

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **JOHN STREET COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Ellesmere Port

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111086

Headteacher: Mrs. J Johnson

Reporting inspector: Mr O L Thomas  
16041

Dates of inspection: 26 - 30 January 2002

Inspection number: 243704

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Ellesmere Port

South Wirral

Postcode: CH65 2ED

Telephone number: 0151 355 1524

Fax number: 0151 356 8798

Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Captain D O'Brien

Date of previous inspection: 17 March 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
16041	O L Thomas	Registered inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Physical education Equal opportunities Special educational needs	What sort of school is it? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
11077	J Harrison	Lay inspector		Attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
17711	J B Thomas	Team inspector	English Geography History	How high are standards? How well does the school care for its pupils?
30023	R Taylor	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Music	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
30243	A Heakin	Team inspector	Religious education Foundation Stage	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school roll has declined since the last inspection. There are 185 pupils on roll, which includes 26 part-time nursery children. The attainment of most pupils on entry is well below what is usually found; a significant number have delayed speech and language difficulties. The area the school serves is challenging both socially and economically. The accommodation in the area is mixed, with the majority of pupils living in rented accommodation. There is a high incidence of one parent families and there is high unemployment in the area. The school was originally built in 1934 as a secondary school; however, it has undergone extensive remodelling with seven spacious classrooms, three additional resource rooms and a good sized hall. There are 49 per cent of pupils eligible for free school meals, which is well above the national average. There are 51 pupils on the register of special educational needs, 46 are in Years R-6, with 32 of these being at Stage 2 or above; five children in the nursery class. Four pupils have statements of special educational needs. This is well above what is usually found. The school does not currently serve any pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds, traveller, refugees or asylum seekers' families. There have been 11 exclusions for fixed periods and one permanent exclusion in the last year.

The school is currently involved in a local Education Action Zone project, which has made additional resources available. The school has recently achieved a Department for Education and Skills (DFES) achievement award for improvement to its test results. Significant staffing, long term staff absence, recruitment difficulties and limited funding have been features of the school's history since the last inspection in 1997.

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

The effective leadership of the Headteacher has moved the school forward well in the key areas of raising standards, teaching and learning for pupils by the age of 11 since the last inspection when many weaknesses prevailed. Pupils make good progress and achieve well overall because of the mainly good teaching. Long-term absence and recruitment difficulties in the infants have hindered improvements, and firm intervention is now needed to raise standards by the age of seven. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

- Improvements to pupils' performance in the national tests by the age of 11 because of good quality teaching.
- The good quality provision and good progress made by children in the nursery and reception classes.
- The good progress made in information and communication technology in a short time, in the upper juniors.
- The direction given by the Headteacher and senior staff in driving the school forward.
- The very good management and high expectations for pupils' behaviour.
- The high quality provision for pupils' personal development.
- The very good procedures for assessing pupils' progress.
- The quality of information provided to parents.
- The efficient use of funding and drive to seek best value.
- Curriculum provision.

### What could be improved

- The achievements and standards attained by pupils at the end of the infant stage.
- Enhance the focus on raising standards of pupils' work throughout the school in English and mathematics to support attainment in all subjects.
- The systematic recording of information about pupils' personal and general skills and abilities.

*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 March 1997. Since that time rapid progress has been made in many areas of its work with the exception of standards by the time pupils are seven years old. The serious weaknesses in management, teaching, planning and balance of the curriculum have been eradicated.

The senior management team is very effective and development planning is good; it focuses on the important priorities although more attention is needed to monitoring the outcomes of teaching and learning and taking effective action to drive achievements in the infants to the level of those found elsewhere in the school.

Amongst its successes the school has received a DfES Achievement award for improving standards by the time pupils leave the school at the age of 11. Teaching quality is now good overall and staff have a strong commitment to team work and success. The literacy and numeracy strategies have been implemented well. The school has a comprehensive range of policies and guidance in place to cover all aspects of its work. The procedures for assessing what pupils know are very good and the use of this information to plan carefully for the range of ability is mainly well executed. Homework is very well planned for pupils in the upper school to prepare them for the next stage of education. Pupils' personal development is now a strength of the school. The school works very hard to involve parents in their children's education but its efforts are not always appreciated well enough.

In spite of some lingering staffing difficulties, the future impact of which cannot be easily measured, the school is overall well placed to move forward to address the challenges remaining.

### STANDARDS

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

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

**Key**

well above average    A

above average        B

average                C

below average        D

well below average    E

The table shows very good added value by the time pupils leave the school considering their low starting base. Results are moving closer to those expected nationally by the age of 11

and the trend has been one of consistent improvement. The school met its planned targets. The inspection finds that the current Year 6 has a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and whilst most pupils are making good progress, the school's targets for this year group are appropriately lower than last year given the level of pupils with special educational needs in the class.

The inspection, which judges pupils' attainment across all aspects of their work, finds that most pupils are not currently attaining securely at the nationally expected Level 4 in English, all aspects of mathematics, except numeracy or in science, except living things. It is quite possible that with the planned booster support and the high quality teaching they are currently receiving, they may well achieve their targets.

In the nursery and reception classes pupils achieve well but do not attain in all of the Early Learning Goals by the age of five mainly because they have come from a very low academic starting point.

The results are not so positive for seven year olds, where over the past few years, they have attained well below national averages and similar schools. Mathematics results improved to in line with national expectations in the most recent tests but overall the trend is downward and this indicates some cause for concern given the pupils' good progress by the age of five. The main areas of weakness in the pupils' day-to-day work are in writing and aspects of mathematics. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well overall by the time they leave the school. However, inconsistencies in their progress between the key stages are detracting from a steady picture of improvement.

In information and communication technology, pupils attain as expected in communication and handling information by the ages of seven and 11, their progress is less good in other aspects of the subject. Progress has been notably good with some very good progress in the upper juniors.

In religious education, pupils' attainment by the ages of seven and 11 match the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. By the time they leave the school, pupils have a satisfactory factual knowledge of Christianity and other world religions but their understanding is weaker.

In art, physical education and singing pupils attain as expected for their ages. In the other subjects standards do not yet meet national expectations but are moving closer to them for pupils by the ages of seven and 11. Weaknesses in attainment in the subjects have much to do with the pupils' limited knowledge of the world and their ability to retain and internalise information.

## **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Good. They enjoy school and are interested in the activities offered to them although many can become easily distracted.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good when under the supervision of adults. A significant minority lack self discipline
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils respond well to the rules and conduct expected of them. Pupils mainly get on well with each other. They are given good opportunities to use their initiative.



Attendance	Broadly in line with national averages. Some pupils arrive late in spite of the school's best efforts.
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The school makes every effort to involve parents but parents' contribution to children's learning is not widely evident.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good overall. The teaching of literacy and numeracy are at least satisfactory and often very good. The best teaching is in Year 1 and in the juniors. All staff have high expectations for good behaviour and this results in pupils staying on task and being productive in lessons. The relationships with pupils are warm and caring. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers are well supported by non-teaching staff. The assessments kept, and their use, ensure that teachers plan well for the needs of all pupils. Pupils gain knowledge well in lessons but their recall of what they have learned is too often short lived and this consequently demands considerable time being spent on reinforcing and consolidating past learning. To improve areas of weakness in teaching in Year 2 greater consistency and intervention are needed in checking pupils' work to show them how improvements can be made. The teaching of handwriting is not effective enough to support writing skills. To enable pupils to become independent learners there is ample opportunity for them to check their own targets for success to improve the quality of their work and to have more chance to improve their thinking skills and use what they know to investigate in open ended situations.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Requirements are met. The school provides a relevant and interesting curriculum to broaden pupils' views of the world. Extracurricular activities enhance the pupils' learning very well as does the community involvement.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory but its use is very good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Spiritual and cultural development are good and social and moral are very good. Personal and social education planning is comprehensive and meets the pupils' needs very well. There is an ever present challenge to help pupils understand the multicultural society in which they will grow.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well indeed. Pastoral care is first rate. The use of assessments are largely effective in planning suitable work. Information about pupils' general skills and abilities is not formalised to form accessible, ongoing records.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the Headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The senior management team works well together and has the confidence of staff. Monitoring of teaching and learning has not impacted consistently on standards attained or teaching and learning in all areas of the school. The recently appointed Key Stage 1 manager has not been in post long enough to influence the longstanding weaknesses in achievement and standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Well. The principles of best value are very well applied. More regular questioning about the progress on improving standards in the infants is needed.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school knows itself well but monitoring has not been rigorously systematic and firmer action is needed in areas of weakness.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are good and well used. The accommodation has been vastly improved and supports learning well. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The quality of teaching is good.</li> <li>• They would feel comfortable approaching the school with problems.</li> <li>• The school expects children to work hard.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• Pupils make good progress.</li> <li>• The school is helping their children become mature.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of extra activities.</li> </ul>

- The inspection agrees with the positive points although there is some variation in teaching quality between the key stages. In relation to the range of additional activities offered to the pupils, the inspection disagrees with the parents and finds that the school offers considerably more than many of its size and the range is very good to complement learning and pupils' interests. The achievements and standards attained by pupils at the end of the infant stage.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. The test performance of 11 year old pupils in 2001 show results are moving closer to national averages. When the school's test performance is considered against similar schools the school's results are well above average in all three subjects showing added value by the age of 11.
2. A significant minority of pupils attained at the higher Level 5 in English and mathematics. Teacher assessments were largely accurate. Boys do better than girls in all three core subjects. The school's trend of improvement is upward and rising. The school met its targets last year and although they are lower this year this reflects the nature of the cohort, which has a significant number of pupils at higher levels on the register of special educational needs. Even so the inspection finds that these targets may be challenging for the school to reach when pupils' current levels of performance are considered. However, it is not to say that they will not be reached when the planned booster support is used and given the good quality teaching in Year 6.
3. The picture is far more disappointing for seven year old pupils test results in 2001. For some time pupils have not reached the national averages and when compared to similar schools the school's results are well below average. This suggests that standards do not rise quickly in reading and writing although some improvements in mathematics are evident. Too few pupils attain at Level 2c or above in any aspect and this indicates that they will not be on target to attain the expected Level 4 when they reach 11 years old. Unusually boys fared better than girls in all areas. The trend of results was better in 1997 and 2000 but the trend is erratic; in 1998 and 2001 results were very low in reading and writing and well down in mathematics. The results are even more concerning when the pupils' good progress in the Foundation Stage is considered.
4. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is well below what is usually found and although they make good and at times very good progress in the nursery and reception classes, this has not been sustained in the infant classes over time. There are a number of explanations for this lack of added value. The school has suffered from significant staffing difficulties including long-term staff absence, which has also left the infant stage without a key stage manager. The focus of management attention has been centred, as in many schools, in raising standards in Key Stage 2. Responsibility must lie with management in that although weaknesses in the infants have been identified through monitoring, not enough action has been taken to raise standards and overcome barriers to improvement.
5. The inspection finds that standards of work are not yet at the expected Level 4 for most 11 year olds although they are working systematically towards what is expected. There have been many gaps to fill in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding since they left the infants in English, mathematics and science. By the age of 11, in English pupils improve their speaking and listening skills and achieve well against their prior attainment. Pupils become technically competent readers but their understanding is more limited. Writing is the weaker element of the subject and the pupils make slow progress in the infants but good progress in

the juniors. Pupils have limited experiences to write about and this is hindered by their lack of extended vocabulary. Handwriting is not systematically taught and the school has not yet come to grips with ensuring pupils achieve well and transfer their skills to everyday work. In mathematics, pupils attain as expected in numeracy by the ages of seven and 11. In all other aspects of mathematics they do not attain as expected. In science, pupils' knowledge of life and living processes is satisfactory. However, their retained knowledge of scientific phenomena and investigational science, even where learning has been particularly stimulating such as recent work on Forces in Action, is poor.

