

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **THATTO HEATH PRIMARY SCHOOL**

St Helens

LEA area: St Helens

Unique reference number: 104763

Headteacher: Mrs C Taylor

Reporting inspector: E Jackson  
3108

Dates of inspection: 6<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> May 2003

Inspection number: 246405

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, with nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of children:	3-11
Gender of children:	Mixed
School address:	Hobart Street St Helens
Postcode:	WA9 5QX
Telephone number:	01744 678710
Fax number:	01744 678712
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Stamp
Date of previous inspection:	Feb 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3108	E Jackson	Registered inspector	Science Physical education	How high are standards?
14141	E Marshall	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its children?  How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
32703	J Barnes	Team inspector	English Geography Educational inclusion	
10526	M Roe	Team inspector	Special educational needs Music Religious education	
29504	S Herring	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to children?
22644	B Hill	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Art and design History	
30439	M Heyes	Team inspector	Design and technology	Pupil's attitudes, behaviour and personal development

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## REPORT CONTENTS

Page

### **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT** **6**

Information about the school  
How good the school is  
What the school does well  
What could be improved  
How the school has improved since its last inspection  
Standards  
Children's attitudes and values  
Teaching and learning  
Other aspects of the school  
How well the school is led and managed  
Parents' and carers' views of the school

### **PART B: COMMENTARY**

#### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?** **11**

The school's results and children's achievements  
Children's attitudes, values and personal development

#### **HOW WELL ARE CHILDREN TAUGHT?** **13**

#### **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO CHILDREN?** **15**

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS CHILDREN?** **18**

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?** **20**

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?** **21**

#### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?** **23**

### **PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS** **25**

### **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES** **30**

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Thatto Heath is a very large primary school, catering for children from three to 11 years old. There are currently 505 on roll, 243 boys and 230 girls full-time, and 37 boys and 27 girls part-time in the nursery. Approximately 35 per cent of the children are eligible for free school meals, well above average nationally. Almost all the children are ethnically white, and there is none learning English as an additional language. The number of children identified as having special educational needs is below average, but the number with a Statement of Special Educational Needs is above average. The school is involved in a local Education Action Zone that supports children's improved attendance and attainment, particularly through the performing arts. Children's attainment is well below average on entry into the nursery, although it covers a wide range, and below average into Year 1.

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

Thatto Heath Primary is a good school, with some very good features. It is held in high regard by parents and the local community. The school has moved forward in many areas since the last inspection, and there have been some very good improvements in key areas of its work. The headteacher gives outstanding commitment to its development. She provides clear and dynamic leadership, and has put in place very good systems for its organisation and management. She is well supported by her deputy, who manages key areas of the school's work efficiently. The governors also support the headteacher strongly, and fulfil their duties well. They know the school, and are active in supporting the staff, children and parents or carers. The contribution of other key staff is variable, but is strongest in the management of the Foundation Stage and special educational needs. The Key Stage 2 coordinator had only been in post one week at the time of the inspection, but has taken over a well-run area of the school. Teaching is good overall, leading to good progress in many areas of children's learning. This is best in the nursery and upper Key Stage 2. However, it is weak in the teaching and learning of basic skills in English and mathematics in some classes in the infants and lower juniors. Standards of attainment in mathematics and science currently are above average by age 11, and were much higher in the 2002 national tests than those in schools in similar circumstances. In science, they were well above the national average, and in the top five per cent compared to similar schools. Standards of children's work in English by 11 are average, an improvement on the previous year when they were below the national average. Many children still achieve below average standards in writing. Given the above average funding per child, and the good quality of education provided, the school continues to give good value for money.

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

- Children's standards of attainment in national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2002 were above the national average in mathematics, and well above average in science. These results were well above those in similar schools in mathematics and in the top five per cent in science.
- The headteacher is a strong and effective leader. Working with the whole-school community, she has managed the transformation of the school's learning environment, and very good improvements in the quality of education in the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 2.
- The quality of teaching is very good in the nursery and upper Key Stage 2, helping the children to make good and sometimes very good progress in their learning. The learning support team also contributes well to children's learning across the school.
- The staff and children's skills in information and communication technology (ICT) are above average, showing impressive development recently.
- The school promotes good attitudes to learning and good behaviour for all children, including those with special educational needs. Provision for the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also good.

- The school has very good links with parents, and their support makes a valuable contribution to its work and to their children's learning.

#### What could be improved

- Children's learning and the standards they achieve in mathematics by age seven and in English across the school.
- The impact of leadership and management on standards of children's work in English and mathematics at Key Stage 1.
- The more effective use of the assessment of children's work to promote better progress and attainment, including for those who may be gifted or talented.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan. Aspects of all these are covered in the current School Improvement Plan.*

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1998. It has made good, and sometimes very good, improvements in some areas, and satisfactory progress in others. All the key issues from the last inspection have been addressed, and provision for special educational needs and the Foundation Stage have improved very well. There have also been improvements in standards by age 11 in mathematics, in the provision of educational resources, and in linking staff development to overall planning for learning. There is still work to do at Key Stage 1, and in writing across the school, however. Other aspects that have improved very well are the quality of the learning environment, and the staff and children's skills and progress in learning and using ICT. The quality of teaching is better now, in part because the governors have made good staff appointments, but also because staff training has improved based on evaluation of children's needs. There have been some good developments in leadership and management, particularly in subject leadership, although further development is required in the development of literacy and numeracy, especially at Key Stage 1.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	D	C	D	C
mathematics	C	B	B	A
science	C	A	A	A*

**Key**

Very high A\*

Well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

As the table shows, results in national tests by age 11 have varied in English, and were below average last year. This is because writing standards were lower than those in reading. Writing is improving across the school, so that standards in English by age 11 are now broadly average. In mathematics, the school has achieved above average results in the last two years, and the current Year 6 also attain above average standards. In science, results in national tests at age 11 have been maintained at well above average nationally, and in the top five per cent compared to schools in similar circumstances. Currently, children achieve above average levels in science by age 11. When children start in the nursery, their attainment covers the full range, but many of them have well below average skills in many areas of their development. By Year 1, they have made good progress, although attainment for many is still below average. Results in national tests for seven

year olds in 2002 were below the national average in reading, average in writing, and well below average in mathematics, a fall since the last inspection. When compared to schools in similar circumstances, these results were well above average in reading and writing, and average in mathematics. Teachers assessed standards in science by age seven to be in line with the national average. Over the past five years, the trend in the school's results at age 11 has matched the nationally improving trend, but at age seven it has fallen, particularly in mathematics. The school has set demanding targets for improvement in standards. By age 11, children currently achieve above average levels in history, ICT and some aspects of physical education. In all other subjects, they achieve levels broadly line with those expected for their age.

## CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The children look forward to the day's activities, and want to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The school functions well as an orderly community. Children respond well to the staff's high expectations, and feel that they are treated fairly.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Children relate well to the staff and to each other. They take responsibility well, for example as members of the school council.
Attendance	Below average. There are very good procedures to improve attendance.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of children in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Satisfactory	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.*

The quality of teaching and learning is good, and it was at least satisfactory in almost all lessons. It ranges from being occasionally outstanding to being poor in one lesson seen. In the majority of lessons seen, it was at least good, and strongest in the nursery and upper juniors. It was consistently very good in Year 5, and occasionally excellent. Teaching was often good in Year 6, Year 2 and the reception classes. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in the specified areas of learning. Those children with special educational needs often make good progress because they have focused attention from the teacher or a support worker. Where teaching was very good or better, the pace of children's learning accelerated, and they often made very good progress. In some lessons, the pace was slow, and a number of children were not sufficiently challenged. Strategies for teaching literacy in English lessons are sound, and children produce a satisfactory amount of work. However, there is little enrichment beyond the National Literacy Strategy in these lessons to improve standards. Strategies for teaching numeracy in mathematics lessons are good, supported well by work in other subjects such as science. Children's progress accelerates well in the nursery and reception classes, slows in Year 1, picks up in some of the work in Year 2, slows again in Years 3 and 4, and accelerates strongly in Years 5 and 6. This is too variable a picture. There are strengths in the teaching and learning of mathematics and science, ICT, history and physical education, particularly in upper Key Stage 2. Some exciting work has been carried out in the performing and visual arts as a result of the school's involvement in the local Education Action Zone.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good in the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 2; satisfactory at Key Stage 1. Good use of ICT to enrich learning in other subjects.
Provision for children with special educational needs	Good. Staff place a strong focus on the teaching of basic skills. The learning support team make a good contribution to children's learning.
Provision for children with English as an additional language	Not applicable currently, but the school is generally well placed to help children learn, whatever their needs.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The staff plan a good range of opportunities for children to develop in these areas in all aspects of school life, including in assemblies, circle time, and religious education.
How well the school cares for its children	Care and welfare are good. Assessment of children's progress is satisfactory, but the information gained could be used more effectively.

The school works well with parents, who are very supportive of the school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher provides clear and dynamic leadership, supported well by her deputy, and some key staff. The school is well managed, and there are very good systems for its administration and organisation. However, development is not as effective as it should be at Key Stage 1.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are very supportive of the school, and fulfil their duties well. They ensure agreed plans are implemented, and take staff appointments seriously.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. There are good systems in place to inform staff and governors of the school's effectiveness, but resulting action does not have equal impact across the school.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The staff, learning resources and accommodation are deployed well to support children's learning. Finances are carefully directed to agreed priorities, and the school attracts extra funding from the Education Action Zone and other agencies. The school has good regard for securing best value in its work.

There are good levels of staffing, particularly of support staffing. There are good learning resources, and they are cared for well by staff and children. The accommodation is good, and has been improved very well in recent years. There are also active ground improvement plans currently in hand.

## 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 parents expressed their strong support for almost everything the school does.</li></ul>	There were no significant comments from parents.

The inspection generally supports the parents' positive views of the school. However, there are aspects of the school's work in Key Stage 1, the use of assessment information, and the range of opportunities for children to make decisions in their own learning that could be improved.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Many children begin school in the nursery with very poor speaking and listening skills. Assessment on entry shows that the majority of children are well below average, although attainment overall covers the whole range. Records of progress in the specified six areas of learning<sup>1</sup> are kept, highlighting the steps the children have taken towards the Early Learning Goals. Through good teaching overall and with some very good teaching in the nursery, the children make good progress. They are on course to reach the levels expected by the age of five in both physical and creative development, but below them in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world.
2. In the 2002 national tests in English, the percentage of seven year olds attaining the Level 2 expected for their age, was an improvement on the previous year in both reading and writing. It matched the national average and compared very well with results in schools in similar circumstances. However, the attainment of individual children varied considerably, particularly the attainment of the more able children in reading which was below the national figures, although about the same as in similar schools. Girls attained less well than boys in reading. In writing, the more able children achieved well. The 2002 national test results for 11 year olds were significantly lower than the previous year, and were below the national average, although they compared well with schools in similar circumstances. The results attained by the most able children were similar to the national figures and were above those in similar schools. The improvements made by the majority of Year 6 children since the test results when they were seven years old were not enough to enable many of them to reach the standards expected for their age group.
3. Currently, standards in English for many of the infant children, including those in Year 2, are below expectations for their age group, and progress for many is not fast enough. By Year 6, standards are similar to those expected nationally, except in writing, where few children attain high enough standards.
4. The 2002 national test results for seven year olds in mathematics, show children achieved standards which were well below average when compared to all schools nationally but were average when compared to results in schools with children from a similar background. Results for 11 year olds show children's attainment was above average when compared to all schools nationally and well above average when compared to similar schools. Inspection findings show that children in Year 2 are working well below average standards and that the work of children in Year 6 is above average. This represents unsatisfactory progress for seven year olds since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be above average. Improvements for 11 year olds have kept pace with the national trend.
5. In science, standards in national tests for 11 year olds in 2002 were well above average, and in the top five per cent compared to similar schools. This maintained the school's high results from the previous year, and since the last inspection. Results in teacher assessment at seven were in line with the national average, lower than at the last inspection, but above those in schools in similar circumstances.
6. Children with special educational needs in the Foundation Stage make good progress overall, with those in the nursery making very good progress especially in their personal and

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<sup>1</sup> The six areas of learning are: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematics; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; creative development.

social skills. In Key Stage 1 children make mainly satisfactory progress and by the time they reach the end of Key Stage 2 most show good and some very good progress which is due to the combination of good teaching and very good support that some receive. Many have poorly developed language skills on entry to school and are identified early for special support. Although many no longer need this level of support when they move into Key Stage 1, language and literacy skills continue to be the main areas of weakness for children with special educational needs throughout Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

7. Very good improvements have been made in standards in ICT since the last inspection, when it was a key issue for development. Children attain above expected levels at seven and 11, and have well-developed skills which they use in other subjects. This is because the co-ordinator leads the subject well, and staff have worked hard to improve their confidence and skills.
8. Standards in all other subjects are as expected at seven, representing satisfactory progress for most children at Key Stage 1. Standards are above average in history and aspects of physical education by age 11, and as expected in other subjects. The school has invested its major developments into literacy, numeracy, science, ICT and physical education, and has the results to show for the staff and children's efforts.

