not always of such high quality. At its best clearly tells pupils what is good about their work and how to make it better, as in the history book where the teacher complimented the pupil on using evidence and suggested that next time he could draw timelines to scale. In other books however pupils are allowed to continue to misspell simple words like 'they' several times with no attempt to correct it by the teacher. The best teaching involves setting pupils clear learning targets in their groups and these are displayed on their tables or in their books. This encourages hard work and pupils know precisely what is expected of them and strive to achieve it.

23 Teachers work well with classroom support assistants to ensure that all pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, get the support they need to achieve well. This good team work is well managed so that support staff do not spend time listening to teachers at the beginnings of lessons but are very well briefed so that they can contribute effectively to lessons at the point where the pupils start their group or individual activities. Those assigned to pupils with disabilities work sensitively with their charges while also allowing a degree of independence and encouraging them to join in group work with other pupils.

24 Teaching quality for pupils with special educational needs is good within classes and pupils make good progress. Teachers know their pupils well and plan activities that are matched to their needs, particularly in literacy and numeracy. This, together with well-targeted support enables pupils to make good gains in their learning towards their individual targets. Classroom learning support assistants and supporting adults play an important role in ensuring that pupils with special educational needs benefit from an appropriate range of activities. This is particularly so for pupils with a statement of special educational needs. Sometimes pupils are withdrawn individually or in groups by the special educational needs co-ordinator. Although this is satisfactory, it does not make the most efficient or effective use of the co-ordinator's time. The needs of pupils in Year 6 are met well within the classroom.

25 Homework is set regularly and includes reading, learning spellings and tables and researching at home, for example for history topics. However parents feel that some pupils get too much homework and some do not get enough. It would be useful for the school to monitor and review how teachers use homework and how it is perceived by parents in order to get the balance right. A particular issue with some parents is that pupils of the same age in different classes appear to get different homework workloads and the school should aim for greater consistency.

26 Given the high quality of some of the teaching in school, particularly in the infant classes and with some of the older juniors, the school could raise the quality of the satisfactory teaching elsewhere with some sensitive sharing of expertise.

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

27 The school teaches all the subjects required by the National Curriculum and, with the exception of geography, meets the related statutory requirements. The requirements for religious education are also met. The school makes good provision for children in the Foundation Stage. The school places considerable emphasis upon English and mathematics and provision for these subjects is good. There is, however, a need to review the structure of the school day. Some English and mathematics lessons are too long whilst in geography the planned programme is not being effectively delivered. There is a need to reassess the organisation of the mixed year classes so that the continuity of the programme delivered to each year group is more assured. Despite these shortcomings, the overall curriculum provides a broadly satisfactory range of opportunities for learning as the school seeks to provide not only the essential skills for learning but also a range of enriching experiences. The National Literacy Strategy has been introduced very effectively and there is good use of English skills in other subjects. The National Numeracy Strategy is being implemented with consistency and care and this is having a good effect upon the provision for mathematics. ICT is in the process of significant development but is not yet used sufficiently to support learning in some other subjects.

28 The school is committed to providing an education which meets the particular needs of each of its pupils and lessons in literacy and numeracy, in particular, routinely contain separate activities designed specifically for the higher and lower achievers. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. There are sound guidelines for responding to the needs of such pupils. These have yet to be updated to take account of the changes in requirements from next term. Pupils are given the same learning opportunities as others. In literacy and numeracy lessons, pupils with special educational needs are given work at the right level, reflecting targets contained in individual education plans. The school ensures that pupils with special needs are fully integrated within the classroom and this provision is good. Where pupils are withdrawn from lessons for extra help, provision is satisfactory. Pupils with the potential for higher achievement are encouraged and recent analysis of test results has led to additional emphasis on the work of average and lower achievers.

29 The governing body has approved an appropriate policy for the teaching of sex education and matters relating to health education are given considerable emphasis. The school's programme for health education includes the required emphasis upon the importance of diet and harmful substances. Overall, the provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good.

30 The school has broadly defined what should be taught to each class. In a number of subjects the programme is planned within a two-year cycle in order to meet the needs of pupils in classes with mixed year groups. This documentation provides a sound basis for ensuring that a balanced curriculum is delivered but in geography greater precision is required in order to ensure that skills and knowledge are built upon systematically.

31 The number of extra-curricular clubs is currently very limited, but the school has plans to address this issue and further activities are planned.

32 Satisfactory links with the community are evident. The school regularly participates in events organised locally and some industrial contacts, such as those at the Risley Science Park, are used productively to generate educational opportunities for pupils.

33 Links with other educational institutions are good. Teachers meet regularly with their colleagues in other schools in order to pool ideas and to ensure that the move between the different stages of education is as smooth as possible. The school participates in a number of initiatives involving other schools. These are exemplified by the curriculum consultations with the nursery and the drama and mathematics workshops at the high school.

34 The previous report identified the need to improve the provision for ICT and to increase the time allocated to design and technology and physical education. These matters have been satisfactorily addressed although the initiatives for ICT have not yet had time to impact fully. There was criticism of the withdrawal of some pupils from lessons in order to receive extra tuition. Although there are clear benefits from such support it can mean that key parts of a lesson are missed and this problem has not been entirely resolved. The inspection also drew attention to the limited number of after-school clubs. Compared to many similar schools this remains the case. Overall the school is responding satisfactorily to the shortcomings identified in the last report.

35 Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. This reflects the judgment made at the time of the last inspection. Moral and social provision are good. Spiritual and cultural development are satisfactory. This has had a positive impact on pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development, which are good.

36 Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Although it is not yet systematically planned within the curriculum, examples of special moments occur and are valued. For example, there is the wonder of children in the Foundation Stage when looking at insects, the simple pleasure of bursting balloons in a physical education session and the excitement in a Year 1 science lesson when looking at plants or the creative response of older pupils when composing their own music. Assemblies contribute well to pupils' spiritual development. Music, hymns and prayers create an atmosphere for quiet reflection. The weekly themes are further developed in class assemblies where time for reflection is usually provided. The school works closely with parents whose children are withdrawn from collective worship to ensure that there is appropriate provision.

37 Provision for pupils' moral development is good. The majority of parents feel that the school helps their child to become mature and responsible. 'Golden' school and playground rules are displayed prominently and referred to by staff. Each class agrees its own set of rules. The school's approach values and includes every child. The recently introduced scheme for personal development and citizenship includes discussions around social and moral themes. Pupils of all ages are enthusiastic about the organisation of the groups, which includes children from reception to Year 6. This is already having a positive impact on behaviour as older pupils take responsibility for younger children in their group during informal sessions. While there is no school council, one is planned and pupils' views have been sought regarding behaviour and bullying through questionnaires and discussion.

38 Provision for pupils' social development within school is good. The personal development of pupils is given a high priority and a programme that deals with a range of important and sensitive issues is successfully delivered. The development of good relationships and consideration for others is deeply embedded in the life and work of the school. Considerable efforts are made to develop pupils' self-esteem, to enrich their experiences and to develop them as capable, responsible people. A range of opportunities is provided for pupils to develop their personal initiative, such as fundraising and taking turns as class helpers. The school also provides opportunities for older pupils to further develop their independence away from home. These include an annual residential experience for older pupils, and a 'sleep over' for pupils of all ages.

39 Provision for cultural development is satisfactory overall, with some strengths and areas to further develop. Pupils learn about British, European and non-European cultures through the planned curriculum. The range of visits to support the curriculum over the last two years has been good. It has included, trips to Whitworth Gallery, the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, the Planetarium, Styal Mill, Wigan Pier and Llandudno. The school has also organised some performances in school for all pupils, including a drama group and musicians. Pupils have football and rugby coaching from Manchester United and Warrington Wolves. The school has joined in national initiatives including the launch of science year and national poetry day. Pupils have some opportunities to act, sing and play instruments in school productions, although there is no school choir. Music tuition is provided for those who wish to take it up. The school plans to develop an arts week, to include expressive and performing arts.

40 Pupils' awareness, respect and appreciation of the range of cultures in Britain is mainly through religious education and music. While book provision is adequate, displays and images around the school and role-play equipment in the Foundation Stage are limited.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41 The school takes care to look after its pupils well. Where comparisons are possible, the good standards seen at the last inspection have been maintained.

42 The school is a friendly and caring community where pupils are well looked after and where the staff know the pupils well. Pupils are always treated with respect and their concerns are listened to sympathetically by the staff. Supervision is good at all times. The school is a safe and secure environment.

43 Procedures for child protection are good and have been improved since the last inspection. There is a clear policy and the person responsible has been appropriately trained. Staff are regularly reminded of the school's procedures and are familiar with the latest guidance on the subject. Health and safety is considered important. The headteacher and maintenance officer regularly inspect the premises and points requiring attention are followed up speedily. All the necessary safety checks on equipment are carried out regularly. First aid cover is good and detailed records are kept of all accidents.

44 The headteacher has tackled poor attendance very robustly since he was appointed. Procedures have been clarified and tightened up. Registers are very well kept and monitored weekly. The school contacts all parents on the first day of any unexplained absence. Strongly worded letters to parents leave them in no doubt about the school's attitudes to holidays in term time, poor attendance and persistent lateness. These procedures are having a positive impact as attendance is improving.