6. In religious education, pupils learn satisfactorily about Christianity and other main world religions but they take little understanding from what they study.
7. Standards in information and communication technology are as expected in communication and pupils have made good progress in this aspect; they do not yet have a firm base of skills in all of the elements of the subjects.
8. In the other subjects, pupils attain as expected in art, singing and physical education by seven and 11. Standards are below expectations in all other aspects of music and in history, geography and design and technology.
9. Pupils do not achieve as well as expected in the infants although the current temporary teaching in Year 1 is helping pupils making good progress and many are attaining well for their age. In the juniors, pupils are making good systematic progress from class to class and they achieve well given their prior attainment. Pupils' achievements are held back by the inability of many to retain knowledge and verbalise what they know. It is undoubtedly the overall very good quality teaching in the juniors, which supports pupils' achievements against their low starting point.

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

10. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, have generally good attitudes towards school. This has been sustained since the last inspection. Most show a pride in their school and try hard to please their teachers. Pupils are keen to show their work and talk enthusiastically about school visits and are pleased with recent school improvements, such as carpeting in the corridors.
11. The younger pupils in the nursery and reception classes, whilst positively motivated, often have poor concentration or are immature for their age. They enter the school with low social skills. However, during their progress through the school there is a steady improvement in these attributes. Pupils in Year 1 have very good attitudes and have acquired, through good quality teaching a positive work ethic. By Years 5 and 6 pupils show that they are capable of sustained concentration when suitably engaged by the work, as for example using the interactive white boards for mathematics, English and geography.
12. Parents have noticed improvements in pupils' behaviour at the school. Behaviour in lessons is satisfactory. This is not easily achieved easily, as some pupils are difficult to motivate and a few others have challenging behaviour. Nevertheless, teachers expect good standards in the classroom enabling pupils to learn with confidence. At times, despite good teaching, too much chatter and restlessness and odd incidences of wilful defiance affects some lessons, particularly in the younger year groups. In the last year the school excluded a higher than average

number of pupils for short periods for poor behaviour. These exclusions were considered carefully and well justified. The numbers of exclusions are falling, signifying a general improvement in behaviour standards.

13. Relationships in the school are very good. Around the school pupils are friendly, they often hold open doors for adults in the corridors. Many volunteer to help their teachers, taking back registers, or setting out equipment. They play happily at lunch and break times, like the way their playground is marked out for games and enjoy the balls, stilts and skipping ropes to play with. There is relatively little bullying at the school. Pupils are very confident in the abilities of their teachers to sort out those incidences that may occur. They know that it is not right to leave anyone upset or isolated and are inclusive in their play.
14. Levels of attendance at the school are improving slightly and are close to the national average. Last year the overall attendance was 93.4 per cent. A few pupils are regularly late in the mornings.
15. Pupils make very good gains in personal development. They discuss personal and social issues with their teachers and show a good degree of respect for others' feelings and beliefs. They help with assemblies, the library and with play times. In the week of inspection the school council met and responsibly discussed how to solve litter problems and make and publicise a suggestion box.

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

16. The quality of teaching is good overall which is a more positive picture than at the time of the last inspection when it was deemed satisfactory.
17. When each stage is considered separately, the Foundation Stage reveals effective teaching where children make good and at times very good progress including those who have special educational needs. Teachers and nursery nurses have a very good knowledge and understanding of early learning and child development. They use language well and directly teach skills within an effective caring and stimulating social setting. Clear procedures, routines and expectations are being established to create opportunities for the development of independence and initiative. In both the nursery and reception classes, the freedom of choice children have is well planned and complements focused activities and directed teaching sessions.
18. In the infants, teaching overall is satisfactory in the lessons seen and varied from good in Year 1 and on occasion excellent, where work is well matched to the pupils' needs and the pace and level of challenge are fast moving. In Year 2 teaching was satisfactory in lessons where pupils gain from introductions, explanations and practical tasks but scrutiny of their recorded work shows too little impact from the teacher to improve what they do and enable systematic progress. There is an urgent need for further improvement here in the use of assessment to plan work which is better matched to the pupils' needs, and for there to be far more rigorous marking and intervention in the learning process. The school's own monitoring has identified weaknesses in Year 2.
19. Teaching in the juniors is very good overall because teachers have secure subject knowledge, high expectations and work is generally well matched to the pupils' needs.

20. Highlighted in the last report was the need to improve planning, which was generally unsatisfactory; the use of assessment to inform planning was judged to be poor; and teachers' class control, which was insecure. The school has been very successful in improving procedures and practice in these areas and standards have risen as a consequence.
21. Planning for literacy and numeracy follows the structure of the national frameworks, teachers adapt the sequence of their lessons well to meet the needs of their pupils. Overall the school's approach to the teaching of the subjects is good. The school has recognised for itself that teachers need to focus in greater detail on the teaching of writing and the investigative aspect of mathematics and science.
22. Teachers have very high expectations of the pupils they expect them to pay attention and behave well, which they generally do. They encourage them to concentrate on their work and to persevere with tasks. Accordingly, most pupils respond well and their attitudes to learning and behaviour in lessons are almost always good. This has much to do with their learning in personal and social skills they receive and the teachers' vigilance and high expectations. However, there are a small number of pupils throughout the school who have a poor work ethic and are very immature.
23. Pupils with special educational needs make good or very good progress when receiving support from the highly skilled staff who are committed to the pupils' welfare and academic needs. Tasks are well matched and reflect the targets in their individual educational plans and targets for grouped activities. However, despite the teachers' and support staff's best efforts, the limited provision results in some teachers, generally in foundation subject lessons, coping with high levels of special educational needs on their own, which sometimes hinders the progress pupils make within the lesson.
24. In most lessons the teachers' management and organisational skills are very good, particularly their behaviour management which is a strength of teaching throughout the school. Good relationships prevail resulting in pupils who feel safe and secure in their learning. The staff present good role models for their pupils and the parents appreciate this. Teachers generally use questioning well to engage pupils in discussions, for example, in Year 2 pupils learned about the Great Fire of London and made good progress through the skilful questioning by the teacher which enabled them to share their knowledge of Samuel Pepys' Diary and how the text could be used in their detective work of finding out about the historic event.
25. There is inconsistency in the generally good marking of pupils' work in that it is not showing pupils how they might improve or requiring them to. Individual targets are not being used well enough to engage pupils in evaluating their own progress.
26. Pupils' achievements mirror the quality of teaching in that they start off well, and then take dip at the end of the infants, before making good or better progress through the juniors. The good start they make within the Foundation Stage and Year 1 shows there is potential for learning to be much more systematic and lead to higher achievement for pupils by the end of the infant stage.

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

27. Improvements have been made to curriculum provision since the last inspection when there were many significant weaknesses.
28. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is good and is strength of the school. It provides for all areas of learning and meets children's needs well. The curriculum is planned in accordance with the Early Learning Goals and promotes intellectual, physical and personal development. A strong emphasis is appropriately placed on developing children's personal and social skills.
29. The school provides a suitably broad and balanced curriculum in which subjects are taught in accordance with the requirements of the National Curriculum and locally agreed syllabus for religious education. A strength of the curriculum is the prominent and effective focus on personal, social and health education, with timetabled sessions throughout both key stages. There is a sex education policy and a drugs misuse policy in place and these are due to be reviewed and updated in the near future. Pupils are also involved in circle time when they usefully explore and share their feelings and, an effective Schools Council meets regularly; this gives pupils involved first hand insight into decision making and accepting responsibility. Personal and Social skills are not formally tracked and recorded for each pupil, in order to build up a progressive structure for assessment other than in the Early Years.
30. The curriculum planned for pupils in the nursery and reception class takes account of the requirements for the Foundation Stage. Teachers' planning reflects the activities across the six areas of learning and the quality and range of learning opportunities is very good. The principles of learning through play and experience underlie the curriculum and there is an appropriate heavy emphasis on fostering children's personal, social and emotional development and their skills in language, literacy and mathematical development. The school is keen to develop the outside play area so that provision for physical activities can take place in a secure and stimulating area, specifically designed to meet the needs of the youngest children in school.
31. At both key stages planning is comprehensive. The school has in place secure policies and schemes of work for each subject, which covers the progressive development of the pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding as they move through the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The effectiveness of the strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills is a strength of the school. However, better use could be made of the opportunities for speaking and listening throughout the school.
32. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is in line with national expectations for both key stages and is good for pupils in the Foundation Stage. The school is socially inclusive and ensures equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. Good use is made of the support staff in the school. Pupils with statements of special educational needs are well supported by the appropriate agencies involved with them.
33. There are very good opportunities for pupils to participate in extracurricular activities. This is in contrast to the views of some parents who feel there is not a range of interesting activities. These include after-school clubs for homework,

cooking, chess club, art, gymnastics as well as football and netball skills development. The school also places high emphasis on providing first-hand experience for the pupils by organising visits to museums for example, Warrington Museum, the local boat museum, the Albert Dock in Liverpool, and art galleries such as the Walker Art gallery. The Year 6 pupils have recently had a very successful residential visit to Burwardsley where they were able to participate in a wide range of activities to enhance their learning.

34. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibilities, and are relied upon to deliver registers and dinner numbers to the school office and to take messages. Behaviour management is a real strength, pupils in all classes are reminded of class rules and these are prominently displayed around the classrooms and corridors. Pupils show respect for the needs of others, and are able to distinguish right from wrong. There are clearly understood sanctions in place for misbehaviour and each class has a system of happy / sad faces to record how well pupils behave.
35. The community links with the school include regular visitors, links with the local playgroup and other local primary schools. These links include participation in joint sporting activities such as a swimming gala, athletics and football matches. The Education Action Zone links have resulted in shared staff training with other schools, and an art and literacy project for able pupils led by a teacher from the school. Smooth transition from Key Stage 2 to the associated high schools is enhanced with 'familiarisation' days during the summer term prior to the move. One of the high schools has recently set up a valuable link, whereby, the Year 6 pupils can e-mail Year 7 pupils to find out more about school life.
36. The provision for the development of pupils' personal values is overall very good. The school has planning for all aspects of the provision. Provision for their moral development and social development is very good and good in respect of spiritual and cultural development. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
37. Within their curriculum activities they have completed high quality artwork following the styles of leading artists. Their work is complemented by the imaginative celebration of their paintings in displays around the school, which significantly adds to the ethos of high expectation. Pupils' efforts and good behaviour are celebrated during collective worship. Limited time is available in collective worship for reflection. Classrooms have natural objects and attractive displays on which pupils can ponder and explore.
38. The development of pupils' moral values is very good and significantly supports learning. Parents support the school's provision. All pupils have class rules and they understand the parameters in which they work. Although many children start school with the disadvantage of limited personal values and poor self-discipline, they enjoy the secure, firm and consistent environment of their school life. Pupils recognise and respect the moral values expected by the school and cooperate with the sanctions imposed for breach of the rules. The management of behaviour is very good and makes a major contribution to the pupils' progress and learning.
39. The pupils' social development is very good and complimented by the very good role models provided by staff for care, respect and consideration of the feelings of others. Pupils work cooperatively and share ideas in class. At lunchtime and breaks they socialise well and there is little disagreement. They are seen working together on projects and sharing their ideas in class. Pupils are well involved in



their local community and they use it as part of their studies in geography and history. The pupils' social development is well complemented by the personal, social and health education programme. Older pupils are given responsibilities and the school council is a good example of how pupils take responsibility and are able to make decisions.

40. The good provision for pupils' cultural development is an improvement from the last inspection. Pupils study their own heritage extensively and have gained an insight into the main religions of the world. They have made visits in the immediate area, in which they live, and visited locations of cultural interest such as Chester, the Boat Museum and Tatton Hall. Given the nature of the school's cohort it is important that the school continues its efforts to broaden pupils' view of the multicultural world in which they will grow.

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

41. The school takes very good care of pupils. Pupils say that their teachers and other pupils are helpful and friendly and that they feel confident in the school. There is clear equal opportunities provision and no children are left out in any way.
42. All prospective Nursery entrants are visited at home and settle smoothly into the school. The children who are under five have a separate safe play area and are well looked after during the day. There is good teamwork in the nursery and reception classes between the teachers and support assistants to monitor and support the young pupils very well.
43. Effective child protection procedures are in place. All staff and non-teaching staff have received training on child protection and local authority guidelines are followed. The school has established an orderly and safe environment. The governors and caretaker take good care to improve the premises and ensure it is well maintained, with up to date health and safety risk assessments. Teachers look after the pupils very well and are considerate, for example the school provides bottles of spring water in the Key Stage 2 classrooms. The school as part of "Parent Aid" provides comprehensive information for parents on a range of support services and useful contacts. This extends care into the community.
44. There are very effective procedures to monitor and promote good behaviour. Pupils are keen to win "the star of the day and week." They are involved in drawing up their own classroom rules, which gives them a sense of ownership. There are some pupils who can be challenging; the teachers manage such pupils well, but nevertheless, this takes time from the lesson. Supervision levels are good. Staff have received training from the police on conflict management and the mid day assistants have been trained in behaviour management.
45. Attendance procedures are good. The secretary contacts parents on the first day their children are away; this has helped to reduce the level of unauthorised absence. The school nurse and education welfare officer give very good support to the school and families by making home visits when pupils are absent for sickness or other reasons. Individual attendance is well monitored.
46. Procedures to support personal development are very good. Each class has "circle time" sessions where personal confidences are shared and issues such as bullying discussed. Recently Year 5 pupils enjoyed a talk from the local mayor about the role of the council and citizenship. Pupils are actively encouraged to

take responsibility and help others. Class teachers keep good records of pupils' personal development, but there is no standardised ongoing record of personal skills and general ability as they move through the school.

47. The procedures and use of assessments were a weakness at the time of the last inspection. They have improved significantly. The school has made very good progress, since the last inspection, in formulating procedures for assessment and good progress and in putting them into effect. As a result, teachers are better informed about the standards their pupils reach and the progress they are making. This helps them plan work, which is more challenging and relevant to individuals and groups of pupils. The exception is in Year 2 where pupils' progress is not tracked well enough and a stronger push is needed to raise standards and expectations.
48. The school analyses the results of tests, including the annual statutory tests for seven and 11 year olds and draws conclusions from the results, which help it improve teaching and learning. The analysis in mathematics, for example, highlights, which questions pupils, answered well and how many attained at various levels. The analysis has been more effective at Key Stage 2 than Key Stage 1.
49. In the reception class, children are assessed against local authority base line tests. The teacher uses the results to plan the curriculum and to evaluate the progress children make during the year. Detailed assessment records allow the teacher to plan very carefully to meet children's individual needs and to ensure that the teacher and the nursery nurse work jointly to help children make good progress. All staff in the Foundation Stage know their children well and use this information effectively to improve children's skills.
50. Individual educational plans are well written and focus on the pupils' most pressing needs. Targets are regularly monitored for success and shared with parents as required. The wide range of tests administered for English and mathematics help teachers to check on the standards pupils reach. In Key Stage 2 the results are analysed in order to see how successful teaching has been and how well pupils have been learning.
51. Each year group has predicted targets and these are reviewed on a termly basis for reading, writing, spelling and mathematics. Each pupil has targets for improvements in writing through the school and in mathematics in the juniors. These are appropriate but not checked well enough for success. Pupils do not have them ready at hand to help them in their work in other subjects. Currently pupils do not play a big enough part in the assessment of their own work. Clearer use of targets would certainly support this activity.
52. A very comprehensive range of assessments are in place in English, including the use of optional national tests, reading and spelling tests, guided reading and writing assessment sheets, the use of a literacy development continuum and a 'my talk' sheet to monitor speaking and listening skills. These are used well to track pupils' progress and set targets for achievement. The school does not, however, have a writing portfolio to track improvements in writing as pupils move through the school. There is a 'golden book', which is essentially a record of achievement in which pupils choose pieces of work of which they are proud. Whilst the school aims for this work to be annotated, leveled and dated this is not always the case and it is difficult to see how it shows progress in any particular

skill. There are also assessment sheets for all foundation subjects linked to units of study in the QCA schemes, these support identification of what pupils have covered and understand.

53. Marking of work is mainly good and helps many pupils move forward. It was inconsistent and not seen as being supportive enough at the last inspection. Since that time the school has introduced a marking policy, which is now beginning to have a better effect on pupils' progress as it is aimed more at pointing to how pupils can improve their work. The exception to this good picture is in Year 2 where marking does not have strong enough impact on helping pupils to improve.
54. Whilst there are both informal and formal procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development, they are good, but not yet of the quality of other assessments. They are dispersed through speaking and listening assessments, behaviour files, attendance records and are discussed in assemblies and staff meetings. The school has yet to devise a system whereby this information can be as easily accessed and used in the same way as the academic information. The quality of school reports is good overall but in some cases they are overly descriptive at the expense of evaluation of standards. The school has targets in mathematics in the juniors, which have been shared with parents to give them insight into what their children are aiming for.

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

55. Parents are very pleased with the school. There was a relatively low response rate from parents to the questionnaire sent out before the inspection and to the pre-inspection meeting held at the school. However, 100 per cent of those who did reply said that they feel welcome in the school and think that the teaching is good. They also believe the school expects their children to work hard and is helping their children to become more responsible. Parents have noticed improvements in the school since the last inspection in the accommodation and the leadership. Parents did not have any significant concerns, apart from wanting more activities for their children outside of lessons.
56. The inspectors broadly agree with parents' positive views. However, they consider that there is a more than adequate range of extracurricular clubs, sports and residential visits.
57. The school works hard to encourage parents to participate in school activities and work; is successful in forming a good partnership with most parents, but meets a disappointing response from others. Parents give sound support to the school, several help in the classroom, an increasing number help with trips. School productions are well supported. Some parents do not always give enough support to their children's education by, for example, listening to reading at home, attending educational events or the termly consultation meetings with teachers to discuss their child's progress.
58. The school is running several initiatives to encourage parents to become more involved. A room in the school has been converted for use as a community room. This room was used last term for finger puppet making, craft sessions and Family Literacy, run in conjunction with the local college. Whilst attendance at some of these events was initially disappointing, there are signs that they are becoming increasingly popular.

59. Written communications sent by the school are of very good quality. The regular weekly newsletter is an excellent way of keeping parents informed about the children's work and successes. The prospectus has a friendly tone, with plenty of photographs of the children's activities. Parents like the comprehensive end of year reports about their child's progress. These present a clear, thorough picture of the work and strengths and weaknesses. The inspectors, however, consider that they could be further improved by more information about the child's actual achievement in the subject.

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

60. The overall quality of leadership and management by the Headteacher and key staff in partnership with the governing body is good. The serious weaknesses identified in the last inspection in 1997, in the management, planning and balance of the curriculum, have been eradicated. Rapid progress has been made in ensuring a clear direction for the work and development of the school and the promotion of high standards, except that more effective action is needed to drive achievements in the infants to those found elsewhere in the school. The school has been awarded a DfES Achievement Award for 2000/01 for raising standards at the end of the juniors.
61. Since taking up her appointment in 1998, the Headteacher has been central to the school's success and staff, parents and governors have high regard for her clear vision of what sort of school John Street should be and her commitment and resolve to providing the 'best' for the school and its community. The senior management team has worked well together. The Headteacher and assistant Headteacher are a very effective team, who draw on individual expertise and talents where ever possible and, despite numerous staff changes and restructuring due to long-term absence, have established a team spirit amongst all staff, who share a common purpose and zeal to provide high quality provision for their pupils.
62. Policy statements, schemes of work and negotiated job descriptions are well defined, setting out roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for individual staff and governors within an agreed framework of strategic development planning. Specific in-service training initiatives have been undertaken by individual staff and, the whole staff and governors, to ensure the necessary skills have been developed and used to secure success. For example, in the implementation of the national literacy and numeracy projects, information and communication technology, provision for pupils with special educational needs. Funding has also been used well to give coordinators non-contact time to review their areas of responsibility. This has resulted in the compilation of well-informed policy statements, schemes of work, planning and assessment and review procedures, which have helped to safeguard coverage, continuity, and progression of curriculum subjects throughout the school.
63. Systematic monitoring by the Headteacher, core coordinators and local education authority advisory personnel has played a key role for the school and governors in identifying strengths and weaknesses in the delivery of the curriculum and the drawing up of priorities for development. All of these initiatives have impacted well on the quality of provision and pupils' achievements in the Foundation Stage and junior classes. However, there has not been the same level of success within the infants, where the attainment of seven year olds has been low and remains well below both the national average and that compared with similar schools. Action has been taken to address the underachievement in the infants but has been counterbalanced by staffing difficulties, which have been complex and resulted in

a lapse in leadership in the infants and this is unsatisfactory, given the pupils' good progress within the nursery and reception classes.

