

INSPECTION REPORT

ASHURST PRIMARY SCHOOL

Blackbrook, St Helens

LEA area: St Helens

Unique reference number: 104771

Headteacher: Mrs C Walpole

Reporting inspector: Mrs L A Furness
8245

Dates of inspection: 24-27 February 2003

Inspection number: 246406

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3-11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: New Glade Hill
Off Chain Lane
Blackbrook
St Helens

Postcode: WA11 9QJ

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Rev Janet Roberts

Date of previous inspection: 2-5 February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
8245	L Furness	Registered inspector	Foundation Stage of Learning English	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught?
9798	V Ashworth	Lay Inspector		How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
32189	Y Clare	Team Inspector	Mathematics Physical Education Religious Education	How well is the school led and managed?
23751	J Fairclough	Team Inspector	Educational Inclusion Art and Design Design and Technology Geography History	
30781	W Richardson	Team Inspector	Special Educational Needs Science Information and Communication Technology Music	How good are the curricular and the other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Ashurst School is a community primary and nursery school situated in Blackbrook, in St Helens. The school draws its pupils mainly from the local area and the vast majority of pupils are white European. There is one pupil with English as an additional language. Two hundred and fifty-one pupils age 3 to 11 attend the school and the percentage of pupils known to be eligible for school meals free of charge matches the national average. The percentage of pupils having special educational needs is below the national average, but the percentage of pupils having a statement of special educational need is above the national average. There are nine classes, including the reception class and the nursery class (Foundation Stage of learning). There are currently 30 children of reception age and 49 part-time nursery age children who attend either a morning or an afternoon session. A nationally approved assessment scheme used for children when they start their reception year, shows that most children have levels of attainment that match those expected for their age in communication language and literacy, mathematical development and personal, social and emotional development. The school is a part of a local Education Action Zone.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This school has many very good features and the headteacher and staff are fully committed to providing very effective care and support for pupils, resulting in a school that is orderly, harmonious and happy. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage of learning and the majority have attained at least the 'early learning goals' in the six areas of learning recommended for children of this age by the time they enter Year 1. However, although there is evidence of very good teaching and learning in Years 2 and 6, the quality of teaching and learning is uneven throughout the school which means that achievement overall is satisfactory. The leadership of the school is aware of the weaknesses and has put into place systems to rectify this uneven provision. As yet these systems have had insufficient impact. School effectiveness is therefore satisfactory and the school provides sound value for money.

What the school does well

- Children are provided with a very good start to their education in the Foundation Stage.
- The high quality teaching in Years 2 and 6 impacts very positively on the achievement and the progress of pupils in these two year groups.
- The school promotes a very strong ethos of care and consideration and relationships throughout the school are very good.
- The extra-curricular activities and the contribution of the community very effectively enhance curriculum provision.
- Pupils enjoy attending school; they show good interest in their work and their behaviour is good.

What could be improved

- Standards attained in writing.
- Consistency in the quality of teaching and learning.
- Pupils' knowledge of how well they are achieving and what they need to do to improve.
- The action taken to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

The school has identified writing as an area for improvement on the school development plan.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February 1998 and the action taken, in response to the key issues raised has, in the main, been successful. The accommodation and provision for information and communication technology has been greatly improved by the provision of a computer suite in order to raise standards. However, pupils make insufficient use of the computers in the classrooms. Teachers have all undertaken the New Opportunities Fund training, which has raised their subject knowledge and confidence in the subject. Pupils are provided with more opportunities to use their speaking skills, for example, through the school council, 'circle-time' and class discussions. The library has been reorganised and reports to parents now meet statutory requirements. There is

an improvement in outdoor playground provision and the health and safety report relating to the school grounds is no longer a concern. The school has implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies satisfactorily and performance management is securely in place. Curriculum provision has been improved with the introduction of modern foreign languages. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

Pupil performance in the Year 6 National Curriculum tests in 2002 was above the national average in English, below the national average in mathematics and well below the national average in science. In comparison with similar schools the pupils' performance was well above average in English, below average in mathematics and well below average in science. Over the last three years pupils' performance has improved in English but has declined in mathematics. In science, performance improved from 2000 to 2001 but declined in 2002. The English results in 2002, reflect very good reading performance, and mask the writing results which were well below the national average. The majority of pupils currently in Year 6 are working at levels that match those expected for their age in English, mathematics and science but it is evident that standards are improving because of the very good teaching that occurs in Year 6. However, writing standards are still below the level expected for the pupils' age. In Year 2, pupil performance in the National Curriculum tests matched the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. In comparison with similar schools the pupils' performance was average in reading and below average in writing and mathematics. There has been an improving trend in all three subjects over the last three years. On the basis of teacher assessment, pupils' performance in science was above the national average and above average in comparison with similar schools. Pupils in Year 2 are working at levels expected for their age in reading, writing, mathematics and science. By comparing the level of skills that many children have when they start at school and the levels they attain by the time they leave, achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well because of the good support that they receive. The targets set for 2002 were exceeded in English but missed in mathematics. It appears that the targets set for 2003 will be met by the school in both subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils show great enthusiasm for their school in everything they do. They enjoy the sense of belonging and all those spoken to would not wish to be at any other school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are aware of the expectations of their teachers and behave accordingly.
Personal development and relationships	The personal development of pupils is satisfactory and relationships between the pupils and staff and each other are very good.