### **Children's attitudes, values and personal development**

9. The children's attitudes to school, to each other and to staff are good. Their personal development, behaviour and respect for others' feelings, values and beliefs are good. These important aspects clearly add to the progress they make in the encouraging learning environment created by the school. The school's aims place a high priority on this aspect of its work. It meets these aims well. Parents are very pleased with the way their children grow into confident, responsible and mature individuals, well prepared for secondary school and their future lives.
10. The children enter the school in a purposeful manner, looking forward to the day's activities and wanting to learn. The youngest children enjoy and relish the subjects presented to them. Older children enjoy the challenge of learning how to use such subjects as mathematics in their everyday life: for example, Year 5 children could see the connections of knowing how to use mathematical operations when solving problems. Children have a strong sense of ownership of the school and fully involve themselves in the many activities it offers, particularly sporting activities. Most children are keen to do well and value their teachers' praise and encouragement. However, very occasionally, a few become restless if explanations in lessons are too long. Children know how to respond appropriately in assemblies. They are capable of good independent learning and work well in groups, for example in a Year 2 art and design lesson. However, there are insufficient opportunities for the children to use their independence in making decisions about their own learning.
11. The school functions well as an orderly community. Children know the school rules well and feel they are treated fairly. They respond well to teachers' expectations of good behaviour and as a result, behaviour is generally good in lessons, assemblies and at lunchtimes. Bullying is rare and children and parents feel confident that it will be dealt with quickly and effectively. There are very few exclusions. Children are friendly and polite to visitors. Teachers offer good examples of courtesy and fairness. There are some good opportunities for children to take responsibility and they take these seriously, for example, as prefects and as members of the School Council, and the ECO Council. They learn about the values of other cultures through art, music, religious education and geography and show respect for the feelings and beliefs of others.
12. Children with special educational needs concentrate well in lessons especially where the learning is lively and fun. They are generally interested and enthusiastic, particularly where

the support enables them to be fully involved in sessions. They demonstrate growing self-confidence and self-esteem. Their behaviour is almost always good and in most lessons even those children who have been identified as having difficulties with behaviour, cope well and are generally well motivated. Children relate well to the staff and to each other and support each other in their learning. They co-operate well when working in pairs, working on computers and in problem solving in maths and science. They are developing positive approaches to learning. This is a substantial improvement since the last inspection.

13. Children's attendance during the previous school year is well below the national average figure for primary schools and is unsatisfactory, as it has an adverse effect on a number of children's achievement. The main recorded cause of absence is short-term illness affecting a significant number of children. Holidays being taken in term time by a number of families also affects the out-turn performance of the school. There is no evidence of truancy. Due to a concerted effort by the school with outside agency support, attendance for the current year is showing an improving trend. Registration meets statutory requirements and the school day starts and finishes on time.

### **HOW WELL ARE CHILDREN TAUGHT?**

14. Teaching and learning are good overall, and best in the nursery and Years 5 and 6. Teaching is good overall in the Foundation Stage, covering the nursery and reception classes, leading to good progress in children's learning. Teaching is generally satisfactory in Key Stage 1, but ranges from being occasionally very good in Year 2 to occasionally poor in Year 1. Children's progress is more variable in these classes, being good in some lessons, but slower in others, particularly in aspects of mathematics and English. This is in part because some of the staff's expectations of children's progress are too low, particularly in the teaching and learning of basic skills in literacy and numeracy. In Years 3 to 6, teaching is good overall. It is generally satisfactory with occasional good lessons in Years 3 to 4, but children's progress accelerates in Year 5 where lessons are often fast-paced, challenging and exciting. Teaching is often good or very good in Year 6, but is also occasionally fairly slow-paced in some lessons. In these lessons, usually led by temporary teachers, children's learning slows, and they occasionally become restless.
15. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are good overall and sometimes very good, with an emphasis on learning through practical and play experiences. The teachers, nursery nurses and classroom support assistants know and understand the Early Learning Goals for children of this age, planning the curriculum to attain them. Since the previous inspection, when there was a lack of continuity in the planning of the transition from nursery to reception, the Foundation Stage team work and plan together well. Considerable improvements have been made in children's learning. Children acquire a good range of vocabulary because the teachers plan carefully to develop it. For example, in the nursery, the children enjoyed using the new words they have learned from Postman Paul. After listening to mood music in the reception class, the children described it as 'gentle' 'rippling', 'like a butterfly'. Through the very good leadership of the coordinator and the commitment of the staff, the Foundation Stage was awarded the Kite Mark in December, 2002, for the high quality of its provision.
16. The teaching for children with special educational needs is good in the Foundation Stage with teaching in the nursery being very good where staff identify children's special educational needs at an early stage. Both the teacher and the support staff help children to develop their spoken language very effectively and most have had specific training to ensure that they are able to support and communicate with children whose language is not well developed. In the reception classes, support assistants work well with children with special educational needs across a range of activities. This enables them to take part in and fully benefit from the activities, for example in physical education and literacy.

17. The teaching of children with special educational needs in Key Stage 1 is mainly satisfactory, with good support for children with statements. There is a strong focus on the teaching of basic skills, especially in literacy, and support assistants are used effectively by teachers to develop children's reading skills. For example, in a literacy lesson in Year 2, support staff worked directly from children's individual education plans which were clear about what they needed to learn. These sessions included a good balance of reading and writing tasks, and children enjoyed making good progress.
18. The quality of teaching for children with special educational needs in Key Stage 2 is good and often very good in the upper key stage. Children are well supported in literacy and this enables them to take an active part in whole-class sessions. Within the short withdrawal sessions, when children worked on specific targets from their individual education plans, both the learning and teaching were good. However, some crucial parts of lessons in other subjects such as science, physical education or history are often missed when children are withdrawn for help with literacy skills. Teachers try to minimise the effect of this by spending a short time with these children when they return to tell them what the lesson is about. The teaching was at its best when teaching and support staff worked closely together to ensure that supported children had similar learning experiences as other children, but matched to their particular needs. For example, in an English lesson, children were able to develop their writing skills as a result of the support assistant's understanding of language structures and the essentials of letter writing. In a mathematics lesson the children's problem solving skills were extended as a result of the support assistant further developing and extending the effective teaching strategies used by the teacher.
19. Strategies for teaching literacy are satisfactory overall. Teachers' planning, based on the National Literacy Strategy, results in the children producing a reasonable volume of work, however, there is little enrichment beyond this to improve the standards that children reach. Strategies to develop literacy skills are most effective in Year 5 and Year 6, where the level of challenge and range of work accelerates children's progress. For example, Year 5 children wrote a persuasive letter using prompts from a word-processing program. They tackled this in pairs and groups with great enthusiasm, energy, and determination. The outcomes were of high quality for their age, and reflected the skilled teaching based in very good planning of the lesson. However, the provision for the teaching of reading and writing skills in Key Stage 1 is not sufficiently systematic, and standards are below average. The school has introduced a range of additional strategies for teaching literacy to small withdrawal groups in an effort to raise standards. Whilst this is having a positive effect, care needs to be taken in ensuring that children do not regularly miss lessons in other subjects.
20. Strategies for teaching numeracy are good overall enabling children to reach an above average standard by the time they leave school. However, they are not consistent across the school. They are most effective in Year 5 and Year 6 where the setting arrangements and some additional booster lessons are used very well to provide appropriate challenge for children of all abilities. There was also a very good lesson in Year 2, where the teacher extended the children's understanding of counting on and back in multiples of ten at good pace as far as 200. In Year 1 to Year 4 generally, however, the pace of introductory mental mathematics sessions in most classes is too slow to challenge children sufficiently to develop their arithmetic skills at a quick enough rate. In addition, extensive use of workbooks in Year 1 reduces the opportunities for the practical experiences needed to develop a depth of understanding. Consequently, standards are well below average by the end of Year 2. A good feature is the varied opportunities for children to develop their numeracy skills in other subjects, for example children in Year 5 measure their pulse rates in science over a period of time and draw graphs to compare the effects of different activities. The school has rightly identified problem solving as an area for development.
21. Major progress has been made in developing all the staff's ICT skills, and in improving the general provision for the subject. This has brought rich rewards, particularly at Key Stage 2. A key feature of these developments is the use of the skills learned in other subjects,

particularly but not only in English and mathematics. For example, in a very good lesson with children in Year 5, the teacher challenged well children at different levels of prior attainment in ICT to identify effective uses of spreadsheets in mathematics. She solved problems skilfully with those having difficulty, and ensured that all the children applied and extended their developing skills. Science teaching has also maintained high standards since the last inspection, leading to good and sometimes very good progress in children's learning. For example, Year 3 children explored magnetism, and used a wide variety of different magnets to test the forces of attraction and repulsion. However, further work is required to develop children's personal control and understanding of the principles and practice of scientific testing and investigation. History was taught well during the inspection in Year 2, as children studied the Great Fire of London. In one lesson, the teacher kept the children's interest well by using good resources to illustrate her description, and in another the teacher led a feedback session skilfully, so that some children spontaneously applauded others who had explained their work. Physical education is also taught well in many classes, and good work was seen in a Year 2 dance lesson, Year 3 orienteering, and Year 6 soccer skills practice.

22. The general pattern of teaching is often supplemented by visits out of school, or by visitors to school. Children generally respond well in these sessions, and their learning is enhanced because they are so interested. Similarly, extension activities provided through the Education Action Zone also motivate the children to learn well. This has been the case particularly in the performing and visual arts. Here, attractive displays of completed paintings and sculpture, or videos of musical and dance productions, testify to the quality of the work.
23. There are major developments underway in the use of test and assessment information to plan what children should do next to improve. On occasion, staff use their day-to-day knowledge of children's progress very well to set new tasks, or to adapt lesson plans. Teachers at Key Stage 1 use the outcomes of their assessments in English and mathematics to make predictions about the test outcomes for the end of the key stage. However, children's progress suggests that the teachers' expectations in setting targets for these children are too low. At Key Stage 2, the substantial information that the school now has is not yet used consistently to monitor the attainment of individuals and groups or to ensure that children are on track to reach or to exceed the levels that they might be capable of. A new coordinator and a new computer system, which has recently been implemented, might help to make this easier in the future. A key feature should be to consider the importance of the marking of children's work. There are excellent examples in English and mathematics of helpful comments used to direct children's learning. Often, however, comments are general and unspecific, with no reference to the child's subject performance.

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

24. The school's curriculum and the quality and range of learning opportunities are good in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 2 and they are satisfactory in Key Stage 1. Provision for children with special educational needs is good throughout the school. The balance of the curriculum is good overall, and the staff ensure that all children have full access to curricular opportunities in the main. A significant improvement since the last inspection has been the strong commitment given to the provision for ICT. The resulting improvement in the skills of both teachers and children has fostered the extensive use of ICT in other subjects to enrich learning. The breadth of the curriculum is satisfactory overall in Key Stage 1, but there has been insufficient emphasis on developing a wider range of structured opportunities to improve children's literacy and numeracy skills. Consequently, standards in both subjects in Key Stage 1 have fallen since the last inspection.

25. Children in the Foundation Stage receive a varied and rich range of experiences that lead to good progress. Teachers have a good awareness of the needs of young children and so plan activities well to take account of all areas of learning. The provision of a lunchtime club in the nursery is much appreciated by parents.
26. Provision for personal, social and health education, including citizenship, is good overall and makes a good contribution to children's personal development. Aspects are discussed in circle time, and specific topics are covered in lessons on health and personal safety. For example, children in Year 2 learn the dangers of hazardous substances and all children in Year 6 are receiving first aid training in small groups. Areas of citizenship are covered in voting for class representatives on the active School Council and children develop a good awareness of wider environmental issues through participation in projects such as the Eco School initiative.
27. Individual education plans are in place for children with different levels of need, and for those with statements. These individual education plans are useful to support staff and classroom teachers to help them differentiate work and plan specific support. Provision and support are in line with the national Code of Practice with specific support provided in literacy and numeracy. However, the planning of tasks and activities in other subjects is not so well matched to attainment. The support in and out of class sessions and in supported groups is well matched to the content of individual education plans and the recommended provision in children's statements. Some of this support is very good, particularly for children with Statements of Special Educational Need, but overall the provision is good.
28. Strategies for teaching numeracy are good overall, but they are not consistent across the school. In Year 5 and Year 6, setting arrangements and some additional booster lessons are used very well to provide work at the right level for children of all abilities. In Years 1 to Year 4, however, introductory mental mathematics sessions are often too slow to speed up children's use of their arithmetic skills. The use of workbooks in Year 1 also reduces the time available for children to engage in practical experiences to develop their understanding.
29. Strategies for teaching literacy are satisfactory. Teachers' planning is based on the National Literacy Strategy and children produce a satisfactory amount of written work. However, there is little enrichment other than in ICT to help the children to reach higher levels, except in Years 5 and 6. However, the provision for the development of reading and writing skills in Key Stage 1 is not sufficiently systematic. The school has introduced a range of additional strategies for teaching literacy to small withdrawal groups in an effort to raise standards. Developments are underway to promote literacy across the whole curriculum.
30. The very good improvement in the provision for ICT is a considerable success. Computer skills are taught systematically and well and children improve through using computers to enrich learning in other areas of the curriculum. For example, children in Year 2 search the Internet for information on the Great Fire of London, whilst children in Year 4 put information into a database to collate a variety of statistics, such as hair and eye colour, about their class. This has resulted in a very good improvement with children attaining above average standards by the time they leave school.
31. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught. Religious education lessons meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and a strong feature is the progressive development of knowledge about major world faiths. Areas of strength in other subjects include the good coverage of all aspects of science including an improvement in scientific enquiry since the last inspection, and the development of research skills in history. Good use is made of the school grounds to give children experience of orienteering and a good range of games. Children undertake a wide range of artwork, and the model of Queen Elizabeth I is impressive. Whilst sketchbooks are used well in Key Stage 1 to develop a range of techniques, they are not used effectively enough in Key Stage 2. Areas for development are the systematic teaching of skills in subjects such as music and geography



and to continue to develop opportunities for working independently, which are beginning to show some success in some science and history lessons. The school has timetabled some longer lessons in Key Stage 2, lasting a full afternoon, on a trial basis. Where they are planned well, they enable topics to be covered in greater depth, as in the Year 5 science lesson seen. However, the pace of some lessons becomes too leisurely and the tasks expand to fit the time available without any significant benefit to learning.