45 Procedures for promoting good behaviour are effective overall. High standards are expected and usually achieved. Rules are clear and well understood by all pupils. The procedures, including issuing of credits for good behaviour and yellow and red cards leading to sanctions for inappropriate behaviour, are applied consistently and are considered fair by the pupils. Good use is made of classroom support assistants in general behaviour management, but some teachers without any support are not entirely successful in their class control. Procedures for dealing with bullying are satisfactory and bullying is not a significant problem in the school. A few pupils and some parents however, do not have total confidence in the school's procedures for coping with the problem. The school is aware of

this concern and a new anti-bullying policy is currently being produced in conjunction with parents. The issue of bullying is well covered in the school's teaching of personal, social and health education. Racism is not tolerated and any incident is investigated thoroughly.

46 Procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development although informal are satisfactory. Good use is made of the pupils' annual reports to inform parents of any personal qualities in need of improvement.

47 The proportion of pupils having special educational needs is well below the national average. All statutory requirements are being met. Needs are identified early and outside agencies are used effectively. Learning support staff are effective in their roles and assist these pupils in making good progress towards their learning targets.

48 The school has appropriate procedures for measuring pupils' progress in literacy, numeracy and science annually and is now piloting an additional system for assessing ICT skills. These procedures enable the staff to sort pupils into classes, sets and groups and provide suitable work. Limited amounts of additional information about pupils' achievements are gathered more frequently to enable teachers to plan and match work to more individual needs.

49 A recent innovation is a more rigorous tracking system - currently on a trial basis for Year 6 - which enables senior staff to set targets for national tests and to check regularly whether pupils are making the expected progress. Plans to extend this in order to identify precisely what pupils need to do next, to involve class teachers and parents in ensuring pupils make best progress and to enable staff to have realistic professional targets are currently being formulated. The headteacher has already gathered and organised the existing information and produced charts for showing it in a variety of ways. He is clear how it can be used to monitor progress and what further work is required to make the procedures effective.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

50 The partnership with parents is satisfactory although not as strong as at the time of the previous inspection.

51 Parents consider this to be a good school. They are generally supportive although a significant minority have concerns about specific aspects of the school. Parents are of the opinion that the school has improved steadily in recent years. These judgements are based on the good level of response to the questionnaire, a lively pre-inspection parents' meeting and conversations with parents during the inspection. Parents particularly like the high expectations the school has of their children, the good progress they make, the good teaching in the school and the fact that their children like school. The inspectors confirm these positive views. Almost half of the parents reporting think there is not an interesting range of activities outside lessons. The inspectors agree.

52 Information for parents is good. The governors' annual report is well written, interesting to read and contains far more information than is legally required. Newsletters are very well produced and appreciated by parents, but their impact has suffered from being published in fits and starts. Parents are well informed on what their children will be learning with information on future work every half term and this allows them to be involved effectively in their child's learning. Most parents have signed the home/school agreement. Opportunities for parents to meet their child's teacher are satisfactory with two formal meetings each year. The quality of pupils' reports is good. Progress is clearly stated and parents are told how their

child is doing against national standards in English and mathematics. This guarantees that parents have a clear picture of their child's attainment each year. Reports also contain a simple but clear overview of their child's attitudes and behaviour together with very good pointers, if necessary, on how to improve these personal qualities. Most of the reports that the inspectors looked at did not indicate what the child has to do to improve their academic performance, or suggestions on how a parent can help. A significant minority of parents feel that the school does not keep them well informed. The inspectors disagree and judge that overall, the quality and level of information are good.

53 Satisfactory links have been established with the parents of pupils with special educational needs. However, they are not sufficiently involved in the target-setting process. Local authority support services work closely with staff to ensure that needs are fully met. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are reviewed termly. At present, parents attend a post-review meeting when targets have already been set. This does not reflect the spirit of the new Code of Practice. Plans are in hand to include parents more in the target-setting process. Most parents attend the annual reviews to discuss their child's progress. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are given sound information but greater involvement of parents and pupils would develop the partnership further.

54 The school tries hard to involve parents in the life of the school, but a significant minority of parents does not appreciate this. On the positive side, parents have been consulted by questionnaires on the general performance of the school and on bullying, and this information is being considered in drawing up the school's development plans. Parents are invited to class assemblies and school productions. These events are popular with very good levels of attendance. A few parents help in the classroom and this help is appreciated, well used and makes a valuable contribution to the children's learning. There is an active parent teachers' association that is successful in both arranging social events and fund-raising. But over a third of the parents responding to the questionnaire do not think the school works closely with them. Areas of concern include a feeling that parents are not particularly welcome in the school, that bullying problems are not always effectively addressed, that some teachers are less approachable than others, that parental comments in pupils' homework diaries are not always followed up and that there is a general lack of understanding by parents on how pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. The headteacher has been made aware of these views.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

55 Overall leadership and management are good. The head has been in post since September 2001, less than a year at the time of the inspection. He has a very clear view of where the school should be going and how to make it even better than it is. Having looked closely at all aspects of the school when he took over, the head has identified its strengths and areas for development and compiled a list of priorities. These include:

- ◆ improving the building by constructing walls to separate classrooms;
- ◆ raising standards in ICT;
- ◆ extending early years provision;
- ◆ improving information to parents.

56 Having identified the priorities the head has developed clear plans for achieving them. Work is scheduled to begin on building improvements in the near future. The computer suite is functioning well and the Foundation Stage is well organised. The head has therefore shown

that he has not only very good leadership skills but also the capacity to manage the changes required to achieve the targets he has set. This is an improvement on leadership and management at the time of the last inspection when no real judgement was made and the school was in a state of transition with an acting head.

57 The school has a strong senior management team and the head has delegated responsibility to it well. Senior teachers are fully involved in performance management, monitoring the performance and setting targets for teachers they manage. The school has a clear performance management policy and a detailed programme to ensure that it is applied. Systems for supporting teachers new to the school are very effective and make efficient use of senior and experienced teachers to mentor newly qualified ones. Subject coordinators have a stronger role in monitoring teaching and learning, particularly in English, mathematics and science, which shows a good improvement since the last inspection. The challenge for the school now will be to enhance the role of coordinators in other subjects. This would avoid situations where a subject, like geography at the time of the inspection, was not being provided as effectively as it should be.

58 The management of the provision for special educational needs is satisfactory. The co-ordinator is well supported by class teachers. The co-ordinator has undertaken training on the revised Code of Practice and has shared this with staff. The school is in the process of changing over to the new arrangements. The co-ordinator maintains the register of pupils with special educational needs efficiently. All funds designated for special educational needs are used appropriately.

59 The governor with responsibility for special needs has a good understanding of special needs in the school. Although he meets informally with the special educational needs co-ordinator, a more formal arrangement would enable him to be more closely involved in the monitoring of the school's provision. The use of ICT to support pupils with special educational needs is not sufficiently developed. Currently the school is not making the most efficient use of the special needs coordinator. She spends too much time taking small groups out of lessons and providing their support directly instead of managing that support through class teachers and learning assistants. The head has already identified this issue and has plans to resolve it. The school works satisfactorily to ensure that all pupils have equal access to all that it provides. It is especially good at including those with disabilities in the life and work of the school. It recognises the need to improve the way it helps pupils to appreciate the range and diversity of cultures represented in Britain today and the need for a whole school policy on race equality.

60 The school development plan is broadly satisfactory. However it focuses too much on what the school will do rather than on the outcomes and how these will raise standards. Too much of it relates to what should be in job descriptions and part of the normal duties of teachers with responsibilities. It could be sharpened up considerably by focusing purely on development and improvement issues rather than including things like monitoring policies, reviewing job descriptions and handbooks and implementing threshold assessments. Targets within it should be much more specific and measurable so that the school knows whether they have been achieved.

61 The governors are keen and committed. They fulfil their statutory duties satisfactorily and have a satisfactory knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development. They are fully involved in school development planning and in setting the budget to meet the priorities set for the future. They ensure that any funds allocated for specific purposes, like special needs, are appropriately used. They appreciate the need to get the best from the funds they have rather than necessarily taking the cheapest tender. They share the head's vision for the future of the school. Governors are aware of how well the school is performing

in the annual national tests at seven and eleven and are clear on how to interpret the statistical information they receive on the school's performance. Through visits to the school and a system of linking with specific staff they know what is happening on a regular basis. However, although in general terms they know how well the school is doing and are confident in being able to compare its performance with others based on statistical evidence, they are less secure on issues like teaching quality and whether all pupils are performing as well as they might. They rely heavily on the head for information on these issues without always being clear where the evidence lies.

62 The school has good systems for managing and monitoring the budget. The clerk keeps all those who hold a budget well informed on the state of that budget and manages the day-to-day running of the accounts effectively and efficiently. She contributes greatly to the smooth day-to-day running of the school. Given the standards achieved, the quality of leadership, management and teaching and the overall budget the school is allocated, the school achieves good value for money.

63 The open plan nature of the school makes the accommodation unsatisfactory. There is nowhere, apart from the hall, that classes can use for lessons like music which, by their nature, generate noise and disturb other lessons. In some areas people have to walk through the middle of lessons in order to get to where they need to be. Given these constraints the school has managed well so far but plans are in place to remodel the building and put up walls to create proper classrooms. This is an issue that the pupils highlighted as one of the few improvements they would like. The premises staff make a good job of keeping the building clean and well maintained.