Attendance	Attendance is broadly in line with the national average. There is no unauthorised absence. Punctuality is good and lessons start promptly.
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TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with evidence of very good teaching of pupils in Years 2 and 6. A small amount of unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Teaching is very good in the nursery and reception classes. All staff there, have a very good understanding of how young children learn, and make learning enjoyable. They have high expectations and consistently encourage children to make choices and to take decisions. Assessment information is used well to provide suitable tasks that match the children's needs. As a result, children learn effectively and make good progress. In English and mathematics, teaching is mainly satisfactory with good and very good features in Years 2 and 6. These two teachers have high expectations of pupils, use resources well to capture the pupils' imagination and their very effective questioning techniques encourage pupils to be challenged in their thinking and to achieve well. In all the lessons, teachers displayed satisfactory subject knowledge and teaching of the basic skills. They plan satisfactorily to meet the needs of pupils in the class. However, in many lessons the conclusions to lessons are rushed and do not effectively consolidate or enhance pupils' learning. Also there are times when lessons last too long and the activities lack challenge particularly for the more able pupils. The quality of marking is inconsistent and in the majority of classes gives little information to pupils as to how well they have achieved or what they need to do next in order to improve the quality of their work. Pupils with special educational needs learn well because of the good support that they receive from the adults in the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 is broad and balanced and is enriched by very good community links and a very good range of extra-curricular activities. The children in the Foundation Stage of learning benefit from very good curriculum provision.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils with special educational needs including pupils with physical difficulties are effectively enabled to access the full curriculum with the support of assistants who help to ensure their needs are fully met.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through a range of activities that reflect the Christian values expressed in the school aims. The school successfully provides a climate in which pupils can grow and flourish, respect others and be respected.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes very good care of its pupils and has established a safe secure environment. Procedures for child protection are very well established and very effective.

The school has strong links with parents. The survey of parents' views before the inspection and at the pre-inspection meeting showed that parents are highly satisfied with the school's provision.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher, together with senior staff provide clear purpose and direction and in addition, provide staff with confidence, commitment and support, ensuring that all members of staff feel valued.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is enthusiastic and highly supportive of the school It is fully involved in the school development planning process and is satisfactorily aware of strengths and areas requiring improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Although satisfactory the systems for observing teaching should focus more on the impact that teaching is having on pupils' learning and on their resulting achievement.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school maximises the use of available grants well to improve its learning resources and accommodation and uses them effectively for its designated purposes. The basic principles of best value are carefully applied.

The match of the teachers and support staff to the curriculum is good. The school is well staffed so that appropriate support is available to pupils who require it. There are a large number of teaching assistants available, all having good levels of expertise to provide effective support to pupils and work well to give pupils in their care support and guidance. The accommodation is satisfactory overall. Space is at a premium and every spare area has been used to best advantage. Staff have made good efforts to make all classrooms pleasant with bright displays in most classrooms and around the school. The overall impression is warm and welcoming. Resources for learning are good overall, with information and communication technology and religious education benefiting from increased resources, in order to address the findings of the previous inspection.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Children like school. ▪ Children are making good progress. ▪ Parents feel comfortable approaching the school with a suggestion or a problem. ▪ The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There are no areas that a significant number of parents would like to see improved.