32. A good range of visits and visitors to school enriches the curriculum. The school's active and enthusiastic participation in the local Education Action Zone has resulted in the strengthening of the creative elements in the curriculum. These include activities such as drama workshops for Year 6, a dance week for Year 5 and an artist in residence who helped children in Year 3 and 4 with willow weaving. Children in Year 2 visited the local library to take part in workshops to celebrate National Poetry Day. A particular success has been the children's participation in the 'Bollywood' production, which they have performed well to plaudits from a range of audiences. This has also added to their wider cultural understanding, as has the Creative Partnership link with schools in Blackburn.
33. Teachers give generously of their time to provide a good number of activities outside the school day which are well attended. These include a very good range of sports activities; indeed the school has a Sport England Active Mark Gold Award. There is also a choir, dance club and brass band.
34. In circle time, children are encouraged to talk about problems and disappointments and to develop their own solutions after discussion. Sex education and drugs awareness are dealt with sensitively and with parents' agreement. Citizenship is promoted through community links with local businesses, local police personnel and the school nurse. The annual residential visit provided for Year 6 children gives good opportunity to develop leadership and teamwork skills.
35. The School Council provides good opportunities for children to identify problems or suggestions for school improvement. Councillors were trained in how to hold successful meetings at the Pilkington's 'World of Glass' centre. The council has since nominated two of its members to serve on the 'Eco Council' to work on collection of paper for recycling. The school encourages children to take on additional responsibilities by appointments such as prefects and monitors. A particularly good example of this is seen in the Years 5 and 6 activity leaders. All Year 5 and 6 children applied and 27 were selected for training provided by the local education authority. These leaders now supervise games in the infants play area. Older children run the school shop.
36. Provision overall for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good. Spirituality is promoted well through assemblies where music is an important feature. Work in art and science provides an opportunity for children to reflect on the wonders of nature. Circle time gives children the opportunity to understand and respect the feelings and beliefs of their fellow classmates. The school celebrates other major religions and arranges visits to the local church for special services.
37. Moral development is promoted through the effective implementation of the behaviour policy and encouraging children to take ownership of their own rules of conduct. This leads to many of them accepting responsibility for their own actions. The school's reward system ensures this aspect is regularly brought to children's attention. Circle time provides the opportunity for children to help resolve conflict. Social development follows closely. Children are taught to work and play together in pairs or groups and to respect each other. The school helps foster the sense of a community where all children share the same values. The additional tasks they willingly accept help prepare them for future. Physical education and the extra-curricular clubs provide good means of developing teamwork.
38. Cultural development is promoted in several ways. History topics give children an awareness of their own and other cultures, and they are taught that society has developed

from a range of cultural experiences. Issues of racism and prejudice are considered, and music and art are used well. Children study the work of local artists and pottery makers, and have made a range of models and displays incorporating some of these ideas. The school has secured funding for future developments from the 'Creative Partnerships', a national initiative that helps provide artistic experiences. Inclusion in the Education Action Zone has provided support for dance and drama. The school uses classical, traditional, folk and popular music together with Latin American, and the choir is presently studying and singing African songs. The curriculum is broadened by off-site visits such as to theatres and exhibition centres, and the recent 'twinning' with another primary school has provided good opportunities for multicultural exchanges. An Asian family with children in school give freely of their time to talk about food, clothes and the traditions of their country of origin.

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

39. The school's procedures for child protection and ensuring children's welfare are good overall. The school seeks professional advice in carrying out risk assessment and premises condition surveys. The governing body has assigned a member to oversee the procedures and ensure recommendations are carried out. Routine checks on fire safety equipment and large physical education apparatus are organised. Testing of portable electrical equipment now needs to be scheduled. First aid provision is very good and well organised to ensure full cover at all times. Child protection arrangements, including security screening of Internet material, are properly implemented. Parents have recently been contacted to inform them of this latest measure. Personal safety issues are addressed by visits from the local police and visits to the 'Crucial Crew' sessions, led mainly by the fire service.
40. Procedures for monitoring and supporting children's personal development are good. Children in the nursery are continuously monitored in relation to their personal and social abilities to enable the staff determine the amount and nature of the support each child requires. Records are passed on to the staff in the reception classes to provide continuity and to ensure the additional support is appropriate. Children with special educational needs are identified and have individual education plans prepared. Parents are involved with the agreeing and setting of personal targets and in the periodic reviews. Children in the other age groups have personal, social and health education teaching provided within the curriculum and in circle time sessions where they can raise any personal problems. Teachers give a summary of each child's personal characteristics and development on a separate section of their annual reports. Children have their own Records of Achievement folders in which they are encouraged to keep examples of work and awards they select for themselves as illustrations of their progress.
41. Provision outlined in the children's statements of their special educational needs is implemented effectively with programmes of work systematically developed to focus in the main on basic skills in reading and writing. All staff and children are aware of the targets in individual education plans, which are clear and specific across the school. Both teachers and learning support assistants are closely involved in writing these plans. This is an improvement on findings in the last inspection. There are good relationships between the school and local authority with regular contact between special educational needs staff and the educational psychologist. There are also good links with other agencies.
42. Entry assessment is being used well to identify children with special educational needs at an early stage and many children no longer need special support when they transfer to Key Stage 1. The special educational needs coordinator builds well on the assessment information available in the school and uses other forms of assessment to identify needs more specifically. Children's progress is individually tracked through their individual education plans and although there is currently no monitoring of the performance of children with special educational needs as a group, recent whole-school developments in using a data analysis package will provide this facility in the future. The use of assessment has

improved since the last inspection, particularly in ensuring that support is well matched to the children's level of need.

43. Substantial work has been undertaken to develop assessment procedures to monitor children's performance in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, particularly in Key Stage 2. Developed since the last inspection, an extended range of tests is used and the resulting analysis is used to group and set children and to set targets and provide special educational needs support, additional support, and determine who will benefit from booster classes. The school is actively developing procedures both in the core and foundation subjects to assess and record children's attainment and progress.
44. Entry assessment is undertaken to focus teaching for individual children in the nursery and to identify individual needs. The staff in the Foundation Stage are well prepared to implement the Foundation Stage Profile and nursery assessment is being adapted to ensure consistency across the Foundation Stage. Continuous assessment is used effectively to assess and record progress in individual activities throughout the Foundation Stage and information is used to adapt activities for individuals and groups.
45. In Key Stage 1, staff use the assessment information from the reception teachers to group children, especially for literacy and numeracy lessons. Evaluation sheets are used well by support staff to record views about progress and concerns especially in 'Guided Reading' sessions and for children with special educational needs. Teachers use the outcomes of their assessments in English and mathematics to make predictions about the test outcomes for the end of the key stage. However, children's progress suggests that the teachers' expectations in setting targets for these children are too low.
46. In Key Stage 2 there is a wealth of assessment information with formal testing taking place each year. This has been used to set children particularly in the core subjects to better match teaching to children's needs and to set targets initially in literacy based on performance at Key Stage 1. No formal targets are yet being set in the other core subjects. The substantial information that the school now has is not yet used consistently to monitor the attainment of individuals and groups or to ensure that children are on track to reach or to exceed the levels that they might be capable of. A new coordinator and a new computer system, which has recently been implemented, might help to make this easier in the future.
47. The use of assessment to guide curriculum planning is not yet fully developed or consistent. A system for evaluating the impact of teaching on children's learning across the curriculum is being trialled this year. However these evaluations vary in quality. There is not enough consideration of what children have learned or what skills they have acquired. This means that it is difficult for teachers to plan what needs to be learned next. This is also evident in some of the marking of children's work. However, in some classes there is good use of assessment to identify the next steps. For example, in a mathematics session the teacher had identified through her evaluation the need for further work on problem solving. She then planned a different lesson than she had intended in order to focus on this issue, and as a result the children made very good progress. There is also good evidence in the work of support staff that they often use assessment well to set targets and to judge children's progress against them.
48. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. The school acknowledges that it is difficult to raise attendance levels and is working hard to achieve this objective. Location within the Education Action Zone has enabled the school to secure sponsorship for improving attendance. An attendance officer now works with the education welfare officer and the school, to identify children with poor attendance and to conduct home visits where necessary. Guidance and practical assistance are given to parents having difficulty in ensuring children's regular and punctual attendance. The school's administrative staff record all latecomers and liaise with class teachers to identify all cases of unexplained absence on a daily basis. Weekly analysis of the registers is carried out and all children

with unsatisfactory attendance are identified for further action. Parents are discouraged from taking holidays in term time. These measures are beginning to have the desired effect.

49. To help promote good attendance, the school has introduced a competitive element. Each class competes for a weekly award certificate that is presented in assembly. A prize in the form of free cinema, rugby game or entry to the World of Glass exhibition will be awarded to the class with the best attendance at the end of the school year. Children with 100 per cent attendance in any term are awarded personal certificates. Seventy eight of these personal awards were earned in the spring term.
50. The school has good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour. The school's high expectations are made clear at the beginning of the year and children contribute by developing class conduct rules and codes of behaviour. A request for parents to assist is made in the Home/School Agreement. All staff implement the codes consistently and fairly.
51. There are appropriate rewards and sanctions. Rewards can be in the form of stickers and stars or house points and recognition is made in the weekly assemblies. Sanctions range from 'cooling off' periods when children must work in another classroom, to lunchtime detention. Continual good or bad behaviour results in letters sent to parents. Bad behaviour causing concern results in parents being invited into school to discuss the issue and agree the action to be taken. Mid-day supervisors assist in the monitoring process and can nominate children or classes for an award. These are effective in promoting good behaviour and attitudes to school.

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

52. Responses received to the parents' questionnaire and at two meetings held to take their views indicate that parents are very supportive of the school and enjoy a high level of satisfaction with the education their children receive. Parents interviewed during the inspection confirm this situation. There is a clear belief that children are expected to work hard and are making good progress.
53. Parents say the school is friendly and caring, and children, particularly those with special educational needs, are well supported. Parents feel welcome and able to come into school to discuss any problems concerning their children's education. Problems raised are said to be quickly resolved. There is no perception of bullying or bad behaviour.
54. Very good information is provided for parents in the form of regular newsletters and consultation evenings. Analysis of attendance at the consultation evenings shows that 80 per cent of parents attend and the school is now arranging alternative times to accommodate working parents unable to attend the general sessions. The high quality school prospectus and governing body annual report fully meet statutory requirements. Children's annual reports give relevant information of progress in all subjects and personal targets in English maths and science. Home/school diaries are seen by parents as useful means of communication. Parents of children newly entering the nursery or the reception classes are provided with a comprehensive induction session and home visits are arranged. Workshops on literacy and numeracy are provided for reception parents to enable them to understand the material to be taught and the help they themselves may be able to provide.
55. Links with the parents of children with special educational needs are good and parents value the quality of the support given. The school works in line with the Code of Practice with parents being informed at an early stage when children are first identified. Parents make a contribution to reviews and to individual education plans. They are informed of targets and children also now know what their targets are. This is an improvement on the findings in the last inspection.

56. The school is successful in attracting parent helpers in the classrooms. Some 12 to 15 parents and grandparents provide regular support, particularly in the younger classes. These helpers are acknowledged by the award of certificates in special assemblies and 100 hours of given support are recognised by an award from the Lord Mayor. The parent/teacher association is enthusiastic and effective in its fund-raising activities. Events are well supported by other parents and the proceeds used to purchase items such as the demountable stage, TV sets and computer equipment. The association, together with the school's physical education staff team have been successful in obtaining National Lottery funding for the purchase of physical education equipment and to set up a dance club.
57. The school, with support from a further education college, provides adult education courses to help parents gain skills and confidence to assist in their children's learning. Courses include computer use, mathematics, reading and library skills. Some parent helpers, having attended such courses, have continued with their studies and are now qualified classroom assistants. Links with parents are developing well and are effective in contributing to children's learning. The resulting impact of parental involvement in the work of the school is good.