64 There are enough suitably qualified and experienced staff. Over the last two years five teachers joined the school and four left so there has been an unsettled staffing picture for a school this size. The staff work well as a team and are mutually supportive. Teachers use learning assistants effectively and efficiently, particularly where they are supporting pupils with special needs and helping them to join in the whole range of activities provided by the school. Resources for learning are satisfactory for all subjects apart from art where they are good. The library is adequate for the needs of the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

65 In order to maintain and build upon its current high standards the school should:

Improve the way it organises the curriculum to ensure that:

- All subjects are given appropriate time to cover the full National Curriculum requirements;
- Pupils in mixed age classes are guaranteed work that builds upon what they have learned previously;
- Literacy and numeracy sessions are restricted to the recommended length of time;
- Lessons are timetabled more creatively so that foundation subjects are not consistently relegated to the afternoons and ends of days.

(Paragraphs 27, 96, 109, 132, 132, 169.)

Raise standards in ICT by:

- Implementing the ICT development plan;
- Increasing the opportunities for ICT to be used in other subjects.

(Paragraphs 8, 27, 34, 101, 107, 117, 120, 128, 137, 139, 140, 141, 143, 153.)

Raise standards in geography in years 3 to 6 by:

- Ensuring that enough time is given to the subject to ensure that it meets statutory requirements;
- Planning work so that pupils learn in more depth about the places they study and build upon what they already know;
- Improve the teaching and learning of geographical skills like map work.

(Paragraphs 8, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133.)

Make more efficient use of the special needs coordinator to manage provision for pupils with special needs rather than spending so much time withdrawing small groups from lessons. (Paragraphs 24, 59)

Minor issues

66 As well as addressing the key issues outlined above the governors may wish to consider the following minor issues.

- Identify where the best teaching in the school is and use it to further improve the teaching in other areas. (Paragraphs 18, 21, 22, 115, 136, 150, 166.)
- Seek ways to provide more after-school clubs and activities for pupils. (Paragraph 31.)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	58
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	21	50	24	2	2	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	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	259
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	39

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	51

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.1
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
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
		2001	21	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	19	20
	Girls	19	18	18
	Total	38	37	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (92)	93 (95)	95 (92)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	20	20
	Girls	18	18	18
	Total	37	38	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (92)	95 (92)	95 (92)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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
		2001	25	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	22	25
	Girls	17	15	18
	Total	36	37	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (83)	84 (80)	98 (91)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	21	21
	Girls	17	15	18
	Total	36	36	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (72)	82 (74)	89 (87)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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	1
Black – other	1
Indian	3
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	259
Any other minority ethnic group	3

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.9
Average class size	29.1

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	158.25

Financial information

Financial year	200/2001
	£
Total income	522,977
Total expenditure	543,543
Expenditure per pupil	1921
Balance brought forward from previous year	29,570
Balance carried forward to next year	39,004

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	259
Number of questionnaires returned	91

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	43	48	7	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	36	56	1	2	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	16	64	13	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	56	13	5	2
The teaching is good.	32	56	4	0	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	21	45	27	4	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	44	41	14	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	43	47	7	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	19	40	33	4	4
The school is well led and managed.	21	51	13	3	12
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	29	57	9	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	5	25	26	19	24

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

67 The school makes good provision for the children in the Foundation Stage who are well taught in a welcoming learning environment. The teachers and learning support assistants work well together as a team and provide a calm purposeful learning atmosphere. Teaching is good, with examples of very good teaching in both the reception class and in the mixed age class. As a result all pupils, including the pupils who are identified as having special needs and English as an additional language make good progress.

68 The Foundation Stage includes 32 children between the ages of four and five, three quarters of whom are taught in the reception class, with a quarter of the children taught in a mixed age class. The reception class children are well taught by two teachers, who meet regularly to plan and discuss the children's learning needs.

69 Most of the children have attended either the pre-school or private nursery on the school site. The admission arrangements are effective and ensure children settle easily. The school provides a useful information sheet each half term so those parents can further support their children's learning at home.

70 Attainment is assessed using the local authority scheme. The baseline assessments undertaken at the beginning of the year show that children have a wide range of ability. This year the majority of children entered the school achieving as expected in each of the six areas of learning, with a significant minority of children below in their reading and writing skills. The staff make good use of the assessments to take the children's learning on. Because of the high quality of teaching most are now on course to achieve their targets for the end of the Foundation Stage in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding and their physical development. Most children are above national expectations in their personal, social and emotional development, their speaking and listening skills and their creative development.

71 Teaching is consistently good and sometimes very good because the three teachers and the learning assistants have high expectations and a very good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Planning is thorough and caters effectively for the children's wide range of ability. Support staff are a particular strength and teach the children very well in small groups. The eight children in the mixed age class are well catered for.

72 There have been a number of improvements since the previous inspection. The Foundation Stage curriculum has been introduced and the planning has been revised to include the Foundation Stage children in the mixed age class. The Foundation Stage is very well led and managed by the co-ordinator who meets regularly with all Foundation Stage staff. There are good resources indoors. However the outdoor area by contrast, is unsatisfactory. There are appropriate targets in the school development plan, which include the development of a secure outdoor area to allow simultaneous indoor and outdoor activities and the introduction of standardized local authority records.

Personal, social and emotional development

73 Foundation Stage children in both classes enjoy their learning and are confident and friendly. Most children work well in small groups and alongside each other. Care is taken to include all children in lessons. Staff help the children settle in quickly. The two job share teachers teach in a similar way and this also helps the children learn with confidence. There are very good relationships between the staff and children and between the children and each other. The staff make sure the children understand what behaviour is expected. They use lots of praise, which the children respond to well. Most children enjoy learning, behave very well and work hard. A few immature children, who find it difficult to concentrate, are encouraged to stay on task. The children identified with special needs are helped each day by the effective use of support staff. The pupil with English as an additional language, communicates with confidence. She is also well supported each week by external specialist staff.

74 Children are actively encouraged to make choices throughout the day, for example selecting their reading books. The staff have high expectations and children are expected to take responsibility for tidying away their work and equipment used which they do sensibly. Children change their clothes for physical activities and most have well-developed personal self-help skills. The children enter school with satisfactory social skills and most will leave with levels of personal and social development above the expected levels, because this is very well promoted. The recently introduced programme of personal and social development, provides time for children from reception to Year 6 to talk together. This helps the younger children's confidence to mix with older children in breaks and lunchtime. Teaching is very good and children make very good progress.

Communication, language and literacy

75 Children enter school with satisfactory communication, language and literacy skills overall, although a large minority enter with skills below those expected in reading and writing. Elements of the Literacy Framework are used well in both classes. A strength of the teaching is the time all staff give to promoting children's speaking and listening skills. As a result many children develop good listening skills and are keen to answer questions. The role-play areas are matched to each topic and are used well to promote language development, particularly with children who lack the confidence to talk in larger groups or who need more practice in using their communication skills.

76 Many opportunities are used to encourage children's enjoyment of reading; including the use of attractive big books. Each classroom has an attractive reading area, where children can sit informally and enjoy books quietly and comfortably. Most children handle books with care because they are taught to look after them. Children enjoy reading and most talk about their books with obvious interest and pleasure. Children are taught to use information books and some more able children can use the contents page of 'mini beast' encyclopaedia to find information.

77 In lessons, teachers skilfully match questions and activities to cater for the wide range of ability and actively teach children to recognise identify and understand aspects of punctuation such as full stops, capital letters and 'speech bubbles'. Attractive puppet socks for each letter of the alphabet help children to identify sounds and make words. Children are taught good strategies, such as listening for rhyming words, to help them build up 3 and 4 letter words. Parents make a positive contribution to the standards their children achieve by regularly hearing their children read and helping children practise new words.

78 Handwriting skills are regularly reinforced and most children can write their name neatly. However, some children lack fluency with their letter formation and need more

targeted support to help them form letters with more confidence. Supplies of paper, pencils and crayons are available for children to make marks on paper informally that have meaning for them. Many children are beginning to write their own sentences with help and some can write simple sentences independently.

79 Teaching is very good and as a result children make very good progress, particularly with their speaking and listening skills and aspects of their reading. Most children are likely to achieve above average standards in speaking and listening and the majority are on course to achieve the expected targets in writing and reading, with a significant minority above that expected.

Mathematical development

80 Most children enter school with broadly expected skills and awareness of number, although there is a very wide range of ability. In lessons questions and activities are targeted to include some very able children who have a secure knowledge of numbers to twenty, while catering well for children who recognize numbers less than ten. Elements of the numeracy framework are used effectively, especially the daily oral session. Number skills are practised in different ways through a range of practical activities, which the children really enjoy. Each class has an attractive mathematics area. There are plenty of good quality resources, including, number pictures and puzzles, number fans and number lines to twenty to help children develop their number skills.

81 There is an appropriate balance between number based activities and activities that promote the children's understanding of mathematical ideas and language. Children are actively encouraged to explain what they are doing; as a result they tend to use their mathematical language with confidence. Most can talk about and describe some aspects of common shapes and use language to compare, (such as 'heavier', 'lighter', 'shorter' and 'longer') with accuracy. There are many informal opportunities to count, match, thread beads and make patterns, and regular opportunities to use sand and water trays to explore and fill containers.

82 Teaching is good and pupils make good progress. Most children are likely to achieve the standards expected, and a significant minority above that expected.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

83 The majority of children enter reception with expected knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Topics such as *special clothes*, *our senses* and *mini beasts*, help children to build up their picture of the world around them. Children have regular opportunities to use and sort a range of materials. While children have a good range of planned activities they do not have ongoing investigation areas where they can explore and experiment informally. Local walks are a good starting point for simple map work. A particular strength is the teachers' efforts to give children first hand experiences, such as growing their own plants and observing insects. Many have good factual knowledge; many know that spiders have eight legs, make webs and catch insects. Children are also encouraged to respect and appreciate living creatures.