64. The school development plan is comprehensive and is a clear, corporate statement of the school's intentions. Development planning is well established, having been used strategically since 1998 as an effective management tool in focusing attention on: raising standards in teaching and learning, raising expectations, implementing changes to deliver national, local and school initiatives, improving accommodation and resources and the overall quality of education provided. The review of progress in meeting targets has been carried out annually, resulting in an ongoing agenda of agreed priorities.
65. Initiatives have been carefully costed and spending of the limited budget and extra grants have been tightly controlled through the application of the principles of best value. These stringent measures and judicious use of monies governed by effective financial planning have brought the school through some difficult times. For example, a deficit budget, staff shortages, limited resources and mixed age classes. The current situation is now small, single age classes, adequate levels of staffing, non-contact time for key staff, in-service training, good resources and accommodation, which has been totally upgraded. These management actions have made a good impact on the overall quality of education provided for the pupils. The parents expressed their gratitude to the Headteacher and staff for these improvements at the pre inspection meeting. In addition, the school's involvement in the local Education Action Zone Project and Community Project have also been well managed, resulting in greater involvement of some parents and members of the community. Physical education and sporting activities have particularly benefited from funding through the additional resources and training facilities made available.
66. The school makes best use of the accommodation available; classrooms, resource rooms and corridor spaces are geared to the needs of the pupils. Classrooms are generally well-organised, resources readily available and well used by staff and pupils.
67. The installation and use of interactive white boards in the upper junior classes are worthy of particular mention - their impact on the quality of learning, in stimulating the pupils' interest and their enhancement of the teachers' communication skills in the direct teaching of subject skills is excellent value for money.
68. Overall the match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is satisfactory. Restructuring, due to staff changes and absences, has hindered progress in some areas. For example, the recently appointed Key Stage 1 manager has not had time to influence the quality of provision at the end of the infant stage. The provision of support staff is causing individual teachers to cope independently with high levels of special educational needs pupils in some lessons, which hinders progress, and is particularly frustrating when compared to the generally good or very good progress these pupils make when being helped by support staff, whose impact is of high quality.
69. The involvement of members of the governing body has been an integral part of the programme of strategic planning. They are actively involved in the decision making process, including the annual review of targets. They meet their statutory requirements, which they failed to do at the time of the last inspection. Performance management is in place. They are involved in monitoring and have acted as a critical friend in holding the school to account in respect of the overriding issues of curriculum provision, staffing and accommodation. However, their procedures have not been sufficiently rigorous and their questioning

demanding enough to have focused appropriate attention and energies to raising standards at the end of the infant stage.

70. The day-to-day administration of the school is very good, procedures are helpful and supportive to staff, pupils and parents and are well carried out by the highly experienced and efficient school administrative officer. Procedures are having a positive effect on absences and the number and frequency of pupils arriving late. The school is cleaned and maintained to a very high level by the site manager and his staff and is a credit to their efforts. Parents and pupils shared their appreciation of the welcoming, warm and clean environment the school offers.
71. Overall the school gives satisfactory value for money. Its many strengths, particularly the very good 'value added' dimension of raised standards in the national tests for 11 year olds, being offset by the lack of progress and poor achievements by the seven year olds at the end of the infants. This is some improvement from the last inspection when the school was judged "to just give satisfactory value for money".

## 72. WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

**The governors, Headteacher and staff now need to:**

**Raise swiftly the achievements and standards attained by pupils at the end of the infant stage by ensuring that:**

- outcomes of monitoring are swiftly followed through to address identified weaknesses;
- short term targets are set for improvements in teaching and learning;
- progress towards checking targets for success is regularly monitored and evaluated for success.

*Reference to these issues can be found in paragraph numbers: 3, 4, 9, 18, 47, 53, 63, 71, 85 and 98.*

**Enhance the focus on raising standards of pupils' work in English and mathematics throughout the school to support attainment in all subjects by ensuring that:**

- the school's policy on teaching handwriting is reviewed and implemented consistently;
- all staff rise to the ever present challenge to reinforce and improve pupils' vocabulary and speaking skills;
- opportunities to use and apply literacy and numeracy skills are given the highest priority in the other subjects;
- pupils have more opportunities to investigate in mathematics and handle and analyse data;
- pupils' role in checking work targets for success and improving what they do is increased.

*Reference to these issues can be found in paragraph numbers: 25, 51, 52, 86, 88, 89, 91, 93, 99 and 100,*

**Put in place a whole school system of recording information about pupils' personal and general skills and abilities that gives an on going view of strengths and targets for improvements.**

*Reference to these issues can be found in paragraph numbers: 54*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	52
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	13	21	16	1	0	0
Percentage	2	26	42	32	2	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. When the total number is substantially less than 100. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than two percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	11	159
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	77

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	5	46

#### English as an additional language

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

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.4
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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



**Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	4	12	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	3	3	4
	Girls	7	8	11
	Total	10	11	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	63 (92)	69 (76)	94 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	3	4	3
	Girls	9	11	9
	Total	12	15	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75 (76)	94 (100)	75 (96)
	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 (Year 6)**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	6	14	20

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	6	6
	Girls	9	9	14
	Total	14	15	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	70 (78)	75 (57)	100 (91)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	6	6
	Girls	10	9	14
	Total	16	15	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (74)	75 (57)	100 (74)
	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	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	134
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

**Exclusions in the last school year**

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	11	1
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	23

**Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	135

**Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	35
Number of pupils per FTE adult	10.5

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Financial information**

Financial year	2000-01
	£
Total income	374,740
Total expenditure	358,009
Expenditure per pupil	2,157
Balance brought forward from previous year	6,795
Balance carried forward to next year	23,526

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	180
Number of questionnaires returned	43

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	44	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	44	51	0	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	49	5	2	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	44	9	5	5
The teaching is good.	60	40	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	53	9	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	30	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	35	0	2	0
The school works closely with parents.	44	53	2	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	47	49	0	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	56	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	26	33	23	12	7

## **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**

73. Children enter the nursery in the September or January before their fourth birthday and start their reception class in the September before their fifth birthday. Children attend the nursery part-time for morning sessions and join the reception class on a full-time basis. Twenty-six children attend the nursery and 26 attend the reception class. Each class is managed by a teacher and an assistant who work closely to provide a varied and stimulating curriculum in preparation for children's more formal education.
74. On entry to the nursery, standards of attainment are well below national expectations, a significant number of children have speech and language problems. Children in both classes, including those who have special educational needs make good progress. This is because the teaching is consistently good and the curriculum lively and challenging. Behaviour management is good and the very positive relationships within the nursery and reception classes impact positively in developing children's favourable attitudes to school and their improving ability to conform to school expectations of behaviour. This means that children improve their levels of concentration and are able to benefit from the good curriculum provided for them. Children achieve well against their prior attainment.
75. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is good and is a strength of the school. Since the last inspection the school has successfully introduced the new Foundation Stage curriculum for children of this age and planning accommodates each of the six areas of learning. The organisation and management of children continue to be a strength. The school provides a secure and welcoming learning environment and teachers use appropriate strategies to make sure that all children including those who have special educational needs have full access to the curriculum.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

76. By the end of the reception year most children have made very good progress in their personal and emotional development. Though the majority does not reach the Early Learning Goals in this area, this shows very good achievement and reflects the consistently good teaching and the nurturing environment for children under five. Staff place a strong emphasis on the development of children's personal and social skills, this is because the majority of children lack confidence and positive attitudes to learning when they arrive at the nursery, and a significant number of children have limited self control. As a result of the consistent use of good behaviour management strategies and by being very good role models of behaviour and courtesy, adults are able to encourage children to play together in the home corner, shop and playground. Children learn to respond to instructions and by the end of the Foundation Stage the majority can share equipment and toys fairly. They are encouraged to make choices for example, playing in sand, water or dressing up. Children are able to express their needs and feelings though some are restricted because of their immature speech. Adults are firm but caring in establishing clear routines that help the children to become more independent and confident. The majority of nursery children understand that they must stop what they are doing and listen to their teacher when they hear the sound of the tambourine. Snack time in the nursery is used effectively for children to socialise

and to reinforce acceptable behaviour such as saying 'please' and 'thank-you'. The attractive range of plates and trays add to the occasion, making snack time special. There are good opportunities for children to concentrate or persevere with adult led activities such as drawing from observation or giving change for shop items when adults lead the role-play. Children in reception learn to co-operate as they share computers or construction toys. The majority of children accept turn taking though there remain a small percentage of them who snatch or want to keep toys to themselves. Teachers consistently maintain their firm but caring approach when they manage children who have limited social skills or display temper tantrums. The result is that children become secure in their classroom environment, they grow in confidence and develop positive attitudes to learning. Teachers use every opportunity to promote children's social development including the arranging of visits to local places of interest.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

77. Although progress is good, the majority of children do not reach the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning. The majority of children enter the nursery with skills that are well below average, many having immature speaking and listening skills. The good progress made by children is due largely to good teaching. In the nursery adults take every opportunity to encourage children to talk and continually promote a lively atmosphere where children's thoughts and ideas are valued. This approach increases children's confidence so they improve their speaking and listening skills as they role-play in their fast food bar and discuss their painting with their nursery nurse. In reception the teacher plans a good range of tasks to extend children's skills. These include taught sessions with the teacher or the nursery nurse for small groups of children to discuss their class story or make comments as for example, they carefully examine a range of fruit in preparation for making a fruit salad. More able children are learning to use a sentence when they report back to the class about their work.
78. The school benefits from support from the Education Action Zone providing specialist teaching to support the school staff in encouraging nursery children to listen and to talk with increasing confidence. Reception children listen carefully as their teacher reads from 'Handa's Surprise', but lower achieving children find it difficult to concentrate and despite good questioning techniques from their teacher they are unable to recall details from the story. Higher achieving children can remember from the previous day what happened in the story and they enjoy books. Lower attaining children enjoy sharing books with adults and higher attaining children recognise an increasing range of letters and can use pictures well to help them retell a story from memory. In a good lesson based on the National Literacy Strategy, children in reception were able to rise to the challenge and predict what might happen next in a story. Children learn to associate words with stories and understand that words have meaning. As children progress through the Foundation Stage they have regular opportunities to develop writing skills. In the nursery, children use scissors, glue and paint; this improves their co-ordination skills. They progress to reception where they improve their mark making skills by writing shopping lists of fruits they want to buy at their mini-market, and labelling their drawings of favourite fruit. Teachers plan carefully and persist in their strategies to help children develop their writing skills. Progress in letter formation and independent writing is slow mainly because of the difficulty many children have in staying on task and working independently.