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

58. Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff are good. The headteacher is very clear about how she would like to see the school develop, and shares this vision determinedly with the whole-school community. She provides focused and dynamic leadership, and has led significant change in many areas of the school's work since the last inspection. For example, working with the whole-school community, she has systematically upgraded the school learning environment. This project is almost complete internally, and the high quality of classrooms and shared areas reflects the school's mission to promote respect and care for all involved, children, staff and parents. There are ambitious, exciting and active plans to continue this refurbishment in the remaining area of the inside of the building, and then extend the theme of educationally and aesthetically effective change in the school's playgrounds and grounds.
59. The changes to the school environment support a wider drive by the headteacher and governors to achieve and maintain high standards in all areas of the school's work. Whilst this project is not yet complete, there have been very good improvements in the quality of education in the juniors, particularly in Years 5 and 6. This has helped to maintain the high standards from the previous inspection in mathematics and science, and lift standards in ICT significantly. The governors have made successful staff appointments that have been influential here, and the deputy headteacher adds good support both in his teaching, and his leadership and management of key aspects of the school's work, such as subject leadership for science. He has also recently taken on new roles, including developments in assessment, vacated by a member of staff promoted to another school. Provision for children with special educational needs has improved to be good, and the quality of education in the Foundation Stage has also improved. The two staff who lead these areas have successfully implemented the agreed plans for their development, overseen by the headteacher. Other less experienced staff are being trained effectively to assume wider roles, one of whom has recently taken over the leadership and management of Key Stage 2. Many subject leaders have the benefit of a team approach to subject overview, and this is generally a good feature of the management structure.
60. Provision for special educational needs is effectively managed and well led. The well-trained team of support staff works effectively as a team and makes a very positive contribution to teaching and learning for identified children. Procedures and policies are very clear and work effectively in practice and are in line with the national Code of Practice. There are good systems for planning, assessment and identification. The special educational needs coordinator is currently developing systems to monitor trends in the identification of children with special educational needs, which will help the school in its

future planning. The joint leadership by the coordinator and headteacher is good and there is a strong commitment to the school becoming fully inclusive.

61. However, leadership and management are not as effective as they should be in maintaining and raising standards of children's work and progress at Key Stage 1, and in aspects of English across the school. Governors explained that the headteacher's main tasks at appointment were to improve standards and the quality of education in the Foundation Stage, Key Stage 2 and for children with special educational needs. These issues have been tackled rigorously, and effectively. Alongside these developments, though, there has been a fall in standards by age seven since the last inspection, particularly for girls, and the pace of change has been slower in Key Stage 1 than in the rest of the school. Two key members of the management team work in Key Stage 1, and between them have responsibility for the work of the infant department, and English and mathematics across the school. The current school improvement plan has significant development issues in these important areas, but inspection evidence suggests that the implementation of these plans is not as effective as it should be. This is partially mitigated by the quality and contribution of subject team members, and the influence of the headteacher and other key staff. However, the action taken following monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of those key staff in leadership roles here has not yet led to sufficient impact on their strategic overview and practical influence in raising the quality of education and children's standards and progress in their designated areas of responsibility, as set out in the school's guidance document for subject leadership.
62. The evaluation and monitoring of the school's work have improved significantly in other areas, however, and has accelerated well in the last year. For example, the data from national test results for the school in 2002 has been more thoroughly analysed than in previous years, and the information used to galvanise staff efforts to further improvement, particularly in mathematics at Key Stage 1, and in writing across the school. This includes further development of staff's use of marking and assessment information to plan the next steps in children's learning, an area identified by the inspection as needing further strengthening. The deputy headteacher and the headteacher have been closely involved in this in order to ensure that the appropriate action is taken. There are signs that this is beginning to have effect, but aspects of leadership and management referred to earlier also need to be improved if the school is to ensure that best value is delivered in these areas.
63. The school's development planning is purposeful, and addresses issues raised from the staff and governors' collective view of how the school should move forward. The school improvement plan is detailed and costed, and sets out very well the school's priorities for improvement. Governors take a good strategic view based on projections of numbers of children and financial forward planning. They know the school well, and the chair of governors is fully involved in the school's work. Children's views are also sought through the School Council about aspects of development planning that affect them directly, such as the ground improvements. Plans made are followed through, and there is very good evidence through the headteacher's reports to governors and minutes of meetings that schedules are checked and reported on to those with monitoring responsibilities. Committees of the governing body also contribute well here, as do those governors with assigned roles for aspects of the school's work, such as special educational needs. Finances are carefully targeted to agreed priorities, and there are also secure financial procedures in the administration of the school's budget and other resources. A very good feature here is the school's success in winning grant aid to support projects. There is often a great deal of work involved in making these bids, but the staff do this willingly for the benefits realised. For example, significant extra funding has been achieved for the improvement of resources for physical education and games, and to extend the scope of the planned work on the outdoor play areas. The organisation and day-to-day management of the school is very efficient, and the administrative staff support the effective functioning of the school very well.

64. The headteacher and governors recognise the importance of staff training and development, which is more clearly linked now to the agreed priorities since the last inspection. The learning support team speak highly of the opportunities they have had to develop their skills, and this shows in the quality of their work with children. The headteacher believes strongly in the value of each member of staff, whatever their role, and that shared development is vital to providing the high quality of education that the school is working towards. Accordingly, performance management systems are detailed and thorough, and whilst they have not led to improvements in all areas, they are focused on the improvement of staff skills to meet the school's priorities. The very good developments in ICT provide a very good example of the successful application of further training to an area of need.
65. The school premises are well presented, and are of adequate size to meet the needs of the number of children on roll. Facilities for the disabled are provided, and there is a separate secure play area for the nursery children. There is, as yet, no equivalent area for the reception children. The school is well resourced, and good use is made of these resources to aid children's learning. The ICT suites are used very well both to teach ICT skills, and to apply these skills in other areas of learning. Some staff also use ICT facilities in their classrooms very effectively to enhance their lessons. There is a small library, and the two halls are used efficiently. A number of small teaching areas has been developed around the school, and these are used well for individual and small group teaching, often for children with special educational needs. The generous grounds are safer to use since new protective fencing has been added, and good use is made of the facilities by a local sports club, as well as by the school.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

66. In order to further improve the children's standards of attainment, and the overall quality of education, the headteacher, staff and governors should:
1.
    - (a) analyse how effectively the teaching at Key Stage 1 in mathematics, and in English across the school, meets children's needs, and put in place effective measures to use the results of this monitoring and evaluation to improve teachers' lesson planning;
    - (b) ensure that teachers' and other staff's expectations of children's progress are sufficiently high to promote effective learning for those of different levels of attainment.

(Paragraphs 2, 3, 4, 14, 19, 20, 24, 28, 45, 90, 94, 97, 101, 106 & 112)
  2. Ensure that all those staff with leadership and management responsibilities for children's attainment and progress at Key Stage 1:
    - (a) carry out their roles effectively, or receive any further training required to help them to do so;
    - (b) are accountable to the governors for the outcomes of the school's work in their areas of responsibility in terms of the quality of education offered, and the children's standards of attainment and progress.

(Paragraphs 2, 3, 4, 61, 104 & 115)

3. Build on the work currently planned in the school improvement plan to use what is known from assessment and marking of children's work and progress to:
- (a) provide further tasks and activities that help the children to reach the next levels in their learning in all areas of the curriculum;
  - (b) modify and develop the school's planned curriculum, taking account of the requirements of the National Curriculum, children's needs, and the school's resources;
  - (c) identify how far children develop key skills, particularly of enquiry, investigation and problem-solving, and use the information gained to inform teachers' lesson planning to develop these skills further.
- (Paragraphs 10, 20, 21, 23, 31, 43, 45, 46, 47, 90, 95, 98, 101, 102, 108, 114, 116, 117, 119, 132 & 148)



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

83

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and children

28

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
<b>Number</b>	2	12	32	36	0	1	0
<b>Percentage</b>	2	15	39	43	0	1	0

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

### Information about the school's children

Children on the school's roll	Nursery	YR-Y6
Number of children on the school's roll (FTE for part-time children)	32	473
Number of full-time children known to be eligible for free school meals	NA	166

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR-Y6
Number of children with statements of special educational needs	1	10
Number of children on the school's special educational needs register	2	71

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

Child mobility in the last school year	No of children
Children who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	26
Children who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	22

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	8.0
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.7
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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered children in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	28	34	62

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of children at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	25	25
	Girls	30	30	25
	Total	55	55	50
Percentage of children at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (79)	89 (81)	81 (89)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of children at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	26	25
	Girls	29	29	31
	Total	55	55	56
Percentage of children at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (79)	89 (83)	90 (86)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered children in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	38	31	69

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of children at NC level 4 and above	Boys	26	31	38
	Girls	18	24	29
	Total	44	55	67
Percentage of children at NC level 4 or above	School	64 (77)	80 (82)	97 (96)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of children at NC level 4 and above	Boys	25	29	36
	Girls	20	23	26
	Total	45	52	62
Percentage of children at NC level 4 or above	School	65 (75)	75 (81)	90 (93)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

**Ethnic background of children****Exclusions in the last school year**

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>	<b>No of children on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
White – British	399	0	0
White – Irish	2	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	43	0	0

*The table refers to children of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of children excluded.*

## ***Teachers and classes***

### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR-Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	18
Number of children per qualified teacher	473
Average class size	29.4

### **Education support staff: YR-Y6**

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	414

### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of children per qualified teacher	32
Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	85
Number of children per FTE adult	6

***FTE means full-time equivalent.***

## ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6

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.***

## ***Financial information***

Financial year	2002/3
	£
Total income	1,204,908
Total expenditure	1,219,044
Expenditure per child	2,413
Balance brought forward from previous year	52,554
Balance carried forward to next year	38,418

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	505
Number of questionnaires returned	229

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	33	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	68	31	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	41	3	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	47	38	8	1	6
The teaching is good.	70	28	2	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	63	31	6	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	22	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	75	23	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	60	30	8	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	75	24	0	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	65	33	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	56	32	8	1	3

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

67. Provision of learning in the Foundation Stage is good overall and sometimes very good, with an emphasis on learning through practical and play experiences. The teachers, nursery nurses and classroom support assistants know and understand the Early Learning Goals for children of this age, planning the curriculum to attain them. Since the previous inspection, when there was a lack of continuity in the planning of the transition from nursery to reception, the Foundation Stage team work and plan together well. Considerable improvements have been made in children's learning. Through the very good leadership of the coordinator and the commitment of the staff, the Foundation Stage was awarded the Kite Mark in December, 2002, for the high quality of its provision.
68. The children enter the nursery in the September following their third birthday and transfer to the reception classes in the following September. The standard of care for the children is good. Children with special educational needs are identified early so that help and support can be given from the learning classroom assistants. There is good provision for these children and their parents are fully involved, so that progress is good. Many children commence school with very poor speaking and listening skills. Assessment on entry shows that the majority of children are well below average, although attainment overall covers the whole range. Records of progress in the six areas of learning are kept, highlighting the steps the children have taken towards the Early Learning Goals. Through good teaching overall and with some very good teaching in the nursery, the children make good progress. They are on course to reach the levels expected by five in both physical and creative development, but below them in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world.
69. The teachers work in close partnership with the parents, welcoming them into school and valuing their contributions. Before the children start school, introductory meetings are held when the parents learn about the school and receive suggestion leaflets on how they can help their children. Parents join in activity days enthusiastically, and regularly attend school events.

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

70. Many children start school with very immature skills in personal and social development. They grow in confidence through the skilful teaching in both the nursery and reception. The teachers plan challenging but achievable activities, so that the children are interested, excited and motivated to learn. The staff have very high expectations that the children will be able to join in the excellent range of daily, planned activities.
71. The teachers and support staff listen carefully to what the children have to say, showing that their contributions are valued. The adults in the nursery always treat each other with courtesy and respect, acting as role models to the children on how to behave. The children show consideration to each other, reflecting the school rules: 'we share, listen, play together, wait our turn, and tidy up after ourselves.' Everyday routines such as 'snack times' encourage a sense of sharing and belonging. The children also show independence in many different ways: making their own snacks, deciding to put on their coats for outdoor play when it is cold, selecting their activities and resources. In both year groups children play and work well together. They show consideration in saying "Sorry", when they have hurt or upset one another, or by helping each other to find their name cards. In assembly, the reception class was proud to show their paintings and receive a sticker and certificate

72. The children are generally enthusiastic about their learning. For example, in a reception class the children made models of minibeasts after they had found some in the school garden. They were keen to show the rest of the class and enjoyed being praised.
73. Religious education in the reception classes teaches them to understand that people have different needs and beliefs. For example, the children enjoyed a story from the Bible about Noah and the Ark. Good teaching is reflected in the resources used to enthuse the children: a collection of special books, including the teacher's own childhood Bible and her granddaughter's 'Bible Stories', together with paintings of rainbows.
74. All these activities are effective in helping the children to make good progress, and to improve to below average levels by the end of the reception year.