84 The curriculum makes a positive contribution towards the children's understanding of the wider world. The staff follow the locally agreed religious syllabus and children can talk about religious stories such as Joseph's multi coloured coat and the Nativity. They have also touched on different festivals as they arise and visited the local church. This, together with books, music and resources, extends the children's knowledge of different cultures.

Opportunities are missed in the role-play areas to further develop the children's knowledge of different cultures.

85 Provision for ICT is good, particularly when children use the computer suite. Most can name a mouse, monitor and screen, use the mouse confidently and can click, drag and drop with some assistance. Children also use a range of programs to further support topics within the class. Girls and boys display equally good skills and work sensibly, both independently and in pairs.

86 Teaching is consistently good and children make good progress; with most likely to achieve the standards expected by the end of the school year and a significant minority of children above expectations.

Physical development

87 Children enter reception with the appropriate physical development for their age. They really enjoy their physical activities. Teachers in both classes have high expectations of the children who respond with enthusiasm and enjoyment. Children use the hall space well and most can find a space, jump, stop and start with confidence. They attempt to balance items such as bean bags and rubber rings appropriately and with confidence. Opportunities to develop their physical skills outside are limited. The school has some wheeled vehicles and the staff are developing an imaginative set of activity boxes that can be taken outside. However, there is no climbing equipment, sheltered area, or seating. The re-modelling of the school includes plans to accommodate simultaneous indoor and outdoor activities.

88 When children start school many have had pre-school experience of using scissors, paintbrushes and glue. The reception staff build on these skills and continue to provide opportunities to handle equipment safely. They have many opportunities to practise their skills in cutting and sticking and painting. Girls and boys regularly use large and small construction equipment with confidence and pleasure.

89 Teaching and progress are good and most children will achieve the level of physical development expected by the end of the school year, with a significant minority achieving higher than expected, especially in dance and movement.

Creative development

90 Most children enter reception with the creative development expected for their age. Staff develop the children's creative talents well through art, music, physical education and role-play sessions. For example, in a very good dance lesson children were encouraged to move imaginatively and express their feelings and ideas in preparation for a musical production.

91 Children enjoy a wide range of opportunities to mix colours, paint, print and make collages. The staff give the right balance between intervening and allowing children to experiment freely. They encourage both creativity and attention to detail. As a result many children produce work of a higher standard than might be expected; such as their animal patterns, portraits, flower paintings and collages. Staff show children that their work is valued by the care with which their artwork is displayed in the bright and stimulating classrooms.

92 Music sessions are timetabled but some opportunities are missed for children to handle and explore instruments informally, within the classrooms. Children enjoy their opportunities to sing well-known songs and rhymes and most join in confidently. Children in the mixed age class handle instruments safely and sensibly and can scrape, shake and tap

instruments following simple notation cards. Children enjoy performing to each other and listen attentively.

93 The imaginative play area is used well to further develop their creative development. Children enjoy these opportunities to play imaginatively, which further develops their speaking and listening skills.

94 Teaching is very good and as a result most children make very good progress. Most children likely to achieve above the standards expected of five-year-olds in creative development, by the end of the school year.

ENGLISH

95 There has been good improvement since the previous inspection when standards were average. They are now above the national average for seven and eleven-year-olds. Speaking and listening skills are good throughout the school. Standards in reading and writing are above average at seven and eleven. The good standards are borne out by the 2001 national test results, which were above average for seven and eleven-year-olds and in reading, well above average for seven-year-olds. Pupils make consistently good progress through Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6 progress is more uneven being satisfactory in Years 3 and 4 but accelerating for older pupils, particularly for some of the oldest Year 6 pupils reflecting the very good teaching they receive. The good provision for pupils with special educational needs, and especially for pupils with a statement of special need, ensures that support is well targeted and tasks are well matched to pupils' needs in their individual education plan.

96 Since the previous inspection, the National Literacy Strategy has been successfully implemented and resources improved to support this. The schools' scheme ensures a balance of coverage and careful progression of skills. The introduction of initiatives, such as additional literacy support, early literacy support and booster classes together with the introduction of target setting in literacy are among recent improvements contributing to the good standards. The good start received by the youngest children together with strong teaching in Years 2 and 6 also influence standards. However literacy sessions often exceed the recommended time.

97 Speaking and listening skills are above average throughout the school. Pupils speak with confidence and fluency. Most pupils articulate clearly, employ a good range of vocabulary and have a good grasp of standard English. Pupils make good gains in their learning because most teachers ensure good opportunities for pupils to engage in extended conversations. Effective questioning by teachers extends pupils' understanding and use of English, promoting confidence in speaking aloud. This was particularly evident in plenary sessions in the best teaching, for example, in a Year 6 lesson where pupils role-played a scene from *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, working in small groups. Pupils performed confidently to the class. Groups supported pupils with special educational needs very well, so that they were fully engaged and involved. Pupils evaluated each other's performance in the plenary, making constructive comments and agreeing that they have a better understanding of play script form, following this lesson, giving good reasons for this. Pupils are encouraged to express ideas and opinions about texts used in the literacy hour. Most children listen carefully to each other, taking turns to speak in discussions. They are eager to respond to questions and contribute their ideas to discussions.

98 Pupils attain above average standards in reading by the age of seven and eleven. By Year 2, average attaining pupils and many lower attaining pupils have a secure understanding of initial sounds, helping them to tackle unfamiliar words with confidence and building well on

earlier skills. Basic phonic skills are carefully taught ensuring that pupils build systematically on their knowledge. Higher attaining pupils read with fluency and good expression. They use punctuation when reading to gain effect, reading confidently and with good understanding. Many pupils are eager to discuss their reading and talk at length about favourite authors such as Dick King Smith, Shoo Rayner and David McKee. They have a good knowledge of authors and a good understanding of the different range of reading, such as fiction, non-fiction and poetry. They have a good understanding in Year 2 of literacy terms such as 'glossary', 'index' and 'blurb'. A good number of pupils belong to the local library and most have a good selection of books at home. Parents have limited involvement in their child's reading. Reading diaries are not used consistently and do not contain diagnostic information to help pupils improve their skills. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 build on these good foundations, improving fluency and accuracy so that most pupils by the age of eleven are confident, expressive readers. A weakness in these otherwise good skills is pupils' limited knowledge about how books are classified to aid quick reference. Pupils are unaware of the Dewey System, although they are able to locate books using the organization into subject sections. Once located, they are quick to retrieve information. The reading skills of the average and above average pupils are very well developed. They select and cope with quite complex texts in their choice of reading. Lower attaining pupils are more hesitant but often show reasonable accuracy and the ability to build more complex words using phonic skills.

99 Writing skills are above average by the age of seven and eleven. The majority of pupils achieve well. This is largely due to much good teaching with tasks which are both interesting and carefully matched to pupils' differing ability levels. Very good links are made to other areas of the curriculum. Pupils are often presented with challenging, exciting and purposeful writing experiences. For example, in Year 2, pupils write letters, poems, flow charts linked to work in science on life cycles, and stories. News is interesting and stories well extended, and often include an adventurous choice of vocabulary. There is a good emphasis on stories from other cultures, such as retelling *The Great Kapok Tree* and good attention to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. For example, pupils write letters to the Rainbow Fish – one began: 'Dear Rainbow Fish, I have just read your story. I thought it was marvoles¹! I loved the part where you shared your scales.' In Year 5/6 the good focus on extended writing and imaginative choice of writing is particularly evident. Pupils have a good awareness of the different audiences for whom they write. In one example of good story writing the pupil refers to 'whippy waves' and 'I stepped on the sizzling sand grains...the sun seemed to smirk slyly' demonstrating a good confident use of descriptive writing and alliteration. Other writing includes first person accounts in character as Oliver Twist; instructions, for example, how to programme a video recorder; non-fiction writing presenting the facts about alcohol; and different forms of report writing including newspaper reports such as 'September 11th Tragedy Strikes!' Persuasive writing presents the case for and against foxhunting while poetry writing shows a vivid choice of language. For example, writing about a box one pupil wrote, 'My box will be the shape of a bright but peaceful Earth – the fabulous blue will stand for clean rivers, flowing lakes, twisting streams and dazzling oceans.' Another wrote, 'The box I will use is made of silky blue and green fur weaved together with invisible thread.' Pupils create exciting story openings such as this from a Year 6 pupil, 'The dazzling sunshine weaved swiftly in and out of the long, slender branches, which were just beginning to blossom'. Pupils make good use of dictionaries in their search for interesting vocabulary. Punctuation is used accurately by many pupils. Good use is made of traditional stories to extend writing for different audiences. For example, pupils write a letter of concern to 'the big bad wolf' from Eeny, Meaney, Miney and Mo Solicitors to complain about his aggressive behaviour towards the three pigs. While a postcard to 'mummy pig' relates the adventures of the three pigs. Most pupils take pride in their writing and enjoy sharing it with

¹ Sic: 'Marvellous'

others in the class. They are confident when appraising each other's work. These skills help them to refine their own writing.

100 Standards of handwriting are good for most pupils in Years 2 and 6. However, handwriting and presentation skills are inconsistent in Years 3 to 6 with some careless and untidy work in Years 3 and 4, in particular. By the time they leave the school the majority develop a fluent, cursive style. Work is regularly marked but the quality of marking varies. Not all teachers identify areas for improvement. The best marking is constructive with positive and helpful comments to enable pupils to improve their work. Good use of target setting and careful tracking of pupils' progress contributes to the good standards in English. Incorporating target setting more consistently within the marking process would further pupils' knowledge of their own learning.