The inspection agrees with the majority of parents views. Children do enjoy attending school and want to be a part of the 'Family of Ashurst.' The school is well led and managed and it is very evident that parents are made to feel welcome in the school by all staff. However, although the inspection agrees that children make good progress in the Foundation Stage and in Years 2 and 6 in other year groups progress is uneven and therefore overall the children's progress and achievement are satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupil performance in the Year 6 National Curriculum tests in 2002 was above the national average in English, below the national average in mathematics and well below the national average in science. In comparison with similar schools the pupils' performance was well above average in English, below average in mathematics and well below average in science. Over the last three years pupils' performance has improved in English but in mathematics and science performance on the basis of average points has declined since 2000. The main reason for the decline in mathematics and science in 2002 was the lack of pupils attaining Level 5. The school has begun to address this by targeting pupils of higher ability in Year 6. The English results reflect very good reading performance and mask the writing results which were well below the national average. Again the school is trying to address this by all pupils having opportunities for extended writing sessions. Since 2000 boys have outperformed girls by one term in English but there were no significant differences noted in performance in mathematics and science. In Year 2, pupil performance in the National Curriculum tests matched the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. In comparison with similar schools the pupils' performance was average in reading and below average in writing and mathematics. There has been an improving trend in all three subjects over the last three years. On the basis of teacher assessment, pupils' performance in science was above the national average and above average in comparison with similar schools. Since 2000, girls have outperformed boys by approximately one term in reading, writing and mathematics. The targets set for 2002 were exceeded in English but missed in mathematics. It appears that the targets set for 2003 will be met by the school in both subjects.
2. Most children have a range of skills typical for their age when they join the reception class. They achieve well and make good progress during their time in the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception). By the time they enter Year 1, the majority of children achieve at least the 'early learning goals' in the six areas of learning recommended for children of this age and in personal, social and emotional development, many pupils exceed the 'early learning goals.'
3. The majority of pupils currently in Year 6 are working at levels that match that expected for their age in English, mathematics and science. In science however, a significant minority are working at a level higher than that expected for their age. This is because of the well-planned curriculum in Year 6, which gives very good opportunities for discussion and open-ended investigations. In writing, however, standards are still below the level

expected for the pupils' age. Pupils in Year 2 are working at levels expected for their age in reading, writing, mathematics and science. There are no significant differences noted in attainment or achievement of boys and girls in the current classes of Year 2 and 6 pupils. The attainment of pupils with special educational needs is below that expected nationally for their age in English, mathematics and science. Lower than average skills in writing also mean that written work in the other subjects is of a lower standard than that expected for their age. Early identification of those needing support, however, results in pupils with special educational needs making good progress and achieving well.

4. In speaking and listening, pupils attain standards that at least match those expected for their age and their achievement is good. Pupils articulate ideas well and exchange ideas sensibly and co-operatively. They answer questions using appropriate vocabulary correctly and listen to each other's answers carefully. In reading, pupils make satisfactory progress in learning basic skills, which they use satisfactorily to access different levels of meaning. Pupils in Year 2 read simple texts accurately, and some with fluency and enjoyment. In Year 6, pupils know how to choose and use books for different purposes, and are developing informed tastes and interests. In writing, achievement is satisfactory overall and standards are better in some skills than in others. Progress in handwriting is satisfactory overall and most pupils in Year 6 present their work well in a neat, fluent and fully-joined style. Pupils in Year 2 are making satisfactory progress in learning to write creatively and higher attaining pupils write imaginative and coherent stories. Other pupils are below this level and write more briefly with lower attaining pupils still needing adult help to record simple ideas. By Year 6, higher attaining pupils use paragraphs and direct speech to develop the piece of writing but other pupils are less secure with the use of these devices. Some average attaining pupils confuse the use of 'their' and 'there'. Almost all pupils show evidence of use of good descriptive language, for example, 'trees howling in pain' during a hurricane.
5. In mathematics, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. By Year 2, the majority of pupils work confidently with numbers to 100 and carry out simple addition and subtraction problems accurately. They are beginning to use multiplication facts and show a sound understanding of fractions and shape and space work. Their mathematical vocabulary is secure. By Year 6, the pupils have a secure understanding of number. They use effective strategies for addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, across a range of numbers, including decimals, fractions and percentages. They use a calculator sensibly. Pupils throughout the school have opportunity to use their numeracy skills in subjects such as science when recording graphs or in design and technology when carrying out measuring activities.
6. In science, pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall but there is evidence of good achievement in Year 6 where a significant number of pupils are attaining levels higher than is expected for their age. By Year 2, pupils have satisfactory knowledge and understanding of a variety of scientific topics and carry out simple investigations recording their findings appropriately. By Year 6, pupils have increased their understanding of scientific topics including that of forces and friction. They use appropriate equipment to carry out investigations and understand the importance of a fair test.
7. In art and design, pupils in Years 2 and 6 attain standards that match those expected for pupils of their age and achievement is satisfactory. By Year 2, pupils are able to produce good large-scale paintings of characters from stories. They mix colours to make flesh tones and select different size brushes for different purposes. By Year 6, pupils paint quality

portraits of “mood” having studied paintings of famous artists which reflect different moods. Pupils also use a range of materials to make mixed-media collages.