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

75. In both the nursery and reception classes, the children enjoy listening to stories and sharing books with each other and with adults. Children in the nursery enjoy circle time where they meet together to share their news. They listen carefully to what the teacher has to say. The teacher skilfully encouraged conversation when Postman Paul visited the school to talk to the children about his job. Most children were confident enough to contribute by asking questions: for example, "How do you carry all the letters?" "At what time do you get up?" "Have you got a van?". The teacher showed an interest in what the children had to say, so that they knew that their efforts at communicating were valued. In the reception classes, the children enjoy listening games because the teacher makes the lessons fun, such as guessing the names of sounds made behind a curtain screen. Children acquire a good range of vocabulary because of the teachers plan carefully to develop it. For example, in the nursery, the children enjoy using the new words they have learned from Postman Paul. After listening to mood music in the reception class, the children described it as 'gentle' 'rippling', 'like a butterfly'.
76. Children in the nursery and reception year develop a keen interest in books and reading because of the very good range of story and information books. Story time is made an enjoyable experience by the teachers. The teacher and the children in the nursery read the story, The Big Bear Hunt, together. The children joined in the actions, swishing and running up the stairs, in a very lively, exciting use of the book. High emphasis is placed on helping the children in the nursery to recognise their own names, learn the letters and the sounds of the alphabet and some of the words in the reading books. Elements of the Literacy Framework are used well by teachers in both the reception classes. A good understanding of phonics is developed through effective word, sentence and text, using well-known stories such as The Very Hungry Caterpillar. Children think of themselves as readers and are encouraged by the teachers to enjoy books and to share them with their parents. This helps them to make sufficient progress to below average levels by the end of reception, from well below average.
77. Most children in the nursery develop early writing skills. The teacher asked them to write their names in a letter thanking Postman Paul for visiting the school. Supplies of paper, notelets, envelopes, markers, pencils and crayons are available and are readily used by the children. Good, guided writing together is evident in the reception classes. Many can copy the stories they have written with the teacher. High attaining children write independently using word banks but they are not yet attaining the goal of writing for different purposes and forming sentences, using punctuation.

### **Mathematics**

78. Good teaching together with effective planning and organisation enables the children to make good progress in mathematics. In the nursery, they can count every day objects to



five. Lively teaching keeps a good pace so that the children are keen to join in. Good cross-curricular links with other areas of learning are made when studying pedestrian crossings. The children understand positions when describing the lights as being top, middle and bottom. Apparatus for counting, sorting, ordering, and sequencing is well organised in the mathematics area. The teacher develops the children's awareness of the importance of pattern in mathematics through using practical resources, such as threading coloured beads and arranging coloured pegs.

79. All the children in the reception classes can count to ten and many can count well beyond. A very effective number line has been made by the teacher; ordering photographs of the children in her class up to 27, showing the number on roll. Children use mathematical language with confidence. They can roll a dice and name 'one more', relating addition to counting-on. The teacher uses a good range of methods to enable the children to learn. They learn to add numbers practically with cubes, understanding that addition is combining two groups of objects. Lower attaining children, working with the learning support assistants, learn to match one-to-one by making balls of dough to match the segments on a caterpillar. The children are not yet able to relate subtraction to taking away, nor use developing mathematical ideas and methods to solve practical problems. They have not yet reached the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning.

### **Knowledge and Understanding of the World**

80. By the end of the reception year, most children will not have attained the expected levels for their age. However, the children make good progress because of the good teaching, rich and stimulating provision and the very effective use of the outdoor areas. Since the previous inspection the provision for ICT has significantly improved. The children use technology with growing confidence when supported by an adult. They enjoy listening to stories in the listening centre. Good links with creative development are seen in the display of painted flowers that have been printed out using the program, 'Paint'.
81. Adults support the children well in investigating materials and encouraging them to look closely at pattern and change. In the nursery, the children learn about living things by studying snails in their tank, using magnifying glasses. Displays in the reception class show the work the children have been doing on growth. Flowers are labelled denoting the stem, leaf, petal and seed.
82. There is very good teaching on looking after the environment. Recycling bins for paper are placed in both classes. After searching for minibeasts in the garden, the children in the reception class discussed, in circle time, how they could protect the minibeasts. Feelings expressed included: do not destroy their habitat by cutting down trees; do not move the stones where the minibeasts hide. The children build on their general knowledge by observing and finding out about the places in which they live. The nursery welcomes 'people who help us': the postman, the fireman, the nurse, the policeman and the crossing warden. Visits to the shops and the park challenge the children to respond in a variety of ways to what they see.
83. In both groups, the children can select resources and use tools safely to construct and build, having a good sense of how things should join together. 'Come and play in our land of dinosaurs,' enthuse the children in the construction area in the nursery.

### **Physical development**

84. In all aspects of physical development the children attain standards in line with those expected by the end of the reception year. The children make good progress because of the good subject knowledge and understanding of the teachers whose comments and demonstrations show the children how to improve what they do. For example, in physical education in the hall, the reception teacher made good use of child demonstration on how to

throw and catch a ball. The children are aware of the effect of exercise on the body, and they learn to change for physical education. They understand the reasons for warming up at the beginning of the lesson and of cooling down at the end.

85. The children have great enthusiasm for outdoor physical activities. They are eager to go outside, as they know that there are many exciting things to do. This reflects the good teaching and imagination of the staff in making the best use of resources to provide adventurous outdoor play. The children run, jump, slide, balance and climb, using a good range of high and low equipment. They show awareness of the needs of others in the space around them. In the nursery, the children use outdoor equipment confidently. They use wheeled toys independently and when using the car track and the parking bay, they are aware of the need to steer clear of other children to avoid collisions. The adults maintain a close watch on the children and ensure they are safe.
86. The children in the Foundation Stage are developing fine motor skills successfully. They can handle tools such as scissors and knives for cutting, rollers and cutters in playing with the dough and pencils and brushes for drawing and painting. Teachers effectively plan small world equipment and building sets to improve skills in construction.

### **Creative development**

87. In this area of work the children make good progress so that by the time they enter Year 1 most children will have reached the Early Learning Goals. Quality teaching has led to very good progress in painting, drawing and collage. Stimulating materials are provided such as glitter, foil, textiles and papers. The nursery children made a collage of butterflies using splash paint. In the reception classes, the children explore colour, pattern and shape.
88. The children know many songs, which they sing tunefully, with good rhythm and dynamics. They can perform before an audience. One child in the reception class, sang the verse of 'There's a worm at the bottom of the garden', inviting the class to join in the chorus. The teachers make good links with other subjects, such as linking the science work on minibeasts to creative development. The children learn the name of the percussion instruments. In the nursery, the teacher has organised an exciting area of tuned and untuned instruments where the children can make their own music. Reception children experiment on how long and short sounds can be made.
89. A strength in this area of learning is in role play, largely due to the way the adults support and extend opportunities for the children. In outdoor play, excellent resources are planned to stimulate imaginative language. For example, a child who was playing in the construction and repair site called on his mobile phone, "I am on my way", as he was hurrying to 'rescue' an accident on the road track. Enhancement boxes labelled 'windy', 'sunny', 'cold' and 'showery' provide good opportunities for role play. In the classroom, the children use props and other resources with great imaginative skill at the doctor's in the nursery, and at the palace in the reception class.

### **ENGLISH**

#### *Standards*

90. Standards of attainment in English are currently below those identified in the last inspection report but are showing signs of improvement recently, especially in Years 5 and 6. By Year 2, standards for many infant children are below the expectation for their age group, particularly in speaking, and progress for many, although steady, is not yet brisk enough. By Year 6, standards are similar to those expected nationally for 11 year olds, except in writing, where few children achieve suitably high standards. There is considerable variability in the standards achieved by individual children in every year group, and in the progress made within each year group. This is the main issue for the school in improving standards in

English. Children with special educational needs make steady progress, especially when adult support is available, and achieve reasonably well although there remains room for further improvement by many low attaining children. The progress of most capable children is too slow, especially in reading in the junior classes. There is a need for a more consistent and brisk pace of progress in English for all children, as many are not yet attaining suitably high standards.

### *Speaking and listening*

91. Standards in speaking for the majority of infant children are below expectations for their age. By Year 6, standards are generally satisfactory but should be higher for many children. Most children are delighted to talk in informal situations, especially with their friends, and many can use the formal language of good manners, for example, when they open doors for adults or ask for help. Most are eager to participate in class discussions and are successful in answering teachers' questions that require short sentences or single words. Children are less successful, and often reluctant, when answering questions or contributing ideas that involve explaining at length. Although many have clear diction, most children are not fluent when speaking in this situation. They have to consider how to structure their sentences before they speak and have only a basic vocabulary to rely on. These factors account for much of the hesitancy and also have an effect on their writing which shows similar weaknesses in the use of vocabulary and sentences.
92. The hesitancy in formal speaking contrasts with their love of language, which is evident when they are listening to stories or explanations by the teacher, and when reading. Most children listen well, can follow instructions and, where teachers' explanations are clear, can understand the points being made. Many are also able to listen to each other with respect. Teachers encourage the use of spoken standard English and drama is included in the curriculum for some classes. However, too rarely do children have the opportunity to speak in situations where they need to use new words, listen carefully, be precise about the words they choose, and gain the fluency that comes with confidence and familiarity. Many lessons include children making joint decisions after a discussion with their partner. This is a useful strategy that encouraged children to talk about their work, although many of the discussions used the informal language of friendship.
93. The most successful strategies involved children presenting their findings or ideas to a larger group, after having some time to consider and prepare. A good example was a lesson with Year 4 children, where the class was divided into two groups to formally debate the merits of starting school at nine years of age. The children's limited experience of this type of debate showed in their initial reluctance and in their limited skills in summarising their thoughts or summing up the debate. However, they quickly gained confidence, recognised that a persuasive style was needed and the debate began to gain momentum as some children modified their ideas or accepted points made by others. The level of concentration was very high, with careful consideration of the points they wanted to make and an increase in fluency as they warmed to their position in the debate. Many were keen to continue the discussion after the lesson was ended, as they clearly felt they could develop their views further.
94. The school does not yet have a clear view on how speaking and listening skills should be incorporated into the teaching and learning across the curriculum in a way that ensures good progress is made through the school. However, senior managers recognise that these are aspects of English that need further attention.

### *Reading*

95. Standards of reading are at least sound for the majority of children, although there is a considerable range of competence in every year group in the school. For example, in the 2002 national tests for 11 year olds, a similar proportion of about one in four children

achieved below the expected Level 4 as achieved the higher Level 5. The results of the yearly standardised tests administered by the school also indicate that about a quarter of the children are still below the expectations for their age by the time they reach the upper juniors, while others are attaining well. The school's testing programme has generated data that shows the reading ages of some children do not keep up with their advancing chronological age. This situation has persisted for some time, but sits alongside steady progress for many children and good progress in reading for a small proportion of children. The school is aware of the differences in children's progress and has improved provision; for example, by identifying specific children who are not as successful as they could be and providing support through the early and additional literacy strategies. The work of these targeted children is now improving, and they are more knowledgeable about aspects such as letter sounds, the structure of simple sentences and the sequence of stories. However, there are many other children who have individual weaknesses in their reading, such as the recognition of words that do not respond to "sounding out" using phonic syllables, the pronunciation of unfamiliar words, or the narrow range of their reading experiences. The school's assessment system does not securely identify and respond to these individual weaknesses, especially in children with average or better competence in reading. This slows children's progress.

96. Nonetheless, a love of books and stories is clearly evident throughout the school. The children's knowledge of books and authors is effectively extended in a variety of ways. For example, they can describe the characters and story lines in their favourite books and many appreciate the humour of some authors. The infant children are familiar with the way books and text are presented. They know the purpose of the contents and index in a book, although are less confident in using these, and understand the roles of authors and illustrators. Older children extend this knowledge by recognising that the use of different presentations, such as bold text or increasing size of font, often gives an indication of the expression the author intended the reader to use. A wide range of authors is included in the reading scheme and library books supplement these. However, the range of literature chosen by most children appears to be less wide, with poetry and biography not appearing in reading lists very often. Children's ability to understand what they are reading is at a reasonable level, although the older, more capable children still struggle with complex texts especially when information or statistics are included.

### *Writing*

97. Standards in writing are unsatisfactory throughout the school for a significant number of children. This has been a priority area for school development, and the progress now being made in the infant classes is at least steady and good in the juniors. Standards are slowly improving. Children systematically learn the early skills of writing, many spell reasonably accurately, and their handwriting is legible. A considerable volume of written work is undertaken and the presentation is usually neat, especially in the juniors. However, the transfer of the knowledge and skills gained by children in the literacy hour, such as the purpose of adjectives, alliteration and the strategies that authors use to make their writing interesting, are not as systematically encouraged and checked.
98. In other subjects, notably science, there are good examples of writing in different styles and of using notes, charts and lists to enhance written communication. The planning and drafting of this writing often involves guidance from the teacher and has a very clear purpose. In English, opportunities for writing are mainly either responding in short sentences to questions posed by the teacher or from texts, or more extended writing in a descriptive or imaginative style. The extended writing is often less rigorously marked by the teacher than grammar work, with minimal guidance for improvement. As a result the standard of writing for the majority of children does not improve rapidly enough. Although imaginative stories are regularly evident and basic punctuation gradually becomes appropriately incorporated in written work, the quality of what is written is often routine.

Stories are mainly chronological, with a limited range of vocabulary, which reduces the impact of the children's descriptions of places and characters.

99. Nonetheless, there are examples of good quality short or extended writing by individual children which include vivid descriptions such as, "Crystal waters crashing against the boat" and also show that children have not only understood the grammatical and other skills they have learned, but also know how to use them. This quality of writing usually reflects stimulating experiences in a lesson or a visit. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, children used their computer skills to compose letters to the Prime Minister that were lively and challenging. They used their technical knowledge of how to write persuasively or as a complaint and were able to read their writing aloud using the vocal mannerisms that they considered an adult writing such a letter would use. Such examples of writing are rare at present but provide a good basis for the school to acknowledge success and extend it to more children.