## **Mathematical development**

79. Attainment in this area is below the expected standards by the end of the reception year. Taking into consideration the children's poor understanding of number and counting when they start in the nursery, the achievement of many is good and this is due largely to the consistently good teaching for children in the Foundation Stage. Children are given sufficient opportunities to experience mathematics in everyday situations. Children in both classes enjoy number songs such as 'Five Currant Buns' or 'Hickory Dickory Dock'. Nursery children enjoy sorting and matching into groups according to colour and respond well to adult prompting as they choose green objects from a catalogue, cut them out and make their own book of green items. Resources such as jigsaws and tabletop activities are used well to encourage children to become curious and reinforce their matching and sorting skills. As children progress through the Foundation Stage they learn to count together in tens and recite number names to 20, though they require considerable teacher encouragement to progress beyond 20. Well-planned lessons provide good opportunities for children to match coins to numbers and use the class mini-market for their shopping activities. The majority of the children can count out coins and match them to items costing up to five pence, higher attaining children can continue up to ten pence. A significant minority of children are unable to concentrate and though motivated by the golden star awards, these children become restless and are unable to gain full benefit from whole-class activities. The teacher plans a wide and appropriate range of specific activities for them and they make good progress in their mathematical skills when they work closely with adults in small groups. Children's recorded work shows they are developing their sense of shape because they recognise circles and triangles, and are starting to understand measurement when they categorise items as long or short.

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

80. Attainment in this area for the majority of children is below the expected standards by the end of the reception year. This is because children have limited experiences when they arrive at school. Children make good progress because of the range of broad and stimulating experiences provided in their classrooms and the constant adult encouragement to explore and investigate the equipment and resources in the classrooms. Children play with a range of construction and modelling materials, though less mature children need adult support to make sure they complete their tasks. Nursery children explore the green water and compare it with clear water; three children were enthralled to see that their hands turned green after playing with coloured water. With adult help nursery children can use the mouse to click on and move objects around the screen, reception children have developed more independent skills though for a minority of children the inability to share a computer activity restricts their progress in operating equipment. Reception children make good use of the listening station to enjoy taped stories. In lessons based on the theme of fruit, reception children respond very well to their nursery nurse as she encourages them to discuss the features of pineapples and mangoes. They make their own fruits from modelling clay matching carefully to the originals. Children interact well as they make observations about the features of fruit and how of changes occur from making fruit into fruit salad when they work with their nursery nurse. Other children work closely with their teacher carefully examining a pineapple describing it as spiky, yellow and squidgy. Photographs and planning show the school arranges visits for the children. A trip to the local church raises children's cultural awareness, as do

celebrations to commemorate the Chinese New Year and Christmas. A session in a local bookshop for 'story-telling' stimulates children's imagination as well as making them aware of different environments. Photographs show children's obvious enjoyment as they go on a mini-beast hunt in local Stanney Woods. To fit in with class work on money and shopping, staff have planned a visit to a local supermarket and the nursery children look forward enthusiastically to their future trip to a fast-food outlet. These visits provide children with good opportunities to become more aware of the world around them. Adults talk with children encouraging them to talk about significant events such as birthdays and to comment on what they see around them.

### **Physical development**

81. During the inspection there were limited opportunities to observe outdoor play. Nursery children have a secure playground but staff organise playtime so that the children can enjoy and make good use of the markings on the main playground as they play with wheeled toys. Teachers provide good opportunities to develop children's co-ordination and dexterity as they show them how to hold pencils, glue spreaders and brushes correctly and provide regular opportunities to use these skills in their construction, collage and modelling tasks. Nursery children co-operate well with their teacher as they clear away classroom items at the end of the morning so the room is left tidy for the local playgroup to use. Staff work hard to encourage children to be aware of their own physical needs with gentle reminders about hand washing, or using and replacing aprons after wet activities. Overall children achieve as expected by the age of five.

### **Creative development**

82. Although progress is good, the attainment of the great majority is below nationally expected levels even though teaching is good. This is because children have underdeveloped levels of imagination when they arrive at the school. Limited concentration and sometimes tiredness hinder children's ability to participate in singing rhymes for example, 'The Farmers in the Den', or imaginative play. Teachers provide a good range of toys such as small animals to stimulate imaginative play but if left to play independently many children are unable to make up stories or play pretend games. When adults interact with children good progress is made because of the stimulating discussions and ability of staff to relate well to children and encourage imaginative play. In the reception class a strong emphasis is placed on children developing their observation skills and creating much-valued artwork. An example of this was seen during inspection as a group of children carefully examined a banana to decide on the shades of colour. Each child then used oil-based crayons to draw individual bananas from their initial observations. Each child was enthralled with its work and proud of its achievement. Children's work is displayed proudly around the classrooms. children do not have the imaginative skills to take part in make believe stories. Adults help to promote language but given the weakness in children's speaking and listening skills there is scope for increased adult intervention.

### **ENGLISH**

83. When children enter Year 1, a small number are working within the National Curriculum Programmes of Study and many others are on track to achieve most of the goals in listening, linking and reading letters and sounds but not in writing or

speaking. Children by the age of five have made good progress since starting in the nursery.

84. In the 2001 national tests, the performance of 11 year olds pupils was below national averages but well above similar schools. Pupils achieve very well given their low starting base and the proportion of pupils attaining at the expected Level 4 was only slightly below what is found nationally. A significant minority attained at the higher Level 5 and this shows good added value. The school's trend of performance in the tests is upward and rising at Key Stage 2. The school met its targets in 2001. Although currently many pupils are not attaining securely within the expected Level 4, given the high quality teaching they are receiving and the school's planned booster support in the New Year, it is reasonable to expect that its targets for May 2002 will be met. Targets are lower than last year but realistic; as there are a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. This will be because the teaching of English in Year 6 is effective in reinforcing basic skills and systematically improving pupils' knowledge and skills. Given the nature of the cohort there may well be fewer pupils who attain at the higher Level 5.
85. Results for seven year olds are disappointing and show well below average national levels in the tests over a sustained period of time. In 2001, the school's results were in the lowest five per cent nationally. When compared to similar schools they were also well below what is found elsewhere. This is not good enough and shows limited added value particularly when the pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage. The reasons for this must lie to some extent with the very difficult staffing situation which has prevailed for some time in the infants but also with management in not monitoring effectively the outcomes of pupils' learning and tracking progress from reception to check for success. During the inspection literacy lessons were presented satisfactorily in Year 2 and very well in Year 1 but scrutiny of work shows a link between some ineffective outcomes of teaching in Year 2 and low standards. Weaknesses stem from not enough intervention to show pupils how to improve their writing and low expectations for quality. These deficiencies in Year 2 must fall at the feet of both teaching and management. Whilst there is some awareness of these concerns the focus of attention has been given to Key Stage 2 and not enough has been done to ameliorate practice in the infants during turbulence of staffing difficulties.
86. Standards of pupils' work do not at this stage of the year reflect the most recent performance in the national tests by the age of 11 although the low results are evident in the quality of work seen at the end of the infants. By the age of seven a good proportion are likely to be at the lower Level 2c which suggests they will not reach Level 4 by the age of 11. Whilst pupils are moving closer to the levels expected at age 11 too few are working securely within the expected Level 4 and very few show signs of attaining at the higher levels at this stage. It is quite likely given the high quality teaching and the booster support planned, that the school may well reach its targets of 67 per cent at Level 4 at age 11. This represents good progress by the time they leave the school given their prior attainment at five but if progress had been better in Key Stage 1 standards could consequently be much stronger by the age of 11.
87. In spite of insufficient progress in Year 2 and clearly some long-standing underachievement in this key stage as a whole, pupils in Year 1 are currently making good progress under the sure guidance of a temporary teacher. In the juniors, progress is good because of the good quality teaching, which moves pupils' learning forward swiftly. The very good analysis of test and assessment



data at Key Stage 2 and the tracking of pupils' progress to identify targets for improvement add notably to the overall achievement. Target setting is sound but occasionally not accurate and would benefit from further analysis of what pupils can achieve unaided which gives a truer picture of their progress and strengths and weaknesses in learning.

88. Pupils' language and communication skills are low when they enter the school. Many have delayed speech. In spite of good work in the Foundation Stage the pupils are limited in both their vocabulary and experiences about which they can talk. By the age of seven pupils' listening skills are broadly in line with what is expected and whilst good progress is made in speaking about half are still below what is expected nationally at this halfway point through the year.
89. By the age of 11, pupils' speaking skills are better but only about half have adequate levels of skill. Listening skills are average by the age of 11. In the juniors, pupils improve their knowledge of technical subject vocabulary such as 'dialogue' and improve the expression they add to words when following the teacher's good role model for reading aloud. When reading individually pupils often miscue words and only the higher attaining pupils add any expression. Pupils listen well but some are still struggling to answer in sentences. In Year 6, pupils are in no doubt that they are expected to listen accurately and are challenged by the teacher's questioning of them following introductions. Pupils improve their vocabulary through repetition of use. In discussion with pupils many have difficulty in using talk to explain their views. It is an ongoing challenge for the school to improve pupils' speaking skills and define the balance between the good modeling of speech pupils learn from all teachers, giving information and challenging and supporting pupils to speak clearly and more frequently in full sentences. Listening centers are regularly used but evidence of pupils' recording their talk and playing it back to improve what they have said was not a strategy planned for or used.
90. Standards in reading are satisfactory for about half of the current seven year old pupils. Progress is sound in technical reading competency and this is supported by direct attention to phonics teaching. Many still have a long way to go in understanding. There is a suitable focus in lessons on pupils identifying ways to help them read new words but when not directly under the teachers' guidance pupils do not readily look at the pictures for a clue, look at the size of print to help think how to read the word, ask a friend, say the sounds, stretch the word to break it up and read ahead. They recognise most high frequency words. Few self correct their errors when reading and often they replace actual words for similar ones. Pupils by the age of seven are receiving good role models for reading with expression from adults but this is not readily transferred to how the pupils, themselves read, which broadly echoes their speech, and is often monotone. Too few pupils read at home to an adult. By the age of 11, most pupils can 'read' the words in the book they have chosen. The expression of most, including the higher attaining pupils is quite limited. Their analysis of characters is adequate and most can give a brief summary of the story plot. Pupils enjoy reading as a group but lack confidence in reading aloud on their own. Year 6 pupils need to think carefully when asked how to find a book in the library and only about half talk about subject sections. They show some confusion when asked questions about index, contents and glossaries. They can name a limited range of authors. These limitations on pupils' achievements are to do with the pupils' intellectual capacity, which is not strong but well supported by teaching.