8. In design and technology, pupils attain standards that match those expected for their age in Years 2 and 6. Pupils’ achievement overall is satisfactory. By Year 2, pupils have made good quality models which they are able to evaluate sensibly and suggest appropriate improvements. By Year 6 pupils recognise the conflicts between cost, function and fashion when designing a pair of slippers for example. They select appropriate materials and initial designs show each stage of the making process.
9. In geography, in Years 2 and 6, standards match those expected for pupils of their age and achievement overall is satisfactory. By Year 2, pupils describe accurately the main features of their local environment and express their views on what it is like to live there. They use appropriate geographical vocabulary correctly and are developing satisfactory mapping skills, By Year 6 pupils have covered a range of geographical topics and show a good understanding of environmental change and the differences between weather and climate.
10. In history, standards match those expected for pupils of their age in Years 2 and 6 and their achievement is satisfactory. By Year 2 pupils know about famous people for example, Mary Seacole and about life in Victorian times. By Year 6 pupils develop their skills of historical enquiry using old photographs and artefacts as sources of evidence to find out more about the Victorians.
11. In information and communication technology (ICT), the standards attained by Year 2 and Year 6 match those expected for their age. Achievement is satisfactory overall but in Year 6 the progress and achievement of the majority of pupils are good because of very good teaching. By Year 2, pupils word-process their ideas using different fonts and produce images using paint and draw programs. They use database programs to support their learning in mathematics. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils access the Internet to research information They use the multimedia program ‘PowerPoint’ to design the first few pages of the pupil section of the existing school website. They organise, refine and present information in different forms and confidently incorporate text and pictures.
12. Standards in music match those expected for their age by Year 2 and are above those expected for their age by Year 6. Progress and achievement overall are good. The good range of curricular and extra-curricular activities provided by the school, for example musical performances, the choir, orchestra and recorder activities give opportunities for those pupils with a talent for music to achieve well. By Year 2, pupils sing tunefully with a sweet tone, clear words and rhythm. By Year 6, pupils make very good attempts to sing complex rhythms and melodies for example as they begin to learn songs from ‘Jesus Christ Super Star’ for their Easter performance.
13. In religious education, pupils in Years 2 and 6 are working at the level expected for their age as set out in the locally agreed syllabus and their achievement is satisfactory. By Year 2, pupils have a secure understanding of different Christian celebrations but have limited knowledge of celebrations of other faiths, for example, Judaism. They understand that some people are special and know who is special to them. By Year 6, pupils reflect on their own faith and beliefs and display satisfactory knowledge and understanding of faiths such as Hinduism and Islam.

14. There was insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement on standards or achievement in physical education.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15. The pupils' attitudes towards their school and work are good. Their behaviour is also good and relationships throughout the school are very good. This makes a substantial contribution to the calm and friendly atmosphere within the school. This is the same as at the previous inspection. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils identified as having special educational needs show good attitudes to school, work and teachers. Pupils with physical difficulties are managed well by teachers, teaching assistants and learning support staff and consequently these pupils relate well to other pupils and adults within the school
16. The pupils show great enthusiasm for their school in everything they do. They enjoy the sense of belonging and all those spoken to would not wish to be at any other school. There is a positive attitude to learning which is encouraged from the moment the child enters the nursery where very good attitudes were observed. Very good attitudes were also seen in Years 1 and 2. Most pupils show interest in their work and are able to share and co-operate with others. Many pupils are able to demonstrate good levels of concentration and effort in lessons and are keen to join in all school activities. They want to learn and try hard to succeed.
17. Behaviour throughout the school is good. There have been no exclusions. Pupils are aware of the expectations of their teachers and behave accordingly. Good behaviour was also observed at lunchtime and in the playground, where the school's emphasis on social development is having a positive impact.
18. The personal development of pupils is generally satisfactory and relationships between the pupils, staff and each other are very good. The headteacher and staff consider it a very high priority to develop relationships. Their examples as role models make a very good contribution to the education provided. The caring attitude of the "Family of Ashurst" is very evident throughout the school community. The personal, social and health education programme assists in ensuring that pupils are taught to respect and understand other people's feelings and the impact of their actions on others. There is a buddy system which operates in the playground for those pupils who have a problem or have no-one to play with. The pupils understand the reason for this and it works well. They are polite to adults coming into the school and are willing to enter into conversation when given the opportunity. There is no evidence of bullying, sexism or racist behaviour in the school. Any incidents which do occur are dealt with quickly and discreetly.
19. Pupils are willing to undertake responsibility when this is offered, and this is regarded as a privilege. There are opportunities for Year 6 pupils to become house captains, prefects, and reading buddies for reception age children. The school council is elected from Year 2 upwards and two representatives from each class attend the regular meetings which are chaired by the headteacher. Three school governors, three members of staff and the caretaker are also members. The school has yet to transfer the running of the council to the pupils. Friendship buddies are elected from Years 2 to 6 and two are on duty each day. Registers are collected and returned by Year 6 pupils and many pupils offer or are asked to help in the classroom. Although provision is satisfactory, there are missed opportunities for developing pupil initiative and responsibility across the school.

20. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average. There is no unauthorised absence and this is below the national average. Punctuality is good and lessons start promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

21. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with evidence of very good teaching of pupils in Years 2 and 6 and in the Foundation Stage of Learning. There was a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching seen. In English, mathematics, science, art and design, history, information and communication technology and religious education, teaching and learning is satisfactory. In music, teaching is good. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on teaching and learning overall in design technology, geography and physical education.
22. Teaching and learning are very good in the nursery and reception classes. Teachers and support staff have a very good understanding of how young children learn, and make learning enjoyable. They have high expectations and consistently encourage children to make choices and to take decisions. As a result, pupils make good progress in developing their personal and social skills. Teachers assess children's progress regularly using the teaching assistants and other adults effectively to monitor children's learning during whole class teaching sessions. A careful and thorough assessment system ensures that the teachers provide suitable tasks that match the children's needs. The children are well managed and activities are changed frequently to hold their interest and attention. In the very good lessons in both nursery and reception, for example, there are a wide range of outdoor activities, including wheeled vehicles, a sandpit, weighing scales, water tray and a climbing frame, that successfully maintains children's concentration and keeps them busy and happy. As a result, children learn effectively and make good progress.
23. In English and mathematics, teaching is mainly satisfactory with good and very good features in Years 2 and 6. These two teachers have high expectations of pupils and use resources well to capture the pupils' imagination as was seen in a Year 2 English lesson when role-play was used very effectively to stimulate pupils' writing. All the pupils thoroughly enjoyed the dressing-up session and the role-play activity of grandmother and the wolf. They listened interestedly to the dialogue between the two characters and the resulting work showed how much the pupils had learnt about the use of persuasive language. In mathematics, whiteboards are used effectively in both classes to ensure that all pupils take part in question and answer sessions. This resource also allows the teacher to assess how well pupils are progressing in their learning. In an English lesson for targeted pupils in Year 6, learning was very good because the teacher had very good subject knowledge and her very effective questioning techniques encouraged the pupils to think about the features of limericks and rhyme and pattern. The teachers of Year 2 and 6 pupils constantly encourage pupils to be challenged in their thinking and to achieve well. This was seen in both science and information and communication lessons in Year 6 where open-ended investigations, effective questioning and very good opportunities for discussion enabled pupils to learn effectively.
24. In all the lessons teachers displayed satisfactory subject knowledge and teaching of the basic skills. They plan satisfactorily to meet the needs of pupils in the class. Pupils are managed satisfactorily and classroom organisation is appropriate. However, in many lessons, including some of the good and very good lessons the conclusions to lessons are rushed. Pupils are not asked how well they think they have achieved and more often than not, teachers tell the pupils what they have learnt. Consequently pupils' knowledge of their

own learning is unsatisfactory. Marking is inconsistent and in the majority of classes gives little information to pupils as to how well they have achieved or what they need to do next in order to improve the quality of their work. There are times when lessons last too long and the activities lack challenge particularly for the more able pupils. This was seen in a Year 3 art and design lesson when pupils spent far too long colouring photocopied patterns which was not an appropriate activity for these pupils. In mathematics, activities occasionally lack challenge and extension activities often involve working with higher numbers rather than the pupils having the opportunity to apply their knowledge in a different context. Occasionally, pupils' mistakes are allowed to pass uncorrected as was seen in a Year 4 science lesson when pupils mistakenly identified salt as a liquid. This misconception was left unidentified by the teacher. In Years 3 to 5 the over use of worksheets in science limits the higher attaining pupils by the constraints of the answers required. Some teachers' expectations of finished work are sometimes too low and careless presentation including spelling and punctuation is not corrected. Work is not always dated and pupils are allowed to draw grids and charts without using a ruler.

25. The teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs are good. There is a higher than average number of teaching and learning support assistants. This means that pupils with special educational needs receive a high degree of support to enable them to work towards their individual learning targets for improvement. Class teachers plan effectively to ensure that pupils of lower ability or physically disabled are supported in their learning and can access the whole curriculum. Although there is some withdrawal from class for additional support this is appropriate and linked to the teaching and learning taking place in the classroom at that time.

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

26. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is very good. Planning incorporates national guidelines in full and prepares the older children in this age range very well for their transition into Year 1. The curriculum for pupils aged 5 to 11 is good. It is broad and balanced and is enriched by the provision of a very good range of extra-curricular activities. The school also has incorporated modern foreign languages into the curriculum which adds further breadth to the provision provided. Although there is one pupil with English as an additional language no specific provision is needed as the pupil is a fluent English speaker. The curriculum however does not provide sufficient opportunities for independent learning or challenge for the more able pupils. The requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education are fully met.
27. The time allocated to teaching the curriculum is appropriate and is broadly average compared with national figures. Teachers' planning in the Foundation Stage is very good and it is satisfactory overall in Years 1 to 6. There are very good examples of planning in Years 2 and 6. All subjects have policies and programmes of study that clearly guide the planning of teaching and learning and which incorporate national guidelines where appropriate.
28. The school gives good equality of opportunity. It is an inclusive school. Pupils with special educational needs including pupils with physical difficulties are enabled to access the full curriculum with the support of assistants who help to ensure their needs are fully met. Some gifted and talented pupils are identified and offered the opportunity to attend a