#### *Other aspects of English*

100. The quality of teaching in English is sound in the infant classes and good in the juniors, with examples of good, very good and excellent lessons mainly in the upper juniors. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. Children with special educational needs were taught well, mainly due to the support staff who made significant contributions during lessons. Relationships with children are good and this encourages the positive attitudes and behaviour that most children have to the subject. Behaviour is managed very well, including the movement to different classrooms when the daily arrangements for setting children into groups are underway. Teachers prepare lessons carefully and use the National Literacy Strategy as their main guidance for planning. This works effectively in ensuring that children are methodically taught the basic skills of English, but is less effective in responding to the needs of individual children. Staff have adequate knowledge of the subject and this is reflected in their clear presentations at the beginning of lessons. The best lessons are taught with enthusiasm and imagination, with children making significant oral contributions to the lesson and having adequate time to complete their work to a good standard. Occasionally, the literacy hour is extended to give more time to develop the teaching and learning. This was very successful in one Year 6 lesson, where the teacher's planning and resources were carefully considered so the lesson introduced a brisk pace with regular changes of activity for the children, but maintained a smooth continuity. The timing for each activity was well matched to the children's abilities and the lesson was completed with children still motivated, despite their hard work, and recognising that they had successfully achieved their objectives. The pace of this extended lesson contrasted with other, shorter lessons where the expectations, pace and motivation were routine and did not merit extended time.
101. The school's assessment system has provided considerable data about the progress and attainment of children in English. There has been some use of this data to identify children who need support and to group children by their level of competence in order to form sets or groups in the junior classes. This strategy has been successful for some children, mainly the lower attainers in Year 6 who get the opportunity to work with more competent children in smaller groups than in their registration classes. However, all the sets still have large numbers of children, and given the range of children's attainment in the school, the match of tasks to children's abilities and needs is not yet accurate enough overall to ensure suitable progress and standards.
102. Some, but not all, teachers are accurate in assessing children's levels of attainment and progress. Teachers' marking rarely shows confidence about what children need to do next to improve their work. Although targets for individual children have been set and are proving very useful in involving children in the drive for improvement of specific skills, they are not sufficient to accelerate the overall pace of progress. The expertise to make accurate judgements about children's achievements in relation to the National Curriculum Levels of

attainment is most evident in those year groups that undertake the national testing, although even in these year groups, the setting and checking of predictions for improvement are at an early stage.

103. Teachers recognise the improvements children make, but because they are not clear about what progress is expected for individual children in a given time, it is difficult for them to decide whether these improvements are sufficient to improve standards. Most do not set a sufficiently fast pace. As a result, the need for action tends to be recognised only after tests or other checks have identified that progress has been too slow, for example, in the lower than expected results for Year 6 in the 2002 national tests. There is now sufficient data available in the school to enable teachers to add their own sound knowledge of their children and predict a rate of improvement that will ensure each child will make good progress towards higher standards in every year group. The systems to support interim checks on this progress are already in place, for example, reading diaries and teachers' own records, but these currently focus more on recording progress than evaluating whether or not it is adequate.
104. The leadership and management of English are in the process of development, as the need for more active intervention to improve standards has become evident. At present, although the basic provision for teaching and learning has been well established, the subject is not sufficiently well led to ensure the main issues of variable attainment in every year group and unsatisfactory standards in some aspects are being dealt with effectively. The current coordinator has significant responsibilities across all year groups as well as being a class teacher. A sensible decision has been taken to use a team approach to managing the subject in order to provide a range of leadership expertise. This may enable the subject management team to deal with the range of factors that is currently affecting children's progress and attainment.

## **MATHEMATICS**

105. The 2002 National Curriculum test results for seven year olds show children achieved standards which were well below average when compared to all schools nationally but were average when compared to schools with children from a similar background. Results for 11 year olds show children were above average when compared to all schools nationally and well above average when compared to similar schools. Inspection findings confirm that children in Year 2 are working well below average standards and that the work of children in Year 6 is above average. This represents unsatisfactory progress for seven year olds since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be above average. Improvements for 11 year olds have kept pace with the national trend.
106. Achievement is unsatisfactory overall in Key Stage 1 because the pace of the mental sessions in many lessons is too slow to develop children's arithmetic skills quickly enough and there is a lack of the challenge needed for higher attaining children to achieve at higher levels. The extensive use of worksheets in Year 1 reduces the amount of time devoted to the practical activities needed to develop mathematical understanding. However, the good level of support for children with special educational needs enables them to make sound progress.
107. Achievement is very good in Key Stage 2, largely because of the high quality of the teaching in Year 5 and Year 6 with work which is well matched to the needs of individual children. Achievement for all children is enhanced by additional booster classes, which are much appreciated by parents. There is also evidence of good achievement for children with special educational needs and lower attaining children in Year 3 and Year 4, who are well supported in lessons. Achievement for other children in Year 3 and Year 4 is just satisfactory as the range of work is limited and lacks depth.

108. By the age of seven, most children are reasonably secure in working with numbers to 100 and know the multiplication tables for times two and ten and the related division facts. Children make good use of practical counting equipment, for example, when learning to change a ten in subtraction sums. Some children have difficulty in recalling facts quickly as the pace of some mental mathematics sessions is too slow. Higher attaining children extend their knowledge to include times five and can continue patterns beyond 100. Lower attaining children can add and subtract numbers to 20 but are less secure when splitting larger numbers into tens and units, they can work their answers out practically with good adult support but have some difficulty in interpreting written questions or recording what they have done. Children are encouraged to develop their arithmetic skills through working with number patterns and this is showing some success. Higher attaining children look for clues in the words when trying to solve problems, though the majority of children have difficulty in this area.
109. By the age of 11, as a result of well-structured lessons and systematic teaching, children's understanding of the number system, including decimals, is well advanced and they are familiar with the effect of multiplying or dividing by ten or 100. They are proficient with a range of methods for multiplication but little evidence was seen of practice in long division. They show a good appreciation of the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages. Children are gaining confidence when solving a variety of word problems and higher attaining children explain their working out well. They present their findings systematically but are not pressed to generalise their thoughts to gain a greater depth of understanding. Good support and smaller, progressive steps helps lower attaining children to develop basic numeracy skills well.
110. In Year 2, children measure accurately using appropriate measurements such as centimetres. They can identify right angles on objects around the school and can program the floor robot to move around a rectangle. Children can name common two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes and complete shapes to make them symmetrical. Higher attaining children use their skills to solve problems related to time. Some activities set for lower attaining children are not the most suitable to develop confidence and understanding, for example, measuring the depth of water in centimetres is a little confusing. Children have regular opportunities to collect information, for example on car colours, display the results in a variety of graphs and use this to answer questions. Children are particularly adept at using the computer to input facts and generate a good range of graphical information.
111. In Year 6, most children understand and can use the various standard units of measurement and higher attaining children can convert imperial to metric equivalents. They can draw and measure angles with reasonable accuracy and work out the area and perimeter of rectangles. Higher attaining children extend their knowledge to work out the area of triangles using the formula. Children construct a good range of graphs both manually and using the computer and use them well to find information, for example on the lengths of advertisements on television. They understand how to find the average of a set of data and can work out a formula to instruct a spreadsheet how to do this. However, little work was seen on probability.
112. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall in Key Stage 1, though there are considerable variations between classes. There are some significant pockets of weakness, as instanced by a poor lesson observed in Year 1, and some stronger areas, as in a very good lesson observed in Year 2. This inconsistency results in learning being unsatisfactory overall. In the very good lesson seen, the teacher made effective use of patterns to help children identify multiples of ten. The brisk mental session improved children's arithmetic skills well and the following worksheet consolidated learning at an appropriate level for individuals. In the weak lesson observed in Year 1, tasks were not well matched to previous learning and the slow pace of the class session and lax control severely limited the effectiveness of learning as children became bored and uninterested. A stronger element of the teaching overall is the clarity of explanations and the good use of simple resources to help children to

understand. For example, children in Year 2 used a hundred square to help them work out addition and subtraction of tens, and good questioning encouraged them to think and explain their working. An area for development overall is to increase the pace of the initial mental sessions to help children to develop quicker mental recall of arithmetic facts, and to provide sufficient challenge for higher attaining children. The use of workbooks in Year 1 is not helpful in promoting understanding of basic concepts, particularly when the whole class is asked to complete the same page. In one lesson, the teacher quickly appreciated the difficulties being experienced by a good proportion of the class in understanding the workbook page and skilfully changed to a more practical task which was more suitable for their stage of development and improved children's learning when adding to ten. Too often, however, completion of the workbook page is the main focus of independent work, whatever children's previous level of understanding.

113. The quality of teaching is good overall in Key Stage 2, and is strong in Years 5 and 6. The well structured lessons and challenging tasks for these older children are largely responsible for the very good progress children make in their learning and the good standard they attain by the time they leave school. The very good lessons seen were lively and well paced with high expectations of children to contribute ideas and describe their working. Explanations are clear and focused so that children know what to do and get on with their tasks quickly. This was seen in Year 5, where children developed their arithmetical skills well as they used their knowledge of tens and units and recall of tables to multiply 52 by 15 quickly. The very good relationships in class give children the confidence to try, as seen in Year 6 when children tried different methods to solve multiplication problems. In the less successful lessons, insufficient account is taken of the wide range of ability within the sets in Year 3 and Year 4 and this limits the progress of the higher attaining children. This was seen in a Year 4 set where more advanced children were discouraged from using their own creative methods for subtraction, developing their understanding, and were required to follow a longer method which they did not need.
114. A general area of strength throughout the school is teachers' extensive use of ICT to help their own presentation and explanations in lessons. This focuses children's attention well and the powerful imagery helps children's understanding. It also helps them to use their mathematical understanding in other subjects effectively, particularly in Key Stage 2. A new, individual computerised learning program has been introduced recently, which provides children with tailored practice to consolidate their mathematical skills. However, it is too soon to judge the overall effect this has had on children's performance. Another strong feature is the good level of classroom support from skilled classroom assistants, which helps lower attaining children and those with special educational needs to make good progress. A weakness in teaching overall is the quality of marking which often consists of ticks or "Well done!" comments and is not used sufficiently to suggest ways children could improve.
115. There are deficiencies in the management of the subject. Monitoring of teaching and learning has not been sufficiently rigorous in identifying and remedying the unsatisfactory achievement of children in Key Stage 1. Assessment information is not linked sufficiently to National Curriculum levels and so it is not yet an efficient tool in monitoring and tracking the progress of individuals across the school. Half-termly planning reflects the structure of the National Numeracy Strategy well, but individual lesson plans are not sufficiently tailored to meet the learning needs of different groups within the class. There are examples of very good teaching through the school, and sharing this expertise would benefit those teachers who are less effective. The school has identified problem-solving as an area for development and there are good instances of teachers planning suitable learning opportunities to improve children's skills in this area. However, this is not yet done systematically through the school.



## SCIENCE

116. By the end of Year 2, standards are average, as they were in 2002, when they were well above those in schools in similar circumstances. During the inspection, no lessons were observed in Year 2, but examination of children's work shows that they have experienced the recommended curriculum, and made satisfactory progress. The approach taken to recording and marking work is different in the three Year 2 classes. In one, the record is the same for all children, whilst in another there is some evidence of children saying what they have found out for themselves, for example in testing the effect on the movement of wheeled vehicles of raising or lowering a ramp. Children in Year 1 showed good concentration when following teachers' demonstrations of different sources of light. They began to understand the difference between natural and artificial light, but were not helped when the lesson culminated in them cutting out images of lamps from catalogue pages to make a collage, rather than investigating more closely the fine array of torches and other battery powered lights collected by the teacher.
117. Standards at age 11 in national tests have been high for the last two years, maintained since the last inspection. Standards for Year 6 children are currently above the national average, and were in the top five per cent compared to those in schools in similar circumstances in 2002. A significant number of children achieved the above average Level 5 in the national tests. During the inspection, children were revising aspects of the subject where the staff had identified weaknesses in the children's knowledge and understanding, in preparation for the national tests. This involved using torches and mirrors to track light pathways, and being clear how to illustrate findings using conventional symbols. Most children demonstrated understanding that light travels from a source in straight lines, and is detected by the eye through the pupil. A significant number, however, were still unsure how to represent this diagrammatically, and drew inaccurate representations of their findings. In another Year 6 class, children made and used periscopes, the higher attaining explaining clearly how the mirrors altered the direction of travel of the light from the object to the eye, to change the view. They have recorded in their books group test conclusions about micro-organisms, and what they have learned about food-chains. They have also made diagrams to show the forces acting on objects in different situations, and used a variety of methods to represent their results in tables and charts.
118. Children make good progress overall, and achieve well in their knowledge and understanding of important scientific information. For example, high attaining children in Year 6 describe well how to separate different materials, and how a larger surface area may slow the fall of a parachute. They make less progress in developing the skills of investigation and testing, including recording their findings in their own way. This is because written records in the children's science books are often copied as a shared text written up by the teacher from class discussions. Whilst this has merit, particularly for younger children, it also limits the children's opportunities to describe their findings in their own way. This also makes it more difficult for teachers to assess which children have developed the required knowledge and understanding, and which may need more time for further experience to achieve the required level. Progress is strongest currently in Year 5. For example, children consolidated and extended their understanding of electrical circuitry by making and testing a variety of switches using different materials. They used their knowledge and understanding of which materials were conductors and which insulators well in this lesson.
119. The children have good attitudes to their work in the main, and behave well in lessons. When given opportunities to make their own decisions, as in Year 5, they generally do so sensibly and with good regard for the principles of fair testing. However, the progressive development of responsible independent investigation is a feature needing further focus, as some children in one Year 6 class working with a supply teacher showed when they did not use the equipment sensibly.