101 Teaching and learning is good overall, with strong teaching in Years 2 and 6. However, teaching is not as strong in Years 3 and 4 and this is reflected in the satisfactory gains in learning. The accelerated learning for some of the older pupils is a direct result of very good teaching. Pupils enjoy their lessons because they are often challenging, interesting and very purposeful. They work well collaboratively, for example when engaged in role-play. Most teachers share learning objectives with pupils at the start of lessons so that they are clear about what they have to do. In the very good teaching, the teacher's confident, lively style is reflected in the quality of pupils' writing. These lessons proceed at a very brisk pace with high expectations by the teacher both of standards and behaviour. Pupils are expected to take responsibility and work with a good level of independence. Basic skills are very well taught in these lessons, building systematically on earlier learning. Higher attaining pupils are well challenged through demanding tasks. These skills are used very well to extend pupils' writing in other subjects. Pupils have opportunities to develop word processing and research skills through the use of computers but there is room for this to be further developed.

102 Within classes, there is good provision for pupils with special educational needs. It is particularly good in a Year 5 and 6 class where several pupils have statements including some for physical disabilities. Well-planned activities and well-targeted use of additional support ensures all pupils understand and participate fully in lessons. It was a delight to observe one pupil in a wheelchair fully engaged in battle during the role-play of a scene from *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*! The very good attention to inclusion results in many of these pupils achieving well and making good progress towards their individual targets.

103 English is well managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who supports her colleagues well. She has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in her subject and maintains a very good subject file, consistent with other subject leaders, which details all aspects of development in English. The next steps for development include the improvement of the library. The recent move for the library means that although centrally placed, it is affected by the noise from the open plan arrangement and does not enable good opportunities for private study and research. Plans are in hand to relocate the library. Resources in the library are adequate but limited book provision is evident in some subjects.

MATHEMATICS

104 Standards in mathematics are above average at seven and eleven. This shows a good improvement since the previous report which said that standards were average. Last year's national tests showed standards to be above average at seven and well above average at eleven. The majority of pupils enter Year 1 with mathematical skills which are broadly in line with those expected for pupils of this age. Most make good progress and by the end of Year 2 achievement is above the national average. This good progress is maintained in the junior classes although there is more variability. In all parts of the school pupils with special educational needs are sensitively and effectively supported and such pupils also make good progress. The quality of learning is good in both key stages.

105 The school places considerable emphasis upon mathematics and there is proper attention to the development of sound understanding of mathematical principles, including mental calculation and applying mathematical skills to solve problems. The school works hard to extend pupils' mathematical vocabulary and enrich their experience. A focus upon key mathematical words is routinely included in lessons. By the end of Year 2 most pupils can count to 100 and beyond and can mentally add and subtract numbers to 20 and, frequently, beyond. The proportion who are beginning to understand place value, use some of the multiplication tables, employ the appropriate operation when calculating and understand halves and quarters is above the average. A majority identify the common two and three-dimensional shapes and describe some of their features and properties. Many collect information systematically and construct simple graphs to illustrate their findings. Pupils are competent when using standard and non-standard measures of weight, capacity and length. A good proportion of Year 2 pupils is able to make independent decisions as they use and apply their mathematics to solve problems.

106 By the age of eleven the proportion of pupils who are able to add, subtract, multiply and divide confidently and accurately is above the average. Pupils' understanding of decimals, fractions and percentages is above that expected. Most can name a range of two and three-dimensional shapes and appreciate their various features and properties. Pupils collect and interpret data which they present using a range of graphs. The number who apply mathematics to different situations is above the average and higher achievers have a clear concept of angle as a measurement of turn.

107 Throughout the school pupils make satisfactory use of their mathematical knowledge to situations in other subjects. There is also satisfactory use of ICT to support learning although there is a need to develop this further.

108 The quality of teaching is good although it is more consistent in Years 1 and 2 than in the junior classes. Teachers work hard to ensure that ideas are understood and that good learning occurs. Teachers are conscientious in the support which they provide and are aware of the individual needs of their pupils. Lessons focus sharply upon promoting the underlying mathematical understanding and teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. A good range of activities to support learning and help to sustain interest are used. Consequently almost all pupils enjoy the subject and have an extremely positive attitude. They work hard, sustain concentration and often become absorbed in the task. Most will persevere to overcome problems. In several lessons pupils responded particularly well with thoughtful discussion and a real determination to do well. These good attitudes mean that there is little loss of productive time during lessons and this has a clear-cut impact upon their learning. Sound planning says precisely what pupils will learn. In the better lessons teachers ask pupils to explain how they reached an answer and so help deepen language and mathematical understanding.

109 The co-ordinator provides thoughtful and committed leadership. He is helping to foster a collaborative drive for sustained improvement. The school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy with commitment and rigour. All teachers have a clear understanding of the rationale of the Strategy which is properly reflected in planning and lessons. The thoroughness with which the National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced together with good teaching is having a direct and positive influence upon the learning and standards in both key stages. The setting arrangement for the juniors has a good impact upon learning by providing additional teaching groups and work which is more closely focused to individual needs. However numeracy sessions often exceed the recommended time.

110 Teachers know their pupils well and this enables them to assess day-to-day progress accurately and to respond meaningfully. A satisfactory range of formal tests is used to monitor individual progress and results are thoughtfully analysed so that the strengths and weaknesses of the programme can be identified. Additional emphasis upon mental calculations is an example of how this analysis of data has influenced the teaching programme. Overall, the procedures for assessing pupils' work are satisfactory and their influence over what is taught next are good.

111 The previous inspection found that the quality of teaching was variable and that 20 per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory. This had an effect upon progress. Some pupils were said to be given work which was too easy for their capabilities and others easily distracted. The school was said to lack effective development of the subject and to not monitor teaching and learning. It reported a need for further training for some teachers. Since then standards in mathematics have been raised and progress is now good. Higher achievers do well. Teaching is good overall with no unsatisfactory lessons observed. Teachers display secure subject knowledge and there are good procedures for monitoring the subject. Attitudes to the subject are now good with many pupils identifying mathematics as their favourite subject. Overall, there has been a very good response to the shortcomings identified at the time of the last inspection.

SCIENCE

112 Although attainment in science has been well above average in national tests at Year 6 and teacher assessment at Year 2 in recent years, standards are currently average and pupils make satisfactory progress. The current Year 6 contains a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs so the percentage of those likely to reach the expected level 4 is lower than previously. Nevertheless, pupils' scientific knowledge is generally good, and it is pupils' ability to investigate and understand what they have observed which is less secure. Similar findings apply to Year 2 where pupils acquire the necessary knowledge but because some classes contain more than one year group, pupils' skills in investigating and explaining scientific phenomena are not consistently developed. In the juniors there are similar shortcomings in regular skill development because most classes contain more than one year group. Irregular or inconsistent progress is made by groups of pupils. This is the result of differing expectations of teachers and the organisation of what is taught. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in lessons. Effective support by class teachers, learning support assistants and peers ensures all pupils are fully integrated and actively participate in practical work. They are also helped to record what they have learnt through discussion and techniques for organising their thoughts. The previous inspection report judged standards to be average, as they are now, so they have been maintained since then despite the rise above that level in the intervening years.

113 Year 6 pupils are aware of the need for a fair test and the identification of variables which can be changed. They also know that outcomes are recorded efficiently in tables and that results are more reliable if repeated. In practice, though, not all pupils confidently plan

and conduct a fair test. Pupils apply their knowledge of air resistance to investigate what makes the best autogyro². Some higher attaining pupils discuss the effects of altering wing size on the overall surface area before designing their autogyros and testing them. Another group systematically tabulate their results as they add weight in the form of paper clips. A third group apply design and technology skills to ensure the autogyros are identical in construction except for the material. Many pupils, though, start to make their spinners without discussing the fairness of their procedures and it is only after intervention by adults that they actually consider one variable, holding the other factors the same. Very few groups are rigorous about ensuring the height of the drop is the same each time, even after discussion.

114 Year 5 pupils, investigating ways in which solids can be dissolved more quickly, sensibly predict that stirring and heating the water are likely to speed up the process of dissolving. However, many miss the point that it is the speed which needs to be measured or compared and struggle to plan an investigation which will provide the required information. Other Year 5 pupils observe condensation and the outcome of heating a solution, and can answer questions such as why the steam from blue ink is not coloured. Year 3 and 4 pupils are appropriately involved in predicting what will happen when celery is placed in coloured ink and explain their thinking by applying their existing knowledge of roots, stems and leaves. Infant pupils learn the parts of a plant and observe differences in types of roots and root systems; they investigate what plants need in order to grow.

115 Science is well taught throughout the school. Teachers give the necessary information clearly, and question pupils effectively not only about the knowledge they have acquired, but also how what they have learnt applies to different situations. They also introduce and use the correct technical vocabulary. Pupils learn, therefore, to make sensible predictions and to think about the reasons for what they observe, and explain these in scientific language. Teachers use a variety of methods including demonstration, practical work, ICT and observation of real specimens to engage pupils' interest and enable them to see the usefulness of different sources. Recording of science is used to support literacy skills with structured writing being a regular feature of lessons. However, the use of diagrams is less well promoted and too often teachers accept sketches instead. There is regular discussion and recap of essential scientific facts so that pupils build regularly on their knowledge. The best marking not only gives pupils a clear view of what they are doing well but also indicates ways they can improve, but not all pupils receive this helpful feedback. Even where it is provided, it does not necessarily identify the next important step.