- summer school but those with a particular ability in specific areas of the curriculum are not yet provided for in the teachers' planning.
29. The provision of extra-curricular activities is very good and makes a significant contribution to the pupils' personal, social and creative development. There are a good number of activities that cater for a wide range of interests, for example, a choir, recorder group and orchestra that meet regularly. There are specialist teachers for physical education and music who promote good standards. The pupils are involved in a good number of sports clubs and pupils in Years 3 to 6 attend swimming lessons. There is an annual residential visit for older pupils which successfully promotes social development. Trips are made to the local glass museum, Sankey Valley nature reserve and other places of educational interest. The school also provides a homework club and booster classes and the teaching of French, German or Spanish is offered. Pupils may pay for outside tuition in judo and dance.
 30. The school has introduced the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies satisfactorily. However, in science the provision for investigative and open-ended activities is inconsistent across the school. The personal social and health education programme (PSHE) is well planned and is integrated with other subjects. The school makes good use of visitors such as the dental nurse to talk about caring for teeth. Drugs, health and sex education are taught, where appropriate, through other subjects such as science. The links with the local community are very good. The local vicar comes into school and children join the 'JAM' club (Jesus and me). Visits to the local wildlife area contribute to the curriculum and funding from the Education Action Zone (EAZ) has enabled extra activities, for example, dance and music workshops to take place.
 31. The school has established very good links with its local partners. One of the local high schools hosts the City Learning Centre and pupils from all year groups visit this Centre regularly to use the information and technology suite where they have access to computers, keyboards and digital cameras. This results in enhancement to the existing provision in school. The local high school runs a summer school that gifted and talented pupils may attend. It also provides good musical links, with music workshops and visits of the school's choir and orchestra. These performances extend the pupils' opportunities to perform, listen and evaluate many kinds of music. The school works with a number of schools through the EAZ initiative and maintains good relationships with them for the benefit of its pupils. The school also has links with other institutions such as a physical education college where pupils visit to use the good facilities.
 32. Arrangements for identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs are good. A list of pupils with special educational needs is kept by the co-ordinator (SENCO) and appropriate individual education plans provided for pupils on this list. These plans are written by class teachers with the support of the SENCO. These pupils are well supported by support assistants and the care shown by both teachers and fellow pupils enables them to access the full curriculum. The positive atmosphere of the school and the good attitudes and relationships of staff and pupils promote the effective inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in every aspect of school life. All pupils have full access to the National Curriculum programmes of study whatever their ability so no one feels left out.
 33. The school successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through a range of activities that reflect the Christian values expressed in the school aims. This is a similar position to that found at the last inspection. The quality of provision for spiritual development is good. Regular acts of collective worship and daily prayers have an

impact on pupils' lives. Religious education lessons encourage pupils to reflect on values and beliefs other than their own. The school provides a climate in which pupils can grow and flourish, respect others and be respected. The pupils themselves recognise this as seen by a piece of independent writing by two boys in Year 6, for the introductory pages of their school website. Their writing highlighted the pupils' recognition of the value placed on them by the headteacher and the staff.

34. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The pupils clearly know right from wrong. From their first days in nursery they learn to take turns and be fair in their dealings with others. School rules, rewards and sanctions are clearly understood. This is reinforced by rules drawn up by the pupils for their own classrooms. Teachers promote positive behaviour by praise, encouragement and reminders about what is acceptable behaviour and what is not. The pupils also learn the rules of fair play through sport and extra-curricular activities. The Christian values taught through collective worship and religious education help the pupils to learn respect for the values and beliefs of others.
35. Provision for pupils' social development is good. It is effectively promoted through daily opportunities to work alone or in smaller or larger groups. The pupils have good attitudes to one another and their teachers. They are caring and sensitive to those with special educational needs, particularly those with physical disabilities. Social development is promoted through a wide range of visits for example to the St Helen's glass museum, Eureka science museum, and Sankey Valley wildlife area. The annual residential visit to Wales for Years 5 and 6 also helps to foster their social skills outside the school environment. Pupils are given a range of responsibilities as for example in the buddy system or reading partners. However, further opportunities could be made for pupils of all ages to use their initiative in their learning activities.
36. The promotion of pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. The pupils learn about the Christian faith and about other faiths and cultures in their religious education lessons. This helps pupils to broaden their understanding of the diversity of the world in which we live. Knowledge of other cultures is successfully promoted in other subjects for example art and design, music and dance. The wide range of extra-curricular activities and provision for enhancing the curriculum extends pupils' understanding of the world but the school does not yet provide sufficient opportunities to teach pupils about the issues of racism and how to become a tolerant citizen in Britain's multi-ethnic society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. The school takes very good care of its pupils and has established a safe, secure environment within the philosophy of the 'Family of Ashurst'. There are very effective measures in place to provide support and guidance for all pupils and the headteacher and staff know the pupils well. The key issue from the last inspection regarding the school grounds has been resolved and work has been carried out to enhance the outside provision. This is a good improvement since the last inspection.
38. Procedures for child protection are very well established and very effective. The headteacher receives regular training and works closely with staff to make sure that all those pupils in need have the appropriate support. The school has regular contact with outside agencies and great care is taken with this aspect of the school's work. Additionally there are very effective procedures in place to check on the health, safety and well-being of all.