120. The quality of teaching seen was sound in Key Stage 1, and occasionally good. It varied in Key Stage 2 from being satisfactory to being very good, and was good overall. This helps to accelerate children's learning well. The strengths in the teaching are that all staff cover the required curriculum thoroughly, and follow the outline planning prepared by the coordinator together in year groups to plan their lessons. This system ensures that children receive their curricular entitlement, including in experimental and investigative work. However, staff vary in their interpretation of the national guidance about developing the skills of scientific enquiry, particularly how asking questions and deciding how they might answer them in Key Stage 1 leads at the end of Key Stage 2 to children deciding for themselves what to do to pursue a systematic investigation, including what evidence to collect and what equipment and materials to use. Because the teachers have good, and often very good, relationships with the children, lessons flow smoothly in the main. This was the case in a Year 3 lesson to study magnetism as a force. The children eagerly tested the way the magnets' behaviour indicated attraction and repulsion, then tried hard to solve a number of problems set by the teacher requiring the use of these forces. This lesson was not as successful as it might have been, however, as it lasted the whole afternoon, and the children would have benefited from having time to think more about their earlier learning before attempting the further tasks.
121. The coordinator is knowledgeable, and oversees the subject well. In monitoring teachers' planning, he ensures that good cross-curricular links are made, such as with art and design, and design and technology. He has also bought ICT programs to help in teaching, and for children's investigations. He has clear plans for the subject's further improvement based on monitoring of the work across the school, including more helpful marking to encourage children to extend their thinking, and further consolidation of teachers' and children's use of ICT. From the inspection, it would be useful to monitor how children's development of investigatory and enquiry skills are interpreted by different staff, and for children of different ages.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

122. Standards attained by the children by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with national expectations. Standards are lower than those identified in the previous inspection, when they were judged to be above average. The limited work in the children's sketchbooks indicates that there are long periods of time when children do not experience art and design. As in many schools, the subject is taught in alternate half-terms when the teachers cover the work in extended lessons. Teaching is sound overall, so progress is satisfactory. However, there are sessions with visiting artists organised through the Education Action Zone that produce work of higher quality than is usual in the school, and provide rich experiences for the children.
123. In Year 1, the children's pencil sketches and pattern making in their sketch books are well drawn because drawing skills and clear guidelines on looking closely at pattern are taught effectively by the teacher. Crayon and pastel drawings reflect the focus on colour. The children also contributed ideas for the nativity play by designing scenery and making sketches of angels. Children in Year 4 create patterns through repeating and reversing coloured dot shapes. They also study the format of pictures and paintings. For example, one child made notes on a family picture: 'They are grouped together because they are related to each other.' Year 6 children practise shading for effect, using black pencils.
124. Work on the walls shows a wide range of good quality displays. The school has benefited from an artist visiting the school and this has resulted in the good features seen. Links with the Creative Partnership has raised expectations in art and design through a successful bid for funding. The Education Action Zone team for creative arts supports the school so that much of the better work in three-dimensional sculptures is due to their guidance. Children in Year 2 can explore shape and colour as seen in their spring collages. They use spray paint for the background, paper sculpture for daffodils, pasta, straw, textiles and papers in making

the grass and baby animals. In the classrooms, children are proud to show their 'Mondrian masterpieces' that they have printed using a computer program. On the corridors, children in Years 3 and 4 display their portraits, coloured with pastels and paints. In the Junior hall the Year 5 children have made an impressive wall hanging of the Trojan horse, made up of six collages telling the story of the myth.

125. The quality of teaching is sound because the teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject are secure. They are confident and therefore artistic skills are taught effectively. Collage is a strength of the work in art because the teachers plan and organise a wide range of resources. For example, in multicultural Indian art work, children used glitter, foil, tinsel, sequins and textiles to enhance their picture. Lessons are well planned and delivered, which takes children's learning forward. Teachers ensure that children know exactly what to do, give ongoing support, praise good work and show it to the class in order to help children who are having difficulties.
126. Attitudes to learning in both key stages are good. When the teachers are explaining tasks to the whole class, children listen carefully and contribute well in discussions. Children have confidence in their own ability and are proud to show their work. They can work independently in studying scenes and portraits by famous artists in the wide range of art books available in the school.
127. The management of the subject is good. The coordinator has expertise in art, appointed because of a commitment to promote art throughout the school. Teachers' short-term plans are monitored by the coordinator. A portfolio of work across the school is built up. Strengths in the subject are detailed planning, good resources, the richness of the school environment and opportunities for children with special educational needs to shine. Cultural development is provided through visits to the Tate and Walker Galleries, visits by artists and sculptors, multicultural art through the Creative Partnership and support from the Ground Work Trust. The major weakness is in the time-tabling and status of the subject in general lessons when there is no project involving outside support. Future plans include working towards an Art Mark.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

128. Standards are at the levels expected nationally at the ages of seven and 11. Throughout the school all children, including those with special educational needs, achieve soundly in developing the key ideas and skills of the subject. Subject leadership and management are soundly developed. Teachers' planning is monitored on a half-termly basis by the coordinator team, to help with planning future activities, which takes the learning forward. The issues of using ICT to support children's learning and the use of a range of construction kits from the previous report have been addressed. Children's attainment at Year 6 was judged to be above the nationally expected level at the time of the last inspection. However, since then there have been a number of national curricular initiatives, which have reduced the amount of time being spent on teaching the subject. The school has made satisfactory improvement, given the national context.
129. Infant children make steady progress in producing simple labelled drawings to show what their intended model will look like. For example, Year 2 children have designed and made 'Incy Wincy Spiders' with a winding mechanism, and clearly labelled how they will use dowel rod and kitchen foil in the construction of their models. Children's design and making skills improve as they move into the junior classes and show a good level of detail. For example, in Year 4, children have designed and made 'Torches' using a variety of tools and materials, and have evaluated if they would have changed anything when they completed their model. One child recorded in the notebook, "I would paint it differently." Children also experience food technology and are aware of what foods make a healthy and balanced diet. For example, in Year 3, children knew that their design of a sandwich for a nursery child would need to be attractive and interesting, as well as being healthy. By Year 6, children develop a

critical sense that their designs and models have to meet clearly defined purposes. This was clearly demonstrated in a Year 6 lesson, when children took their shoes off to see if their slippers would fit, including the buckle, to see if any modifications were needed during this part of the construction.

130. In the lessons seen the overall quality of teaching was judged to be satisfactory, and good in a Year 3 lesson. Children are well managed and the lessons are well organised. This ensures that children work safely and at a good pace. Children become absorbed in their work and respond particularly well to practical activities. New skills, such as cutting, assembling and fastening are carefully taught by teachers. This ensures that when children begin their projects, they already know how to attach materials together. As a result, their finished work is creditable. This was seen in a Year 2 classroom, where children's work of completed puppets was proudly displayed. Teachers value originality and encourage children to look for ways to make their designs different from others. This was evident in the wide variety of 'slippers' made by Year 6 children. Such approaches offer scope for more able children to develop their creative talents. Children with special educational needs benefit from effective support, which helps them to make good progress. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, a support assistant offered help to children with special educational needs, and their models were as good as any in the class.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

131. Only one geography lesson was taught during the inspection. Scrutiny of children's books, teachers' planning and wall displays, together with discussions with children and the subject leader were used to check children's experiences, attainment and progress.
132. Standards of attainment are in line with expectations in Year 2 and Year 6, maintained since the last inspection. The strengths are in children's knowledge of the topics they have studied and their committed approach to local environmental issues. There are some weaknesses in the consistent development of geographical enquiry and children's geographical skills, although overall progress is satisfactory for most children.
133. The subject has a secure place in the school's curriculum with three half-termly projects each year which enable the children to study in reasonable depth the topics allocated to their year group. Teachers' planning is systematic and reflects the national guidance. This works well in ensuring that the children are regularly introduced to the range of work and experiences required by the National Curriculum, but less well in ensuring that they make suitable progress from year to year in developing their geographical understanding. For example, locational knowledge develops well in the early years when children are studying the local area, but progress tends to slow from the lower juniors onwards, as children study more distant places in different topics with only a limited understanding of how different places relate to each other. The development of geographical vocabulary also slows a little in the junior years, as does the development of fieldwork skills such as recording using different media, including photography. A developing aspect is the use of the Internet to research various localities, which has caught junior children's interest and encouraged them to pursue geographical enquiry in their own time.
134. The geography lesson inspected was an infant class that was considering the issue of safe and unsafe parking of vehicles. The teaching was good, with practical opportunities to test ideas and lively discussion. The teacher's style of questioning successfully encouraged children to modify or develop their ideas. An assessment activity enabled the teacher to assess the children's understanding of the points that were being made, and allowed them to describe why they had made their decisions.
135. The school is involved in the 'Eco-schools' initiative and was successful recently in gaining a Bronze Award. The approach has encouraged children to use their initiative, and to make a regular and practical contribution to the local environment. Children, with the help of staff,

have visited a local recycling plant and also taken responsibility in school for recycling projects with waste paper and printer cartridges. They contribute conscientiously to ensuring the school is litter free, and from the infant classes on can readily explain why litter is a problem, where it comes from and how it can be dealt with effectively. Their own habits are good, and they support each other in keeping the environment litter-free. The older children are knowledgeable about the broader aspects of pollution; for example, they are familiar with the basic concept of global warming and some of its effects. Recent improvements to the school's outdoor environment, with further work in hand, are appreciated by the children, some of whom have been actively involved in painting and planting.

136. The subject is well led and managed by an experienced coordinator. A position statement is in place, which includes evidence from monitoring children's work and the teachers' evaluation of geography in their classes. This has provided a useful check that the subject is being delivered as planned, although it is less useful in identifying the standards attained and the strengths and weaknesses of children's progress through school. A proposed increase in the management team should provide the additional time needed to check these aspects more thoroughly. Resources are suitable for the present curriculum, but are mainly paper-based. The range of equipment is likely to need increasing when more fieldwork is undertaken.

## **HISTORY**

137. Standards for children aged seven are in line with national expectations. For children aged 11, attainment is above the level normally seen, which is an improvement since the previous inspection when standards by the end of both key stages were average. This better picture is largely due to more confident teaching and independent learning through Key Stage 2. History and geography are taught half-termly in rotation.
138. By the age of seven, the children develop their knowledge and understanding of the past by making comparisons between sources that are old and new. Lessons are planned to interest the children. For example, a walk around the school was organised to look at the age of buildings. A display in the classroom labelled, "Can buildings speak?" shows that the children know and understand that history is interpreted through primary sources. Year 2 children show a good factual knowledge of events in the past in Britain. They can vividly recall what they have been taught about the Great Fire of London, because the teacher led a very good discussion on why the fire was so horrific. Children can re-tell the story and use role play to imagine how people felt.
139. In Key Stage 2, children develop their understanding further by considering some ways in which Britain has changed over time. By the end of Year 6, children have acquired a sound knowledge of British, world and local history through a rolling programme of topics. Children's work in Year 3 reflects an understanding of the ways in which Romans changed Britain. Good teaching encourages the study of maps so that children can identify Roman roads, and provides curricular links with geography. Lively teaching in Year 5 asks the children 'Are you a Local History Detective?' They can find information from local history books, such as 'The Way We Were in St Helens', Sepia photographs of the 1930s, posters on 'The Rainhill Locomotive Trials' and artefacts of 'standing irons' and 'carpet beaters'. The teachers have a clear grasp of the subject as shown by the independent work on 'The Blitz.' in Year 6. There is good evidence of literacy development in the sensitive writing of letters home from an evacuee. For example, children wrote, "Please, come and get me" and "P.S. Is our house still standing?"
140. The quality of teaching is sound overall with some good teaching in Years 3 to 6, so that progress is satisfactory through Key Stage 1 and good through Key Stage 2. At the start of the lessons, the objectives for learning are shared with the children to give them clear guidelines on the learning intentions. Lessons are planned with good primary and

secondary resources so that children understand the ways in which the past is represented. A quick pace to the lessons holds children's interest. Ongoing support enables the children to produce structured work. This is evident in the constructive marking of the work of high attaining children in Year 4. They are told to pick out the best attributes of Henry VIII in their work on the Tudors. Teachers made learning fun when they commented on a letter from Anne Boleyn from the Tower of London to Henry, addressing him as, "My loyal, loving husband". Excellent feedback said, "How could they execute Anne Boleyn after such a persuasive letter?"