116 Although some of the open-ended investigational work enables higher attaining pupils to make faster progress, they are seldom actually set more challenging work focused on their particular needs and which makes demands on their thinking. The school has identified assessment as an area for development, but current practice is not precise enough to enable teachers to plan such work, nor to support the systematic development of investigational skills where classes have to contain more than one age group.

117 The co-ordinator has rightly identified a need for further development of these investigational skills in her action plan. She is also aware that monitoring will provide the information she requires to influence expectations and support colleagues with aspects in which they are less confident. The third area identified by the audit, that of full integration of ICT into planning, is also important and timely.

² A paper spinner with two wings which spins as it falls to the ground.

ART AND DESIGN

118 The standard of work in art and design in Years 2 and 6 is average, but with good features in some aspects of the subject. Standards now are similar to those found at the previous inspection, but there have been some improvements, particularly in the quality of display, which enhances many areas of the school and celebrates pupils' success. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in lessons and as a result make at least the same progress as other pupils.

119 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 enjoy a wide range of experiences in art and design and use an interesting range of media, including, paint, collage, observational drawing and various media for printing. In Year 1, pupils explore colour as they mix a variety of shades. They use a range of natural materials to create collages and paint self-portraits and flowers with the expected awareness of colour for their age. There are good links to other subjects such as mathematics, when they create symmetrical pictures, printing with a variety of shapes. In Year 2, pupils work competently with a wide range of media and often produce work to a good standard. They draw fruits from careful observation and use watercolours to paint their drawing. Higher attaining pupils produce work of a good standard. Three-dimensional masks show careful attention to detail and different flesh tones. There is a good focus on the work of other artists such as Miro and Van Gogh. Pupils show some awareness of art from a range of cultures as they create Islamic patterns using paint, pastels and wax resist techniques. Many of these show careful use of vivid colour and good awareness of pattern. Pupils show an appropriate level of computer skills, using brush and pen tools and correcting mistakes on their self portraits using the 'undo' icon. There is less emphasis on three-dimensional work overall. Evidence of the use of clay is limited. The influence of a visiting artist exploring fabric and textiles is very evident in the rich, colourful wall hangings, framed work, such as that of fruits and metallic threads on a dyed background and individual textile designs using a variety of fabric and thread.

120 In Years 3 to 6, pupils build soundly on these early skills with some accelerated learning resulting from very good teaching for some of the older pupils. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 practise simple stitches using binker fabric. They create patterns using gummed paper, decorate paper boomerangs using crayon, and paint pictures of journeys made, using mixed media, as well as painting pictures based on topic work on the Vikings. They explore the use of flour and paste resist techniques and there is evidence of links to mathematics as they 'slip' and 'slide' patterns. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 use Matisse as a stimulus for graphical modelling. Pupils work collaboratively to dye fabric and draw Egyptian designs, using oil pastels. They write their names in hieroglyphics. This work is a response to the visiting artist in school. In a Year 5 and 6 class there are good examples of observational drawings of plants using good shading techniques. Needlework skills are extended satisfactorily using felt designs based on the Egyptians. In another Year 5 and 6 class pupils demonstrate very good knowledge of a range of artists. Their paintings of buildings in the local environment show a good range of skills and techniques as they work from photographic evidence. They mix colours confidently and use a good range of brush techniques for effect. Higher attaining pupils show a good understanding of perspective. There is very limited evidence of the development of skills in three-dimensional art, including clay. Although computers are used satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2, their use is less established in supporting pupils' learning in Years 3 and 6.

121 As only one lesson was observed during the inspection, no valid judgement could be made on the quality of teaching. Planning is effective and displays of work enhance learning environments in some classes. Pupils understanding of the use of a wide variety of materials is developed appropriately. There are good opportunities to engage in artistic experiences

and develop artistic skills for their own sake, particularly for pupils in Year 2 and for some of the older pupils in the school. Sketchbooks are used in Years 3 to 6 but their use is inconsistent. In the best practice, pupils explore techniques and experiment with different media, but in some classes their use as a tool to support the development of skills is more limited, with little purposeful marking and few comments to help pupils improve their work. Most pupils enjoy art because the tasks are interesting and varied.

122 The subject is well managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who is aware of what is needed to improve standards further. She sets a good example through her own teaching and through organising the attractive displays about the school. Among the areas still to be addressed is the development of procedures for assessment, highlighted in the previous inspection report. Plans are in hand to monitor teaching and learning in art from next term. Greater use of visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum has also been identified. A key area for development is the use of computers to support learning. Resources have improved since the last inspection and with the exception of three-dimensional work these are now good. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development and to their overall personal development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

123 At the time of the last inspection attainment in design and technology was judged to be below average in the juniors. This weakness has now been eliminated and standards are average across the school. Although only one lesson could be observed during the inspection, evidence from pupils' work and discussions shows that skills are taught and the full designing, making and evaluating process takes place.

124 Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have considered food packaging and the appearance, taste and texture of biscuits before using a basic recipe to make a batch, and then design their own variations. They have also studied how moving toys work and have constructed their own. The products fulfil the requirement to move and are attractively finished, but would not be sufficiently robust to be played with by their intended users. Evaluations show that some pupils have overcome difficulties during the construction of their toys and have learnt about the mechanisms they have used. Year 3 and 4 pupils are currently designing containers for dinner money using textiles. They are clear about the function of their purses or wallets, have practised a limited number of stitches and are in the process of designing the artefact. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to use internal and external views of their products, adding individual improvements such as stiffening and occasionally producing original designs (for a drawstring purse) which are different from the teacher's suggestions. Most pupils can order instructions logically for making their containers and decide on suitable fasteners and joins. Containers are nearly all an appropriate size and shape for carrying dinner money, and some include pockets for change. Infant pupils have made doll-sized 'Joseph's coat of many colours' having dyed the fabric. They have studied ways of joining paper and fabric and written simple instructions in the order the coat was made. Observations about the finished coats are pertinent, although are often about appearance. Nearly all the coats are identically made, though.

125 Overall, there is satisfactory progress in the techniques, tools and materials used but even so these are somewhat limited. For example, infants learn running stitch and Year 3 and 4 learn cross stitch and blanket stitch, but not always a wider range of alternative ones useful for joining seams. Not all projects are completed - Year 6 pupils said they were not able to make and evaluate their own biscuit designs - and some are not necessarily totally appropriate given the time and resources available. The 'Joseph coats' are not finished so that they can be used because cut edges are left. Pupils with special educational needs are

fully integrated and well supported on design and technology projects and are able to make similar progress to their peers.

126 In the one lesson observed the teaching was good. There was an appropriate emphasis on the purpose and user before pupils committed their ideas to paper so they were clear what criteria their designs must meet. Effective questioning about fastening enabled pupils to make suitable choices for their own purses. Guidance on how certain parts of the making have to precede others assisted pupils in writing instructions logically, and reminders about what they had learnt about seam allowances avoided wastage of material. Pupils' own ideas were valued and good suggestions, which were picked up from marking previous work, were shared with the class so that individuals were confident about trying out original thoughts and all could benefit from additions or amendments. As a result, all pupils made good progress in producing workable, individual plans in what was a relatively short session.

127 Pupils develop their literacy skills through recording their ideas in design and technology and to a lesser extent develop numeracy skills. The structured writing of plans, including 'frames' to guide those with special educational needs in literacy, provides a purpose and use for writing, and pupils also produce regular written evaluations which help them to express their thoughts clearly. Some measuring skills are usefully applied and practised in certain design and technology projects.

128 Although the design and technology curriculum is satisfactory overall, in practice classes containing more than one year group make it difficult to ensure pupils acquire, practise and apply the necessary skills consistently and systematically. Progression in planning has rightly been identified by the co-ordinator as an area for development, as has the need to integrate ICT into the design and technology work. The co-ordinator is also aware that finishing techniques and skills are less well developed than the rest of the processes.

GEOGRAPHY

129 Standards in geography are below average by the time the pupils leave the school at eleven. This represents a decline in standards since the last inspection. As no geography was taught during the inspection judgements are based on talking with pupils and looking at their books. As no teaching was seen it is not possible to make judgements about teaching quality.

130 Year 6 pupils talk about the geography work they have completed on India. They studied an Indian village and compared it with where they live. Although they learned some simple facts about Indian village life their knowledge of India is very superficial. For example they think that Indians are poor, live in sub-standard housing and the children have to walk many miles to school each day, often facing danger from landslides. While the project was aiming to contrast Indian village life with their homes there appears to have been little or no attempt to look at the broader context and give them a more balanced view of India. Their books confirm this. The pupils cannot name Indian cities or rivers, although one does know the names of the main religions found there. The other geography project they have covered is a local one based on their own locality including a survey of traffic on the road near the school. They explain that there is more traffic in the afternoon survey because parents are travelling to pick up children from school at that time. Apart from identifying the types of house found locally, through simple drawings of houses and bungalows, which is the kind of work more associated with much younger pupils, the amount of geography the pupils have covered is very limited. Pupils in the infant years learn about places around the world through the travels of Barnaby Bear who sends postcards from wherever he visits. Year 2 pupils draw a simple map of their journey to school, including some of the features they encounter on the way. They construct a simple chart to show the numbers of children who come to

school by car, bus or on foot. On the very limited evidence available standards appear to be satisfactory at this age.