91. Standards in writing are unsatisfactory in the infants and improving but still below national expectations in the juniors. All pupils in both the infants and juniors have writing targets for improvement but these are not checked for success on a regular enough basis. Neither are the targets referred to in work in other subjects. There is clearly scope for the school to review its use of targets to guide pupils in improving what they achieve. In Year 1, pupils are beginning to write in simple sequenced sentences. They complete simple questions, retell stories and some use descriptive words, for example, when they select parts of the 'Gingerbread Man' story to write about. Pupils can read back well what they have written and refer to other parts of the story they will record next. They build correctly simple words with magnetic letters and the higher attaining pupils quickly complete word searches independently. These well-acquired independent skills are not replicated in Year 2 where in the lessons, progress is adequate; the direct teaching reinforces key writing skills but in independent work scrutiny shows the intervention by the teacher could drive the learning forward more quickly. There is too much acceptance by the teacher of low quality work with errors uncorrected. It is hard at times to find the teacher's mark in prompting the children to improve the finished product. By the age of seven, pupils write for an adequate range of reasons. They retell a story but do not turn readily to dictionaries or word banks to help them check spellings. Few write using full stops and capital letters even though this was target at the start of the school year. Few pupils form letters correctly and there is little working towards using a joined script. Writing requires considerable improvement at the end of Key Stage 1.
92. Pupils improve writing skills in Year 3 but many are well behind where they should be and the teacher has to adapt the work offered. The high quality teaching in this year and subsequent years in the juniors helps fill the gaps in knowledge. Spelling is given good attention in its own right but as in the infants, not enough links are made with handwriting, note taking and fluency. Spelling homework effectively supports learning. Good challenging tasks improve pupils' ability to write phrases in Year 4 and to complete sentences with suitable phrases. Work is well matched to ability levels. In Year 5, pupils learn about story structure and transfer this to their own writing. They understand the key elements of story writing but their limited vocabulary restricts the quality of the work. In Year 6, pupils consolidate their use of Standard English and begin to recognise features of formal and informal language in letter writing. Handwriting is at a low level for their age. Few pupils readily use paragraphs in their writing and need prompting to use speech but they are required to draft, re-draft and edit their work for improvement and this emphasis plays a strong part in improving quality and standards.
93. The key features for improving writing are to broaden the pupils' experiences, so that they have reasons to write using other subjects as a stimulus. Presentation of work is not consistently good and spelling needs improving. These are weaknesses across the school. Handwriting is an area for improvement and the time is right for a review of the purposes and approaches expected for handwriting, its link to spelling, fluency and speed writing and in enhancing the final piece of work. Gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding need to be keenly identified to ensure they are remedied swiftly.
94. The quality of teaching is good in most classes. It is consistently good in Year 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6. Whilst the lesson delivery is satisfactory in Year 2 the teaching impact on outcomes of pupils' work is not as effective as it should be.

95. The national strategy has been well implemented in the school and often adapted to suit the pupils' challenging needs. Resources and lessons are well prepared and planned. Time is used well. Intervention is good and regular in most lessons but not all. The classroom environments are supportive to the teaching enabling the pupils to use the displays to enhance their understanding. Some of these techniques are not replicated well in Year 2. Pupils gain most from highly organised tasks, security of success and caring relationships established by the teachers. Areas of fine tuning are needed in pace, quality of displays to directly support teaching and the use of ends of lesson to give sufficient time to assess what pupils have learned, deal with misconceptions and share the next steps with pupils. Too few pupils offer intellectual, creative or physical effort to their learning and their own knowledge of what they have learned is hindered by poor recall skills and the inability to memorise information when not prompted by the teacher. The introductions to lessons support learning very well. Marking of work does not always reach the higher standards in that it does not always show pupils how to get better and correct errors.
96. The delivery of English has significantly improved since the last inspection and meets requirements. Its strengths lie in the very good range of assessments and their interpretation to drive learning forward in Key Stage 2. Its weaknesses lie in this not being replicated in Key Stage 1. The coordinator is knowledgeable and keen to raise standards consistently. A comprehensive action plan is available and needs to be actioned swiftly to raise standards. Monitoring of the subject in Key Stage 1 is unsatisfactory overall and needs to be addressed. Although monitoring has taken place action to rectify identified weaknesses has not been firm enough. The delivery of English is a strong feature of much of the school but not equally effective in all classes.

## **MATHEMATICS**

97. Pupils in Year 6, in the most recent 2001 National Curriculum tests, attained standards, which were just below what is expected for their age. When compared with similar schools pupils' test performance was well above others. These results have contributed to the school's DfES Achievement Award for raising standards. The results also showed a significant percentage of pupils, 20 per cent, achieving the higher than average Level 5 score. When compared with their results in the infants, this indicates that the school provides these pupils with high "value added" education in this subject. The school met its targets for mathematics.
98. Standards for pupils by the age of seven, as shown in the National Curriculum tests in 2001, were well below when compared with national standards, in deed they were in the lowest five per cent nationally and low when compared with similar schools. This picture is not significantly better than at the last inspection and in many respects is a decline. Very few pupils gained the higher Level 3 and 50 per cent attained at Level 2c or below which suggests they will not attain at Level 4 in Year 6. This picture does not square well with their good progress in the Foundation Stage.
99. During the inspection, scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils shows they attain broadly as expected in numeracy by the ages of seven and 11 but not so in the other areas of mathematics. Pupils do not achieve well consistently in the infants although they make good progress in Year 1. Their work in Year 2 is not accurate enough and is low in output. Their knowledge of shape, space and

measures is weak largely because their memory recall is poor; this is true in the juniors also but not to such an obvious extent. Given the pupils' difficulties in grasping mathematical ideas they require practical exploration regularly. Whilst this is evident, they cannot show enough success in applying what they know to simple problems and their use of mathematical vocabulary is limited but again much better by the end of the juniors. Work shows limited evidence of handling and analysing data and this suggests slow progress in this area and lower than average standards being achieved. There are many gaps for the teachers to make up in the juniors, added to by pupils' generally low intellectual capacity to grasp mathematical ideas. Good teaching and the planned use of Booster Classes and revision work suggests that pupils may well meet the school's targets by the age of 11, but many are currently not attaining as expected for their ages in their daily work.

100. The use of information and communication technology is improving in Years 5 and 6. While work in investigational mathematics is the weakest element of the overall work in the subject. Pupils have opportunities to interpret word problems into mathematical calculations, but there are too few opportunities for them to experiment or investigate with numbers where there is not necessarily a single correct answer. This type of task provides a real challenge to many of them.
101. All staff have made effective use of the National Numeracy Strategy, which has given good support to both planning and strategies for teaching. It is clear to see that in all lessons teachers keep to their plans, although the final parts of several lessons were not as strong as the introduction or development of the main teaching and learning points.
102. By the age of seven, pupils have a sound understanding of place value to 20, but do not make enough use of this in problem solving work. They can measure using centimetres and some know about with metre sticks and can estimate how long the classroom is in metres. Scrutiny of work shows that pupils in Key Stage 1 recognise and know the names of simple two-dimensional shapes and are able to label them with support. Some recognise simple fractions. By the age of 11, pupils can carry out calculations in their heads quite quickly and understand equivalence in fractions. They recognise most two-dimensional shapes but are not so strong on three-dimensional ones. The higher attaining pupils can discuss how to calculate the perimeters and area of shapes.
103. Pupils make inconsistent progress in the infants and good progress in the juniors. Many lessons necessarily begin with a recap of previous learning, before pupils can move into new learning. Progress for pupils in Years 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6, is better as teaching here is of a higher quality and pupils respond very well to the challenges set for them. Pupils with special educational needs receive a good level of support that enables them to make good progress in lessons. They have difficulty in applying what they know without support. There are few higher attaining pupils in the school. In the infants these groups are not making enough progress in Year 2 but do quite well in Year 1. In the juniors these pupils are given work, which is well planned to meet their needs.
104. The quality of teaching in lessons is satisfactory in the infants and very good in the juniors. Some teaching of basic skills observed in Year 1 and the juniors was very good indeed. In the good lessons there is a lively pace, teachers' questioning of pupils is effective and there is some good direct teaching of the whole class. In Years 5 and 6 teaching is mainly good and occasionally very good, as the

teachers have high expectations of pupils and the pace of the lesson is brisk. Effective use is made of information and communication technology with pupils confidently using and responding to the interactive whiteboards in Years 5 and 6. Against this good picture, scrutiny of work shows that the impact of teaching in Year 2 is not helping pupils to improve their misunderstandings, correctness of answers or output and quality of work well enough.

105. Pupils learn about mathematics and they can recite facts but too few learn from it or apply what they know readily without teacher help. In the lessons observed pupils have a sound grasp of mathematical vocabulary and terminology and are able to use the appropriate language. Their recall out of context is not as good. Some pupils in the infants find it difficult to explain what they are doing in class. Older pupils in the juniors talked confidently about factors and finding the product of two numbers. Good questioning techniques by the teacher resulted in the pupils extending their knowledge and understanding of factors. In a Year 6 session pupils' interest was captivated by the creative use of number machines, which resulted in a high level of concentration and perseverance on the task set.
106. Teachers are confident and secure with the National Numeracy Strategy and the three-part lesson is firmly established in all classes. Pupils particularly enjoy the mental / oral starter at the beginning of each lesson and, where the pace is lively, the majority of the class participates and responds well. Teachers use the plenary time at the end of each lesson with varying degrees of success. The plenary is used well when the teacher reviews what has been done and reminds pupils of what they have learned, for example in a Year 6 lesson on measuring angles accurately using a protractor. Time is used less effectively when the teacher does not pull the lesson together well enough, for example when drawing conclusions following an investigation into the points of the compass there was no effective summary to help fix the work in pupils' minds.
107. A good range of tests and assessments are kept and well used to plan work in Year 1 and the juniors. Planning is adequate but not challenging in Year 2. Here, there is scope to better use assessment information to find out what each pupil knows in each area of the mathematics curriculum so that they can be set more challenging targets in order to raise attainment. There are also inconsistencies in the level and quality of marking although much is good quality. In some classes comments are written in pupils' books, which challenge them to extend their knowledge and understanding of the task, whilst in others the work is not marked at all. Presentation also varies across the school, from neat and precisely set out work to untidy, undated work with answers crossed out and little teacher intervention.
108. The coordinator is effective, well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and has monitored the subject and identified weaknesses notably in the infants. As yet this has not been done to any great effect. Assessment of progress and academic standards in mathematics is well documented and gives teachers good support in preparing work for the different abilities within their classes. Not all take best advantage of this support. Resources are good. Further practical work, particularly at Key Stage 1, is needed to consolidate pupils' understanding. The delivery of the curriculum meets requirements.