39. There is close monitoring of academic performance and personal development from the moment the child enters school. Comprehensive records are kept on all aspects of development which are monitored regularly. The pupils are well supported in everything they do. Booster classes have been introduced for those pupils who need extra support in order to gain more confidence.
40. Very effective procedures are in place for promoting good attendance and punctuality. Parents understand that school must be informed of any unexpected absence on the first day and most respond to this request. Where families experience difficulties, the EAZ attendance project provides extra support which the school values highly. Registers are completed quickly and appropriately and returned to the office twice a day. Attendance and punctuality contribute substantially to the attainment and progress of the pupils. Unfortunately, however, some parents continue to take their children on family holidays during term time, which disturbs the learning process.
41. There are very good procedures in place to support and promote standards of behaviour. The comprehensive, positive behaviour policy works well. Behaviour is monitored at all times and recorded where necessary. The school is very successful at eliminating oppressive behaviour. The adopted practice is prevention rather than cure. This is well supported by the school's personal, social and health programme which teaches compassion in order to promote and encourage an orderly community.
42. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported. The school has good links with outside agencies that include the educational psychologist, behavioural support team, pre-school support centre and therapists. The special needs co-ordinator checks on the progress of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils are well supported within the classroom and withdrawal from class is carefully structured so that pupils do not regularly miss the same lessons and steps are taken to make certain that there is equal access to the curriculum. The special needs co-ordinator keeps records of the progress of pupils with special educational needs and each year a small number of pupils are taken off the list of pupils needing support due to their good progress.
43. Assessment procedures are good and information gained from them is used appropriately to address weaknesses in learning and to adapt the curriculum to ensure it meets pupils' needs. For example, the school recognises that writing is an area requiring improvement and pupils now have the opportunity for an extended writing session each week. In English, mathematics and science all task and assessment results are analysed. Good records recording pupils' progress in end-of-year tests as they move through the school are maintained and target setting systems are in place for English and mathematics. However, the use of assessment information is not yet having a significant impact on raising standards, particularly in English. Currently pupils have targets in writing and numeracy, but these are inconsistently used throughout the school and in the week of the inspection were referred to in only one classroom. In most lessons seen the conclusions to lessons were rushed and not used effectively to consolidate or enhance learning opportunities. In the Foundation Stage, assessment, recording and reporting procedures are very good and enable staff to monitor effectively the progress that each individual child makes in all six areas of learning recommended for children of this age. Initial assessment is in place and the information from this is used very effectively to plan subsequent learning experiences as is day-to-day assessment information.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44. The school has successfully developed strong links with parents. The survey of parents' views before the inspection and at the pre-inspection meeting showed that parents are highly satisfied with the school's provision. The key issue at the last inspection involving the statutory requirements on reporting to parents has now been resolved well. There has been a good improvement since the last inspection. Almost all parents say that their child likes school, that the teaching is good and that school expects the children to work hard. All parents agree that the children make good progress, and that behaviour is good.
45. Procedures for involving parents of pupils with special educational needs are good and all statutory procedures involved when assessing a pupil for a statement of need are followed. Parents are consulted when a child is identified as having special educational needs and both parents and pupils are appropriately involved in the setting of learning targets. Parents are also invited to reviews. The governors' annual report to parents meets the legal requirement to report on pupils with special educational needs.
46. The school's good links with parents start early with a well established induction process. Parents are encouraged to come into school to share any concerns with the class teacher, or headteacher if appropriate. This open-door policy works well and the parents are appreciative of the care and attention that the school gives to their children. There are very good opportunities for parents to become involved in the work of the school. There are five parent governors. Volunteer parents are assigned to a class and receive appropriate training. They are encouraged to take part in the '100 hours Voluntary Service Certificate' project. Parents are involved in topic work and hearing their children read at home. Pupils aged 7 to 11 have homework books in which parents are encouraged to write comments and these provide an effective home-school link. All parents sign the home-school agreement and there is a strong parent-teacher association. The 'Friends of Ashurst' hold many popular fundraising events throughout the year, the proceeds of which are used well to improve provision. For example, the school is presently saving for umbrellas to provide shade for pupils during the summer term.
47. Parents receive good quality information, including a detailed annual report of their child's progress. The school prospectus and governors' annual report to parents also give good information on the school and aspects of school life. There are weekly newsletters and information on core subjects issued at least once a term, which are greatly appreciated by parents. The parent consultations are well attended and nearly all parents feel that school works closely with them and that they are kept well informed.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