131 Many of the Year 5 and Year 6 pupils said they do not enjoy geography. While they cited other subjects among their favourites geography is not well liked. They struggled to remember what they had done in previous classes apart from a vague recollection of some atlas work. They have no recollection of working with Ordnance Survey maps. All in all, although the long term planning indicates that geography is in the timetable, there is little evidence of any in depth work. The geography topics follow the national guidance but the emphasis is on acquiring some simple facts rather than on developing in-depth geographical skills.

132 As no teaching was observed it is not possible to make definitive judgements about teaching quality. The pupils' books confirm the emphasis on factual knowledge rather than on developing skills. The local traffic survey made some use of numeracy skills but in a fairly limited way through simple tallying and block graphs. There is little evidence of any more sophisticated mathematics being called for like working out percentages of types of vehicles. Years 5 and 6 construct a simple block graph of means of transport they take to school that is little different from the same work done by Year 2 pupils. The India topic missed opportunities to develop numeracy through comparing and contrasting climate, temperature and rainfall of the two countries. Instead the pupils know that in India "it's hot, rains a lot, then gets hot again." There is no evidence of the effective use of ICT in geography, through producing computer-generated graphs and charts for example. Literacy skills are used a little in recording what they have found out but there is no real evidence of the older pupils undertaking independent research in the library or planning their own geographical investigations. They do practise writing a reasoned argument on whether a road should be closed to traffic. The quality of such writing however is limited and only the highest attaining pupils draw conclusions based on the preceding arguments. Overall pupils make unsatisfactory progress in geography in Years 3 to 6 and do not build upon the work done in Years 1 and 2. They do not achieve what they are capable of because the work they are required to do is too simplistic.

133 Clearly the school, like most others, has been focusing on developing literacy and numeracy skills over recent years and geography has not been a priority. Consequently the school has not monitored effectively how well the subject is being covered and how much progress pupils are making. There are no formal assessment systems in place to alert the school to a decline in standards although a portfolio is being developed. The school is not meeting statutory requirements in geography.

HISTORY

134 Standards in history are broadly average at seven and eleven. This is much the same as at the time of the last inspection. Overall pupils make satisfactory progress. By the time pupils are eleven they know several facts about the periods of history they have studied. They know the dates of some of the key events in the Victorian age for example. They study Ancient Egypt and again acquire information about that period. They highlight key events on a timeline, write about ten facts they have discovered, and know about the social structure of the Egyptians, their farming and their writing. They know that they can find out about the past from a variety of sources including books, pictures and artefacts and the highest attaining pupils are beginning to interpret the evidence they are given and draw conclusions from it. Younger junior pupils learn about Romans, Saxons and Vikings. They write about why the Romans invaded Britain for example. However the pupils' books at Year 3 show that they all write exactly the same so it is difficult to see how the work meets the needs of pupils at different levels of attainment. While pupils learn a series of facts about life in particular

historical periods there is less evidence of them acquiring historical skills. While they learn about how life was different in the past they show little evidence of considering the reasons for some of the significant events or changes that they study. There is rather less emphasis on collecting evidence from a range of sources and considering why some of it may be conflicting. Overall most pupils make satisfactory progress in learning in historical facts at this stage although they could achieve more in terms of developing historical skills.

135 By the time they are seven pupils are acquiring an understanding of some of the ways life in the past was different to life now. For example, Year 2 pupils look at toys then and now, noting the similarities and differences. They are beginning to understand some of the reasons why life was different in the past, as when they realise old toys did not require batteries and electricity because they were not as available then. They learn about some of the significant events of the past as when they study the Great Fire of London. Year 1 and Year 2 pupils remember the date of the fire, where it started, how many people were killed in it and why it spread so quickly. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in their learning of history at this stage.

136 Teaching of history is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory at years 3 to 6. In the best lessons teachers tell pupils what they will learn and use very good methods to make sure the learning takes place. For example, in Year 1 pupils had learned a lot about the Great Fire of London in a previous lesson and demonstrated this at the beginning of the lesson when the teacher recapped on the earlier work. They then went on to learn why the fire had lasted as long, done so much damage and finally been brought under control. To demonstrate the significance of the wind direction in the spread of the fire the teacher laid out paper houses along strips representing roads. She then got pupils to identify which house would be the next to catch alight as the wind blew the flames from house to house. They placed red stickers on each house in turn and so see clearly how the fire would have spread. Consequently the pupils were absorbed in the learning and behaviour was very good. The teacher also identified those who were not as confident and directed questions to them to ensure they took an active part in the lesson. In a lesson with a Year 2 class the teacher introduced the idea of eyewitness accounts. The children again were spellbound as they listened to examples and examined the quill pens the teacher handed around. They had a good range of books, pictures and extracts from the eye witness accounts to help them with their own writing. In both lessons teachers encouraged pupils to discuss the issues and helped to develop their speaking and listening skills effectively. They then set writing tasks which helped to promote their learning of literacy skills effectively. Pupils with special needs are well supported and enabled to achieve well. As a consequence of such very good teaching pupils attain high standards of both work and behaviour. Where teaching is not of such high quality the pupils are unsettled and a little restless and the lesson does not flow as smoothly. Pupils move around and while some are reprimanded for this others are not. The teacher does most of the talking and sometimes talks over pupils rather than ensuring they are all listening. They do express their ideas but the pace of the lesson is too slow to keep them fully attentive. While they learn more or less what was intended they could have achieved more in the time available, particularly the higher attaining pupils.

137 Where pupils are in mixed age junior classes there is little evidence of the work they are given reflecting differences in their attainment or age. At times some are expected to present more work than others or to complete a slightly different task but this relates more to their capability in English than to their levels of expertise in history. In the junior classes much of the teaching is at a fairly superficial level involving learning a few basic facts. Even the pupils say that it would better "Going over things more than once so they go in". In some classes pupils develop their ICT skills by word processing their work but the effective use of computers in history is not widespread. Older pupils say that they are encouraged to do independent research on their history topics at home but do rather less at school.

Opportunities are lost to develop research and study skills and promote independence that encourages pupils to plan and organise their own learning in lessons.

138 The history topics to be covered are arranged currently over a two year period and follow closely the national guidelines. Given that one year group is spread between three classes the school is going to find great difficulties in ensuring that all pupils build upon what they have already learned rather than repeating history topics in the future.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

139 Standards of attainment in ICT are below average overall by the ages of seven and eleven. Nevertheless, there has been improvement since the last inspection and pupils are now progressing well in the aspects they have been systematically taught. The school has invested in a computer suite to enable teachers to teach the class skills, but this has only recently been fully operational. Teachers are also currently developing their own ICT skills. While pupils have been able to acquire many skills in a relatively short time, they have not caught up with what is expected of seven and eleven-year-olds in the National Curriculum and strands in control, monitoring and simulation have not been systematically taught.

140 Most pupils are confident about using the computer, including selecting menus and icons and manipulating the mouse. Older pupils can open files and programs, save their work and print it when required. Many pupils are still unfamiliar with the keyboard, though, and not all pupils are confident about how to alter or delete their work without losing large amounts of what they have produced. Year 5 and 6 pupils can use a 'paint' program to create work in the style of a Matisse painting positioning, enlarging and rotating chosen geometric shapes and selecting and changing colours. Higher attaining pupils can add text and change the effects on their coloured shapes. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have also used word processing and publishing programs to produce posters and instruction sheets. They know how to change fonts and style and add graphics. However, pupils in Year 3 and 4 currently have very similar skills to the older pupils and are using similar programs and sets of commands.

141 A similar situation occurs in Years 1 and 2 where many pupils in both year groups have the same skills. Infant pupils can use the 'spray' tool to create pictures depicting the Great Fire of London to support their history work. Most pupils know how to change the background colour and select suitable hues to represent fire and smoke. They can use the other icons to which they have been introduced in previous lessons, such as free line drawing of buildings. A few higher attaining pupils are able to print their work subsequently. Infant pupils have also used word processing to write short pieces including clip art, done simple recordings of their snack preferences and outcomes of a street survey and downloaded basic information to support the music curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs are appropriately supported by learning support assistants or peer partners and make similar progress to their classmates. Some pupils with special educational needs have more advanced skills than their peers and are able to help them, which has a very positive effect on their confidence and self-esteem.

142 The teaching of ICT is sound and sometimes better. Lessons always have a clear focus which is demonstrated or explained well to pupils so that they know what they have to do and which icons to use. At best this is accompanied by useful prompt cards or sheets which reinforce the icons learnt. Sometimes, though, the main focus provides insufficient work for a whole lesson. Pupils are given timely support by the teacher or classroom assistant so that they can complete the task. In the better lessons feedback is also provided to encourage pupils to apply previously taught skills or extend their knowledge of possible icons. However, there is rarely any work specifically matched to differing abilities even where

pupils with computers at home or previous experience have mastered a particular skill. For such pupils tasks only provide more practice in a skill rather than extending their knowledge. Where the teaching is better, teachers set appropriate deadlines for completion of a task and provide useful work while the first piece is being printed. Most teachers, during recaps, refer usefully to whether ICT is the best method to use or which of the programs pupils have used are more suitable for a particular purpose so that they are aware of the relative advantages and disadvantages of using ICT. It is an expectation of some teachers that pupils produce written evaluations of their use of ICT. At best, where teachers mark carefully, this provides information on pupils' progress and indicates to individual pupils what they can do to improve. However, this practice is not consistent and not all marking indicates next steps. There are also inconsistencies in the way ICT work is recorded and kept so not all pupils can see their progress and refer to what they have already learnt.