## SCIENCE

109. As at the time of the last inspection, inspection findings show that currently the majority of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils are attaining below the levels expected for their ages. However, this masks a significant improvement in test performance by 11 year olds in the national tests since 1997 and in the percentage of both infant and junior pupils doing better. Overall, standards have risen, particularly in the juniors as staff have raised their expectations of what pupils can achieve. They have an improved understanding of how to teach science and this is enlivening the pupils' learning. In the Year 2001 national tests, all pupils attained at the expected Level 4 and when compared with similar schools the pupils' attainment was well above average. Teacher assessment for seven year old pupils for 2001 showed that the number of pupils that reached Level 2 or above to be well below the national average.
110. The judgement that many pupils at the end of both key stages are not attaining in line with nationally expected standards is drawn from scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with them about what they know and understand of the scientific process. Planning shows that the Programmes of Study are being covered at a satisfactory level. Pupils discuss their knowledge and understanding of living things at a satisfactory level. For example, in Year 2 matching adult mothers with their young, where they live and what they eat. They were able to discuss the similarities and differences of materials within wall displays, exhibiting sound observational skills. However, any attempt to extend their thinking skills in asking them to consider which material would be most suitable for making objects such as a chair, door or a pair of shoes, proved difficult. Scrutiny of their books revealed a disappointingly low level of recording activities that had been undertaken.
111. By the age of 11, pupils have satisfactory understanding of fair testing although they need support in explaining what they know. Work shows that their studies have included practical experimentation on forces and materials, for example, how liquids and solids react in different situations and that the skills of prediction and hypothesis have been integral to the process. They have carried out experiments on the process of filtration to separate liquids from solids but their ability to recall the precise sequence of events and to use appropriate terminology in their explanations is limited. This weakness in the pupils' understanding and use of scientific vocabulary was also evident when a group were questioned about their understanding of forces. Their recall of the scientific outcomes was very limited and none had a good enough grasp of the expected scientific vocabulary or hypotheses of why things happened as they did. The pupils' difficulties in recalling information are echoed in other subjects and it is this, on most occasions rather than ineffective teaching which holds back achievement and standards.
112. The Year 6 teacher and science coordinator agree that the good results in the 2001 tests for 11 year olds were the outcome of a particularly able cohort; additional teaching through the establishment of 'Booster support' and a systematic revision programme by the classteacher. Teacher assessments and inspection evidence indicate that the results for 2002 are unlikely to reach the level of last year and appropriate lower targets have been set.
113. Pupils make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs have work adapted to their needs and when helped by support staff who spend time explaining word meanings and tasks they make very good progress. Discussions with pupils reveal that they have an enthusiasm for science.

114. No overall teaching judgement can be made because only one lesson in Year 1, was seen taught by a temporary teacher. The lesson helped pupils progress well in sorting and classifying materials for different purposes. The pupils concentrated well, shared ideas waited their turn and responded well to questioning because teaching was direct, well structured, focused on key vocabulary and was of good quality. Recorded work and pupils' knowledge in Year 2 does not emulate this good picture. School planning shows an emphasis on practical skills and exploration within a clear framework of activities. Pupils have limited knowledge of how to investigate and the process of supporting this deficit is a slow one requiring considerable reinforcement. The use of information and communication technology is limited.
115. The weaknesses outlined in curriculum provision in the last report have been addressed. The science policy, scheme of work and guidelines are an effective aide memoir for individual teachers. Assessment procedures and outlined strategies of using assessments to drive planning are well written and use effectively to safeguard the match of work to the pupils' needs particularly so in the junior classes. The accommodation is used well and resources are good, impacting positively on teaching and learning. The science curriculum is enhanced by specialist events to motivate the pupils.
116. The coordinator has put a good deal of work into the writing of policy documents and in supporting colleagues in the delivery of science. Monitoring of teaching and learning and staff development has had a good effect on overall standards. Although focused intervention is needed at the end of the infant stage to raise standards swiftly. The delivery of the subject meets the requirements of the National Curriculum.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

117. The last time the school was inspected, standards in art were in line with national expectations by the end of both key stages and remain so with some examples of good quality work. Pupils make good progress by the age of 11. During the inspection only one lesson in the juniors was observed, scrutiny of work, teachers' planning and discussion with pupils adds to the evidence.
118. Lesson planning is good through the school and the quality of work on display allows the judgement to be made that teaching is good overall because there is sure evidence of techniques being systematically developed. In the lesson seen in Year 5 teaching was very good and pupils listened attentively to what was expected of them. They used 'frames' carefully to give them a closer perspective of chosen objects. They persevered to create shapes and their drawings were satisfactory given their efforts. The teacher's skilful questioning regularly intervened to challenge the pupils about what they were actually seeing, the use of the pencil and the amount of detail. Concentration was at a high level. Classroom support staff effectively supported groups of pupils through discussion and reflection of what they had achieved.
119. The pupils expressed enthusiasm for the subject and were eager to share the techniques used to achieve their efforts.
120. Scrutiny of displays, sketchbooks, photographs and discussions with pupils show that they are offered a wide range of opportunities to explore all aspects of art and design in an interesting and challenging way. For example, the use of colour wash

backgrounds used by Year 1 pupils to enhance the impact of their self portraits; the mixing and application of colour applied to their models of 'Joseph's Coat' by Year 2 pupils; through the dramatic Batik work produced by junior pupils, showing a healthy progression in the ability to express their feelings through the use of line, texture and tone. An area for improvement within the school is that some displayed work appears to have been overly prescribed and it is difficult to trace the stamp of the individual on it.

121. The policy and scheme of work provides an effective structure to the programme of art being offered through the school. Resources are good and used effectively to enhance the pupils' skills. The subject makes a valuable contribution to the pupils' personal development, particularly their spiritual development. The delivery of the subject meets requirements.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

122. During the inspection only one lesson was seen. In addition, discussions were held with pupils and examples within classrooms and scrutiny of work were taken into account to form the judgement that pupils' attainment is below national expectations by the ages of seven and 11. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection.
123. In the lesson seen Year 1 teaching was good. Pupils were required to put together 'an attractive plate of fruit' linked to the topic on healthy eating. The pupils were able to recall the names of the fruit and the tools they had used to shape the pieces. Through skilful questioning by the teacher they shared their knowledge of the similarities and differences in the fruits used. For example, 'the melon was soft', 'the apple was hard', 'and the fruit salad was like soup'. Good progress was made and pupils constructed some interesting designs. Pupils were supported well during the assembly process and encouraged to make their work a little different from that of others.
124. The elements of design and making, knowledge and understanding are evident in the planning and it is clear that pupils improve their making skills as they move through the school. The design and evaluation elements are underdeveloped but there are some examples of valuable work for example, class 3 have made photograph frames, in Year 4 pupils learn about improving the appearance of their product for example, 'the money holders' contrasting Tudor times with modern day examples and sophisticated shields produced by Year 6 pupils. The splendid helmets made from 'modroc' exhibited in the entrance add to the ethos of the school's drive for high quality. However, there are too few illustrated drawings, sketches and written evaluations. In most cases there is not enough evidence of designs being refined on paper before they reach the final production stage. It is fair to say that the school's time has been focused on improving English and mathematics although this subject is a good example of how literacy and numeracy skills can be applied across all learning.
125. Subject planning addresses the Programmes of Study, including food technology for which there is a regular after school club. The delivery of the subject substantially meets the requirements of the National Curriculum.

## **GEOGRAPHY**



126. The last report stated that standards were in line with national expectations based on a very small evidence base. Standards appear to have declined against this judgement but pupils are making at least satisfactory progress as they move through both key stages although they do not have enough memory recall by the age of seven to attain in line with national expectations. By the age of 11, although in the lesson seen on four and six figure map reference work, pupils attained suitably for their ages under the teacher's very direct guidance, discussions with them about people, places and themes reveals very little retained knowledge beyond snatching at names and ideas suggesting that their knowledge and understanding are below expectations for their age. The weakness in attainment is not linked to the teaching or curriculum coverage but with the pupils' limited knowledge of the world and their ability to retain and internalise information.
127. In Year 1 pupils make good progress in finding out about their own world and gain an early introduction into mapping skills. They 'go on a bear hunt' linked to the story of the same name and add trees, rivers and stones to their picture. Pupils label a street map with support from the teacher showing houses, street furniture and town buildings. In Year 2 pupils make adequate progress when studying places using the travels of 'Barnaby Bear' who has visited the Isle of Islay with the teacher. Using postcards, pictures and maps the pupils gain an insight into places beyond where they live. The pupils require much additional support and reinforcement from their teacher to recall the names of the places the bear has travelled from and to. They have difficulty remembering that London is the capital city of England. To extend pupils' knowledge of the world they make useful visits, one of them residential, to local places for example, to Fox Howl in nearby Delamere Forest. Pupils have produced some maps linked to this with considerable teacher support and been introduced to a key which they can recall some elements of. The gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding suggest that they do not attain in all aspects of the geography curriculum expected for seven year olds.
128. By the age of 11, pupils have made sound progress from a low starting base in their studies of places near and far. For example, in Year 3 they have linked their work in geography with history about Ellesmere Port, then and now. A similar link is made in Year 4 to improve pupils' knowledge of maps when they compare Tudor maps of the world with those of present day. In Year 6 pupils are supported in their learning by the very effective use of Ordnance Survey maps downloaded from the Internet and taught through using the interactive whiteboard. They know about horizontal and vertical axes and that it is always the horizontal axis, which is read first. The higher attaining pupils recall that one square represents one square kilometre. Most cannot recall how many metres in a kilometre. By the end of the lesson the pupils have improved their knowledge of mapping skills and in this instance they attain suitably. However, their broader knowledge is weak, in respect of constituent countries of the United Kingdom, themes such as pollution and knowledge of settlements and they have few ideas about how people can improve or damage the environment or bring about environmental change.
129. No overall judgements can be made about teaching other than that planning is thorough and assessments are made regularly. In the lessons seen, the learning is supported satisfactorily by the teaching in Year 2 and very well in Year 6. In Year 2, the questioning prompts pupils to listen and recall previous work, use of pictures and maps draws their attention to key words. The teacher has good expectations for pupils to focus and complete their task. Teaching intervention to reinforce key literacy skills of spelling and letter formation are not prominent

enough to help pupils improve what they record. Pupils show some interest in what they do but are easily distracted and their intellectual effort is limited. In Year 6 very effective teaching and the use of technology significantly supports the pupils' interest and motivation. The pace of the lesson and use of key subject vocabulary with good demonstration of locating places promotes the learning of mapping skills well.

130. The delivery of geography meets the requirements of the National Curriculum resources are good and well complimented by the use of visits. The curriculum is well planned and covers all aspects of the required Programmes of Study. It follows the QCA guidance carefully and assessments are made against each of the units of study. The subject is soundly managed.