- 141. Children's attitudes to learning are good. Effective teaching encourages them to contribute willingly their thoughts and ideas. Good relationships between children and staff build self-confidence, so that the children are able to report back on their work to the rest of the class. They enjoy challenges set by the teachers. They respond by working hard, concentrating well and helping others.
- 142. The coordinator, an experienced teacher, has adopted a 'light touch' management style. Teachers' short-term planning and children's work are monitored and reported on in the annual scrutiny. Teaching is not monitored, though the coordinator is available to give advice.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

- 143. Children attain standards in ICT which are broadly average by the age of seven and are above average by the age of 11. This is a very good improvement since the time of the last inspection when standards were below average throughout the school. This significant improvement is due to an impressive commitment by the school to raising standards, through extensive investment in good quality equipment, teacher training and curriculum development, which stems from the exceptional drive and leadership of the headteacher who is also subject manager. In recognition of their work in this area, the school has been awarded a 'Kite Mark' as a Centre of Excellence.
- 144. Children's progress is consistently good throughout the school and so children achieve well. A strong feature is the systematic teaching of skills, which are then used regularly to enhance learning in other subjects. The good level of individual support from teachers, support assistants and technical staff enables all children, including those with special educational needs, to achieve well. The number of high quality computers, which are well maintained, enables children to have good access on a regular basis, enabling them to practise and develop their skills effectively.
- 145. By the age of seven, children are familiar with the use of ICT. They develop a positive attitude to the subject in the Foundation Stage and Year 1 and demonstrate a degree of independence by the end of Year 2. This was evident as children entered the computer suite in a mathematics lesson and immediately logged on to their individual program to practise their mathematics. Following the good example set by most teachers, children are becoming comfortable with using technical language, for example higher attaining children can explain the meaning of a 'search engine' when using the Internet to find information about The Great Fire of London. They understand how to frame instructions to control a floor robot's movements and higher attaining children refine their instructions to ensure the robot moves round a precise square. Children use a variety of programs successfully, for example they use a 'paint' program to design pictures in the style of Mondrian.
- 146. By the age of 11, as a result of progressive teaching and sustained practice, children have developed into competent users of ICT. They understand how to input information into a database and how to frame the formula to generate information and solve problems, such as the average of heights jumped. They are confident when using the computer to formulate and edit their written work. For example, children in Year 5 used the prompt box to help them to write formal letters of complaint to the Prime Minister about a proposed

change in the school holidays. However, in evaluating their own work, many children in Year 6 named the development of keyboard skills as an area for personal improvement. Children use the Internet for their own research with increasing confidence, at home and in school, for example when searching for information and pictures of John Lennon to incorporate into their history topic or completing their English homework. Children showed above average levels of competence as they used 'Powerpoint' to make a slide presentation for former children.

147. The quality of teaching is good overall throughout the school enabling children to learn well. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. An impressive feature is the way teachers have worked to improve their own skills and incorporate these into their teaching across the curriculum. For example, teachers use the smart boards with confidence when demonstrating a new method in mathematics, setting a good example of the power of the use of ICT skills for their children. An outstanding example of teaching which incorporated the use of these skills was seen in Year 5 when children learned how to record their thoughts as they discussed writing a formal, persuasive letter and the teacher prompted and questioned their initial thoughts to enable them to focus their discussion purposefully and so edit their letter to a more precise and effective format. A consistent strength of the teaching is the clear instructions and demonstrations, which helps children to understand what to do. Teachers have high expectations of the correct use of language. For example, children in Year 2 learn that Google is the search engine they are using to find information on the Internet.
148. Work is well planned to ensure the progressive and systematic teaching of skills. For example, children in Year 1 are taught how to feed information into a database to generate a graph about how they travel to school, whilst children in Year 6 have progressed to devising formulae for solving problems from their database. Children's learning is enhanced considerably by the high level of adult support in the computer suite, including technical support. This contributes very well to children's individual progress and also helps them to acquire technical skills such as saving their work onto the hard drive. An area for development is the opportunity for children to develop more independence in their own research.
149. In the less successful lessons, insufficient account was taken of the skill some children already have. For example, in a Year 1 lesson tasks were limited by the program setting, and in others too little time was allowed at the end of the lesson to discuss and digest what children had learned and to compare ideas.
150. The subject is very well led and managed by a dynamic and resourceful coordinator who is ably supported by a technical coordinator. A promising start has been made in assessing children's work, with good opportunities for children to evaluate what they have done. An area for development is to record this in a clear and systematic way so that it is possible to check children's progress through the school against National Curriculum levels. The school is ever looking to the next stage and has rightly identified the use of e-mail to communicate with other schools and the development of class web pages. The subject makes a good contribution to children's personal development, as there are many planned opportunities for children to co-operate and work together.

## **MUSIC**

151. Standards are similar to those found at the last inspection. In Key Stage 1, they are in line with expected levels for children aged seven. However in Key Stage 2, although standards overall reach expected levels in singing, performing and appraising music there are gaps in children's knowledge about music and musicians and in their skills in composing. This is due to some lack of continuity and consistency in teaching the subject, especially in Key Stage 2. However, involvement in performing arts through the Education Action Zone has led to some exciting developments. One of these is a production of 'Bollywood' singing and

dancing, which has given a number of children the chance to perform to a range of audiences both in and out of school. Older children also have the opportunity to attend a performance of 'Bombay Nights' in London as part of this initiative.

152. Seven year olds reach expected levels in singing, composing and performing, and make overall satisfactory progress. They sing in tune with a good sense of rhythm and sing well within a range of low and high notes both in lessons and in assembly. They are able to perform a range of sounds to reproduce different kinds of weather and work together sensibly to compose a sound scene of storm. They are able to listen to music played to them and in a Year 1 lesson could identify its qualities as being 'slow music which makes you feel peaceful'. By age 11, children's attainment varies in relation to the different aspects of music. Most are able to sing in tune as they demonstrated in assembly. Children in the choir sing with a good sense of rhythm in two-part harmony. It was evident from discussion with children and from recordings of musical activities that children are enthusiastic, confident in performing and many have good rhythmic skills. Some older children have been inspired to compose 'raps' and are developing skills in writing lyrics and matching rhythms. However, they have a limited understanding of how they might write down their music. In the one lesson observed in Key Stage 2, children demonstrated the ability to listen carefully to contrasting music and could identify rhythms and a range of instruments. However, there is limited progression across the key stage in the development of children's understanding of different kinds of music and in the skills needed for good performance and composition.
153. Teaching and learning in both key stages are satisfactory in lessons, and with that observed in extra-curricular music being very good. Across Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2, lessons are well planned to cover most aspects of music. In all lessons, teachers use questioning effectively to enable children to identify qualities of music heard but not always to describe their personal response. There is good support for children with special educational needs, which enables these children to participate fully in lessons. Group activities are generally used well to enable children to compose together but a few do not engage fully because they are unclear about what they have to do. No lessons were observed in upper Key Stage 2. There was also no instrumental tuition as the teacher was not available. In the choir, the teacher led the children well, had high expectations and developed good techniques in singing with attention to phrasing, breathing and pitch and as a result children sang well.
154. There has been good progress in developing the curriculum for music so that it meets requirements and is very supportive of teachers who are less confident in teaching it. Provision for instrumental tuition is good with good access to teaching and to instruments. Although the curriculum provides good continuity across all aspects of the subject, the way it is timetabled does not give enough regular opportunities to develop those skills systematically, particularly in composition. Monitoring of music through recently introduced teacher evaluation is helping to identify many of the areas for development but more emphasis on children recording their own work and on the extension of individual assessment would help to ensure more consistency in the development of skills. There is a good range of instruments on display from different cultural traditions to support the curriculum. The school hopes to build on the initiatives in music and dance, which have taken place and develop the multicultural aspects of music by their further involvement in a community Creative Arts Project.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

155. Standards are above average by age 11, improved since the last inspection. The school has an ActiveMark for its sporting endeavours, justly achieved. Many staff run extra-curricular sporting activities, and there are over 220 children involved in them. Almost all children achieve the national expectation in swimming, and there are good opportunities



through the school's involvement in the Education Action Zone performing arts initiative for children to develop dance skills. There are also developments in outdoor pursuits using the school field for orienteering from Year 3, culminating in a residential break for older pupils where further adventurous activities are taught. Athletics skills are also introduced, and Year 4 children were observed practising techniques for starting a race, and for maintaining stride patterns between hurdles. No gymnastics sessions were observed during the inspection, however.

156. By age seven, standards are as expected, and good work was seen in dance. In this lesson, Year 2 girls were slightly better in interpreting sounds and words through action and movement than boys. All the children in this lesson made good progress in linking the particular actions of jumping, skipping and throwing to the developing story. They worked well individually or in pairs, and used the space in the hall well. They were particularly good in listening carefully in order to build their story sequence. An area for improvement here is in allowing the children to discuss their own work, and to watch other children in order to evaluate what they have achieved, and how it might improve.
157. By age 11, children have developed well a number of skills required for games such as netball, basketball, soccer, and rugby. They are enthusiastic but controlled in their practice, working in pairs and groups with great energy, and sustaining the pace of the activities well. In one lesson, using the school field, the children worked so well that they stopped quickly to listen to new instructions, then set about practising and improving the new passing or receiving technique, maintaining the flow of the lesson. Boys and girls enjoy these activities equally. In another Year 6 lesson, the children practised throwing a high pass to be headed back by their partner. Boys were generally more competent in this skill, but the girls tried with some success to improve their ability to direct the headed return accurately.
158. The subject has a high profile in the school, and many staff are skilled in teaching it. This is particularly the case at Key Stage 2. Because the staff are enthusiastic, this has a positive effect on the children who respond with vigour and enjoyment. Year 3 children enjoyed learning the rudiments of orienteering in the hall, the playground and on the school field. In one lesson, the children rushed off excitedly in pairs to locate the spots indicated by the symbols, and dashed back equally excitedly to show the teacher when they had found them. The teacher leading athletics work with Year 4 children organised the activities well so that all the children were safely active, and questioned them skilfully to draw out key learning points. Year 1 children demonstrated their growing skills well in bouncing and fielding a large ball because the teacher used skilled observation to pick those who could show exactly what she was after. All the staff follow a similar routine of ensuring good warm-up and cool down activities.
159. Many opportunities are taken for competitive games against other schools, and the school has a deservedly high reputation in such fields as rugby league and netball. The coordinator is very enthusiastic, and has made an outstanding contribution to its development. This includes attracting a rich vein of sponsorship funding to improve facilities for the children, as well as drawing up detailed and helpful individual lesson plans to cover the whole syllabus. The outdoor and indoor accommodation are of good quality, and used well. There are ambitious plans for the further development of the subject, including the outdoor environment.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

160. Standards match the expectations set out in the locally agreed syllabus for both seven and 11 year olds, maintained since the last inspection. This is mainly due to the recently updated policy and scheme of work which provides good guidance to teachers and which provides consistency and continuity in the teaching and learning of all aspects of the subject across the school. This results in sound progress by all groups of children, including those with special educational needs.

161. In the lessons observed, seven year olds had a sound knowledge of the Biblical story of the creation, that it was from the Old Testament, and was an important story for both Christians and Jews. Children's work shows that they develop a systematic understanding of the importance of Christian festivals. They are also able to reflect on what makes people special, both religious leaders and people known to them, including their friends and people in the community. Children make good progress throughout Key Stage 1 in developing their understanding of similarities and differences by considering common themes in different faith traditions. It was evident from the lesson observed and from children's work that by the time they reach the age of 11 they have made satisfactory and, in some years, good progress in understanding about religion and its significance to believers. For example, they learn about diversity and unity in religious traditions. In Year 3, children had some understanding of the symbolism of the different aspects of the dress of different religious leaders. Throughout Key Stage 2, children build on their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and of other major world religions by considering themes at a progressively deeper level. This results in children developing good skills in being able to reflect on meaning and empathise with experience. For example, in Year 4, children explored what Jerusalem was like and wrote a postcard describing the events of the Easter Story as if they had actually witnessed it.
162. Within each key stage there are opportunities for children to develop their personal skills and links are made between religious experience and the children's own lives and relationships. They reflect on what makes them special and what makes other people special. For example in Year 1 and Year 5, children shared their experiences in letters and in visits to a school in Blackburn and discovered similarities in their life styles despite their different cultural and religious backgrounds. Children's attitudes are consistently good as is their behaviour, and they demonstrate their interest by their capacity to ask as well as answer questions.
163. The quality of the teaching and learning is satisfactory across the school with some good features in the teaching in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1, teachers use questioning well to enable the children to reflect on stories and to make links between stories told. Resources are used effectively to enable children to sequence stories and to rewrite them independently. There is a strong emphasis on whole-class work, which limits the involvement of some children in activities. In Key Stage 2, where teacher knowledge is good, teachers are able to lead whole-class discussions with good participation by the children. This enables children to reflect on work covered previously. For example, children in Year 3 were able to draw on their visit to the local church and remembered what was special about the way the vicar dressed, and make suggestions as to why he dressed as he did. Throughout the key stage, there is generally good use of resources provided such as videos, artefacts and posters to develop and extend the children's experience. There is also a good balance of independent writing by the children and the use of well-chosen worksheets. Good feedback is given to children about their response in lessons. For example, in Key Stage 2, children were given immediate praise and recognition for what they had achieved in the lesson in relation to the quality of the questions they had raised. Comments on written work, although supportive, do not often challenge the children to think further.
164. The scheme of work and its organisation and the planning and the resources provided are effective in enabling staff throughout the school to deliver a coherent and consistent curriculum. The study of diverse faiths and the study of religious concepts and themes are strengths that are improving the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Monitoring is in the early stages of development but the school has a good view of what needs to be addressed to further improve. However, there is limited information about children's attainment or of their progress across key stages. This, and addressing training needs for staff, are among issues identified. There are good links with the local church and the vicar is a link governor who gives active support for teaching and learning. Links with

other faith traditions are not yet well developed but a good start has been made in the recent links with a school in Blackburn.