143 The co-ordinator, who has only been responsible for the subject for six months, has a clear action plan for developing ICT now that equipment is available and staff are acquiring the necessary expertise. Amongst the plans are two which are critical to improving the provision, namely a pilot assessment system, and a focus on integrating ICT across the curriculum. Some useful links were observed during the inspection, such as the computer display of a microscope slide of a cross-section of a celery stem in both Year 3 and 4 science lessons. Other classes used computer programs to support literacy and numeracy skills practice. However, ICT is not regularly used as an option for learning and is infrequently incorporated into planning in other subjects.

MUSIC

144 Pupils throughout the school attain the standards expected for their age and enjoy their music making activities. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. The school has maintained the standards achieved at the time of the previous inspection.

145 There have been improvements since the time of the previous inspection. The policy statement has been updated to cover the requirements of Curriculum 2000 and the school has adopted the national guidelines. The key issue identified in relation to music has been successfully addressed. Pupils no longer miss teaching times when they have tuition sessions.

146 The way music is organised presents some challenges for the teachers. All lessons in Years 3 to 6 are held at the very end of the school day and most lessons observed did not have enough time for pupils to fully cover the activities planned. When music lessons take place in classrooms, the lack of walls means that other lessons are often disturbed and pupils can feel constrained in their music making.

147 In Years 1 and 2 pupils have very positive attitudes to their music making activities and behave very well. They listen carefully and are keen to demonstrate and perform their simple compositions. Pupils make good progress because the teaching is at least good. Teachers have high expectations and use precise musical language and terms. Musical notion is taught in a systematic way, which helps pupils build on their previous learning. Year 1 pupils hold their instruments sensibly, name the instruments they use and know which instruments can be used for shaking, tapping or scraping.

148 In a very good lesson, Year 2 pupils made very good progress when making a musical score for 'The scary castle' story. Pupils used the short time well, with real creative effort. Pupils in Year 2 name most percussion instruments. They experiment with sounds and enjoy the opportunity to share their music. They perform in front of each other with

confidence. A significant minority of pupils reach above average attainment in their composing skills and explain musical terms such as, 'tempo', 'pitch' and 'dynamics'.

149 Pupils in Years 3 to 6 also enjoy their music making activities and the majority are positive about learning. The teachers place emphasis on using correct terminology and in developing pupils composing and creative skills. Teachers in Years 3 and 4 plan the same work as part of their two-year cycle but there is little difference in the standards achieved. Learning activities are not always challenging enough for more able pupils. Some understand and use the pentatonic scale and accompany a tune using a drone and have begun to record their ideas using notation. In the mixed Year 5 and 6 class pupils demonstrate a satisfactory understanding of composition and most persevere when creating different textures. They suggest improvements for their own and each other's music.

150 In all three lessons observed in Years 3 to 6, the teachers had to regularly re-direct some pupils with inappropriate behaviour to listen and stay on task. This slowed down the rate of learning for other pupils.

151 The school provides some opportunities to perform in public but opportunities to perform in the community are limited, as there is currently no school choir. Ten pupils (mainly girls) undertake regular tuition sessions in keyboard, piano, flute, and violin. The co-ordinator has identified a further eighteen pupils who have instrumental lessons out of school. Assembly times provide some opportunities for pupils who have musical expertise to demonstrate their talents. Pupils throughout the school enjoy singing and sing tunefully, with enthusiasm, in assemblies and hymn practice sessions.

152 The school has an extensive range of taped music, from different times and cultures, which make a good contribution to the pupils' social and cultural development. These are used well in music and dance sessions and during weekly assemblies.

153 The subject is well led by an enthusiastic teacher who has some musical expertise. She has a clear understanding of what is needed to develop music further within the school. The school uses the two staff with musical expertise well and training sessions have been held to develop further teachers' knowledge of the revised curriculum. Although the co-ordinator does not have the opportunity to formally observe teaching and learning she has a good understanding of the standards pupils achieve, through observation of their skills during assemblies and school productions. Resources are satisfactory. ICT is not used effectively to promote learning in music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

154 Standards in Years 1 and 2 are broadly average. Most pupils demonstrate typical levels of control and creativity in their movements. They are able to link their activities and to repeat and refine their work. They collaborate sensibly with others when engaged in group work. They respond to music with suitable levels of imagination and interpretation. They have satisfactory awareness of the changes which happen to their bodies during exercise. Gymnastics was not observed during the inspection but other evidence indicates that this element is properly included in the programme.

155 Standards in Years 3 to 6 are also broadly average. The majority of pupils display accepted levels of co-ordination, expression and control in gymnastics. They are able to link their movements appropriately and to improve their performance by evaluating, refining and practising. They are able to work individually and with others. Games skills are also in line with those expected for pupils of similar ages and pupils exhibit appropriate levels of ball skills and tactical awareness. In dance lessons pupils interpret music with expected levels of

creativity and precision. All pupils in Years 3 to 6 have opportunities for swimming and most reach the required standard.

156 The quality of learning of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory throughout the school and pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils steadily achieve greater confidence and control in their movements and become increasingly able to evaluate and improve their performance.

157 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have productive relationships with their pupils and organise lessons well. Class control is secure so time is used well and pupils have positive attitudes. They approach activities with enthusiasm and most pupils work with confidence. The majority consistently strive to attain good standards and there is particularly productive collaboration in group activities. Overall, pupils' attitude to physical education is good in all parts of the school. Better teaching is characterised by good subject knowledge and by the systematic refinement and improvement of pupils' performance. This has a direct impact upon pupils' sense of achievement and upon their progress. Lessons in Years 4 and 5 relating to soccer skills, and dance lessons in Reception and Year 1 exemplified such qualities. Real demands upon pupils' performance and a combination of hard work and fun promoted significant gains in standards.

158 The subject is led well. The subject manager has considerable subject expertise, much enthusiasm and a clear understanding of his role. Sound documentation is being put in place to guide teachers' planning, to support a balanced programme and to ensure that skills are developed systematically.

159 Very limited opportunities are provided for pupils to participate in a range of sports and there is some enrichment of the curriculum through the extra-curricular soccer club. The facilities available for physical education are good and make an important contribution to learning.

160 The last inspection reported a number shortcomings relating to physical education including the absence of a planned programme to support the progressive acquisition of skills and a lack of subject expertise on the part of some teachers. A good scheme is currently being put into practice and teachers' understanding is at least satisfactory and often good. Overall, the response to the issues raised in the previous inspection has been good.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE)

161 Standards in RE are average at the ages of seven and eleven. Satisfactory arrangements are made for the pupils who withdraw from RE lessons.

162 There have been some improvements since the previous inspection. The curriculum reflects the national guidelines. A two-year cycle has been put in place to accommodate the mixed age classes. Useful resource boxes have been developed for each religion studied.

163 Due to timetable arrangements no RE lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2. However discussion with pupils, together with a scrutiny of books indicates work undertaken is satisfactory.

164 Pupils' books show that by Year 2 pupils have learnt about a range of festivals and Bible stories, including Harvest, Christmas and the creation story. In line with the agreed syllabus pupils have studied two major faiths, (Christianity and Islam) in depth. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have visited the Thomas Risey Church to extend their knowledge of Christianity. Factual learning about Islam is attractively displayed in the school. Pupils take

care with their work and record their written work and drawings neatly. Teachers use marking to praise and encourage pupils.

165 Discussion with Year 2 pupils shows that their understanding of Christianity and Islam is satisfactory with a significant minority of pupils having a higher than expected knowledge and understanding of both religions. They are clear about some similarities and differences between Christianity and Islam. For example they know Christianity and Islam are different religions and that believers are called Christians and Muslims. They can name the places of worship and the holy books used for each faith. From discussion with the whole class it is clear that they are interested and positive about both religions they have studied.

166 Teaching of RE in Years 3 to 6 presents a mixed picture. There is a wide variation in the quality of teaching from poor to very good. Not all classes were seen but two of the four lessons observed were judged to be unsatisfactory, with pupils making limited progress. Teaching is better at the top end of the school and ranges from satisfactory to very good. In the very good lesson, pupils achieved above the national expectation because the teacher had high expectations. By the end of the session the pupils had looked at a variety of versions of the Bible and reflected in real depth on the meaning of the texts. In the unsatisfactory lessons observed, the teaching lacked challenge and pace. In both classes the teachers did not apply the schools agreed behaviour rules effectively to a significant minority of pupils with inappropriate behaviour. This wasted time and slowed down the learning for other pupils.

167 Discussion with pupils in lessons and with a group of Year 6 pupils indicates that most have retained their factual knowledge. Older pupils make some comparisons between customs and beliefs in relation to Christianity and Buddhism. They explain with accuracy the basic requirements of being a Christian. They talk knowledgeably and with interest about the eight stages on the Buddhist path to enlightenment. They have some basic factual knowledge of Judaism to build on when it is studied in greater depth later in the term.

168 Overall, the syllabus makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural understanding. Pupils are taught to respect people, different religions and beliefs, animals, and the environment. There are good links between religious education and the school's programme for personal, social, and community education. Pupils' moral and social development is well fostered in their RE work.

169 The co-ordinator gives informal support to staff and has updated the school's policy statement. Teaching and learning are not monitored which limits the school's capacity to improve some of the teaching in Years 3 to 6. There is little evidence of ICT being used regularly for research purposes. Resources are satisfactory.