## **HISTORY**

131. Standards and judgements in history are similar to those in geography because of many pupils' inability to retain information. Therefore, by the ages of seven and 11, although pupils have experienced all elements of the required Programmes of Study, they do not attain as expected in knowledge, skills and understanding. Three lessons were seen and scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils contribute to the judgement.
132. In the lessons seen, two in the infants and one in the juniors, pupils achieve soundly and make satisfactory progress given their low starting base. In Year 1 they have studied Guy Fawkes but have not been challenged to use their writing skills as most recording is through completing photocopied sheets. Again in Year 2 although pupils are studying the life of Samuel Pepys and the Great Fire of London there is little evidence of their ability to record what they know. Pupils in the juniors have studied the main eras of British history but have very little understanding of the time span of events nor can they place them in chronological order. Year 4 pupils have completed some very good quality artwork of Tudor figures linked to the school having costumes borrowed from Warrington Museum. They have written reasonable accounts from the perspective of Anne of Cleves and used what they know about Tudor dress to describe how to dress a Tudor lady. A visit to Tatton Park gave pupils a greater insight into life in Tudor times. By the age of 11, pupils have considered the impact of the Romans on life in Britain and their writing shows some awareness of the changes brought about by the invasion. However, in discussions, pupils recall too little of what they studied. Writing is well used to describe a visit to the walled city of Chester.
133. Whole school judgements about the impact of teaching cannot easily be made. However, it can be said that planning covers well the required Programmes of Study and the school makes effective use of visits to places of cultural interest to promote and deepen pupils' insight into life in the past. The lessons seen in the infants show sound teaching enabling pupils to make satisfactory progress in their acquisition of knowledge and understanding of then and now. In Year 3 teaching is good and the pupils who have very little prior knowledge gain a good deal from the use of photographs and Internet source material to compare Ellesmere Port then and now. Pupils are intrigued by the recollections in the School Log Book dating back to the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. The teacher uses key questions very well and the lesson is well planned and prepared with high expectations of what the pupils might cover. Whilst pupils are interested, their overall immature responses and lack of concentration detract from their learning and the teacher's strenuous

efforts to involve them. The classroom display supports learning very well and is used to challenge and prompt pupils' memories.

134. The management of history is good and resources are well used, particularly educational visits. The subject makes valuable contribution to pupils' social and cultural development through visits, such as the Ellesmere Port Boat Museum and the study of other local places of interests. Assessment is linked to the study units. The delivery of the subject meets the requirements of the National Curriculum.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

135. Attainment for pupils by the end of both key stages is broadly in line with national expectations in communication. Pupils demonstrate good skills in word processing, and as they move through the school become very confident at editing their work and notably in Years 5 and 6 extracting information from the INTERNET and other sources. However, there was insufficient evidence of other elements of the subject for example, modeling, computer simulation to represent real and imaginary situations, using a screen turtle and a floor turtle to plan procedures, monitoring environmental conditions and changes and multimedia presentations, to indicate other than unsatisfactory attainment. Planning shows that work is planned for these areas but this would not necessarily enable pupils to attain without systematic learning towards the targets of the Programmes of Study as they have moved through the school.
136. All pupils, including those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in the infants and good progress in the juniors. Some very good progress is evident in the upper juniors. The pupils have good attitudes to the subject, and most are confident and enthusiastic users of computers.
137. The school has made improvements in the resourcing of the subject since the last inspection, so each class has good access to computers. The two classes at the end of Key Stage 2 make very good use of interactive whiteboards, enabling the teachers to demonstrate skills to the class as a whole. Good teaching was marked by teachers' more confident approach and effective demonstration of what is expected. For example, the two lessons observed in which pupils were entering data on to spreadsheets made particular good use of this facility, giving pupils the confidence to carry out the task because they had observed the process clearly demonstrated by the teachers. Pupils were also confident to use the interactive whiteboards when demonstrating mathematics procedures to the whole class.
138. Good teaching was seen to support the work in other subjects. All teachers are becoming more confident with the subject and the resources, which have been put into the subject, are being very well used. Lesson objectives are made clear to the pupils. Whilst there is often little variation in the task set for pupils, appropriate levels of challenge usually result from outcome for the activity. For instance those pupils successfully entering their data to the spreadsheet were able to extend their knowledge by changing some of the data and consequently changing the totals.
139. A new scheme of work is in place supported by staff training so teachers are more confident in helping pupils as they work on the computers. The New Opportunities Fund, and the funding available for Education Action Zone, has been utilised to the benefit of all pupils.

140. The coordinator for ICT provides good leadership and monitors coverage. Her high degree of skill enables her to give appropriate advice to colleagues. Records of work covered are kept to show coverage and understanding. A clear action plan is in place with priorities for the forthcoming year. All pupils have individual discs and are encouraged to save their work. The coordinator then takes a sample of the discs each term for moderating children's work.

## MUSIC

141. At the time of the last inspection standards in music were judged to be unsatisfactory and they have improved only slightly. Attainment and progress at both key stages are still below national expectations.
142. In lessons and assemblies children enjoyed singing, and their attainment was in line with national expectations by the ages of seven and 11. There was insufficient evidence of composing and appraising skills, which indicates a lack of progress. Reception children enjoy singing games with the appropriate actions. In Key Stage 1 pupils are keen to listen to the musical story of Peter and the Wolf, and are able to identify the different instruments being played. They show sustained concentration and are able to recall the sounds with increasing aural memory. The Key Stage 2 lesson observed demonstrated that pupils were able to recall a visiting musician telling them about 'timbre' and overall had a sense of rhythm, maintaining a beat in a simple pattern.
143. The quality of teaching is variable and this is reflected in the overall quality of learning. In the majority of lessons observed during the inspection, teaching and learning was satisfactory. Teachers use praise in an effective manner to share and celebrate what has been achieved. However, in some lessons pupils were not sufficiently stimulated or challenged which led to groups of pupils becoming bored and not participating in the task.
144. Scrutiny of teachers' planning shows that pupils at Key Stage 2 have experience of analysing musical elements in a variety of pieces of music linked with television theme tunes. There are inconsistencies in the quality of teachers' planning across the school.
145. The music coordinator is new to the role and as yet has not determined strengths and weaknesses in the teaching staff. The coordinator's role is undeveloped in terms of the monitoring and evaluation of classroom practice throughout the school, but this is seen as a priority for the future. The coordinator is keen for the pupils to experience musical performances and has arranged visits from musicians. A planned visit is for a group of African musicians to come into school, increasing the pupils' awareness of music from other cultures.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

146. Pupils' attainment was judged to be in line with national expectations at the last inspection and remains so now. By the age of seven, pupils explore different ways of moving on the feet and other parts of the body by: walking, hopping, skipping and rolling, changing speed and direction at a satisfactory level. In a dance lesson they made good progress in using their body movements to represent flames as they enacted the Great Fire of London, by stretching their fingers and curling their bodies. Movements carried out by younger junior pupils in their gymnastics lesson showed little progress because of immaturity; although they were able to perform rolls and jumps with a reasonable level of skill. Few were able to develop a sequence of three distinct movements successfully; most chose the same movement throughout their exercise. Year 5 and 6 pupils delighted their teacher by their efforts to listen carefully to instructions and to concentrate well in performing a sequence of movements requiring balance, flight and landing skills. They worked independently and with partners to improve their performance.

147. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at the end of the infants and very good in the upper juniors. Planning of lessons is good; the teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject requirements. Full attention is given to the pupils' prior learning. Lessons are part of a well structured, developmental programme covering all aspects of the subject including swimming. It was disappointing that not all teachers were changed for lessons, so were unable to participate and demonstrate or to provide good role models as happened in the very best lessons. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. Their behaviour and awareness of health and safety issues have a good effect on the quality of learning.
148. A wide variety of activities are offered including competitive sport. Resources are good and funding from the Education Action Zone enhances provision. There is a large well maintained field, good size playground and a well equipped hall. The delivery of the subject meets requirements and contributes well to pupils' personal and social development.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

149. Standards by the end of Year 2 and 6 match the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. By the time they leave the school, pupils have a satisfactory factual knowledge of Christianity and other world religions. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards in Key Stage 2 were judged to be unsatisfactory.
150. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 understand that they belong to family groups and school groups. This theme is continued as pupils learn there are groups or families of people who belong to different faiths and who celebrate special days such as Christmas, Diwali and Shabbat. Children learn more about Christianity as they discover that Jesus told stories as a way of teaching people about God, of how to behave and how to treat each other. Children in Year 2 have satisfactory recall of the parable of 'The Prodigal Son' and listen carefully to the parables of the 'Lost Sheep' and the 'Lost Coin'. They gain a satisfactory understanding of the message behind these parables.
151. By the age of 11, pupils have increased their knowledge of Christianity. They hear about more parables such as 'The Sower', and extend their knowledge of the Bible to include the Old and New Testament. Younger pupils consider their own feelings, places where they like to be and what makes them proud. This leads pupils to reflect on their hopes and aspirations for the New Year. Pupils learn about the Ten Commandments as a basis for Christian beliefs. They examine religious items such as rosary beads and a crucifix and know the principal features such as the altar, font and pulpit in churches. By the end of the key stage pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of religious items that are associated with followers of Islam, symbols that are important to Hindus and to members of the Jewish faith.
152. During the inspection it was only possible to see two lessons. Teaching in those lessons was satisfactory. The school places a strong emphasis on discussion in religious education lessons so pupils have limited written work. Pupils in Year 6 were able to recall they had studied Islam, Judaism and Hinduism. They were also able to explain they are looking closely at the books of the Old Testament and had recently read the story of creation from Genesis. The school benefits from owning an interesting range of religious items as well as using the local authority loan system. The use of these resources in lessons makes the subject

interesting. Pupils in Year 4 were fascinated as their teacher showed them a puja tray and explained the use of the bell and the kum kum powder. Pupils showed interest as the incense stick was lit and perfumed the classroom. There were missed opportunities for pupils to appreciate the significance of the rituals associated with puja and the importance of this to Hindus. Pupils have positive attitudes to their religious education lessons; they behave well and show an interest. For example, pupils in Year 2 queried why their teacher's personal Bible was special to her family; they listened carefully and with empathy to the response.

153. Pupils learn about the main faiths in Britain but with limited understanding. They do not fully appreciate how special religious books or items are to people who follow those faiths. The interesting and relevant resources could be used to better effect in creating a deeper respect for religious faiths and allowing pupils to reflect on their own beliefs. Though religious education supports pupils' cultural awareness it does not make a significant impact on pupils' spiritual development. Due to staffing changes the subject lacks a manager. This means religious education is not monitored or sufficiently promoted in the school.