48. The leadership and management of the school are good. The school is proud of its family values and the headteacher and all staff make a full and effective commitment to pupils' care, welfare and health. These values are central to the school's mission statement and aims and they are reflected in its everyday life, which is happy, supportive and secure. Parents are appreciative of the good provision for values and believe that the school is helping children become mature and responsible. The governing body is equally committed to the "Family of Ashurst" and to its good links with the community. The headteacher has the confidence of her staff, parents and governors and is popular and well respected. Teamwork and the contribution of staff with management responsibilities are good and staff are committed to improvement and have good capacity to succeed.

49. The monitoring and evaluation systems to develop and improve the quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory. There are many monitoring systems in place but, at present, these are not as effective as they could be. Essentially they lack the appropriate rigour to assess the nature, extent and effect of inconsistency in the quality of teaching. Lesson observations do not judge teaching by its impact on learning. The school's good systems for analysing test results enable it to identify specific areas of persistent weakness in pupils' performance, for example in writing, science and the proportion of higher attaining pupils in mathematics. Potentially this is an effective means for ensuring that teachers take steps to strengthen areas of weaker performance. Now the systems for observing teaching and for assessing attainment should be made to work together so to identify the causes of underachievement in order to address it. To promote more independent learning, pupils need to become more involved in the learning process and know more clearly what they need to do next to improve the quality of their work. The leadership of the school are aware of weaknesses in teaching and learning and have put into place systems to rectify them.
50. The overall effectiveness of the governing body is satisfactory. It is enthusiastic, highly supportive and has an efficient committee system that meets regularly in order to fulfil its statutory duties and responsibilities. It is fully involved in the school development planning process. The governing body celebrates the school strengths in promoting good behaviour, attitudes, relationships and personal developments and many governors undertake training in order to improve their expertise. The governing body have satisfactory knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are, therefore, to some extent, able to act as critical friends. Performance management is securely in place and all statutory requirements are met.
51. The leadership and management of subjects by subject co-ordinators are satisfactory, with the exception of English, science, information and communication technology, music and physical education where they are good. The co-ordinator for physical education in Years 1 and 2 is also a primary link teacher for the school sports co-ordinator programme, and, as a leading teacher in her field brings enthusiasm and expertise to her role. Where leadership and management of subjects are satisfactory, co-ordinators do not have a complete overview of standards and provision in their subjects. Most classroom observations are undertaken by members of the senior management team and, in the main, focus on English and mathematics. This means that the majority of co-ordinators have not had the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning or the subjects' contribution to standards in the school. They have all however, analysed pupils' work and checked teachers' planning. Subject co-ordinators have detailed subject files with good action plans for their subjects, which highlight priorities for the subject and feed into the school development plan yearly. All subject co-ordinators are given their own budgets to manage according to their priority in the school development document.
52. The leadership and management of pupils with special educational needs are good and pupils make good progress throughout the school. The co-ordinator is given time to maintain an overview of pupil progress and to advise the staff, but she has not been given time to monitor the effectiveness of the teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs either in their lessons or withdrawal groups. She regularly attends training sessions and appropriately updates the staff on changes in the requirements of teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs.

53. The school development plan is thorough, detailed and well written. All subject areas are represented and the senior management team is responsible for drawing up a list of priorities. These draft proposals are taken to the staff and governors before the final document is produced. This reflects the diligence of the senior management team in its determination to involve all colleagues. The document clearly and appropriately identifies priorities and details action to be taken with clear success criteria and review times.
54. The governing body is properly involved in decisions related to setting the budget. Spending is clearly linked to planned priorities and developments. School maximises the use of available grants well to improve its learning resources and accommodation and uses them effectively for its designated purposes. It currently benefits from Schools' Regenerating Budget (SRB) money, which has been used to provide a computer suite and improve provision for information and communication technology and EAZ money which is aimed at, among others, on improving levels of attendance. In its most recent audit, the school was praised for its accountancy and clearly established financial procedures. All its minor recommendations have been carried out. In daily practice the school ensures the basic principles of value for money are carefully applied. The school satisfactorily applies the principles of best value.
55. The administrative officer carries out her day-to-day administration very efficiently. Her duties include meeting with the finance officer monthly and, as the school manages its own bank account, she is responsible for the generation of value added tax reports and reconciliation of monies. Staff make good use of the new technology in dealing with financial transactions, planning, record keeping and analysing data. There are five interactive whiteboards in school, fixed in classrooms and the staffroom which are regularly used by members of staff.
56. The match of the teachers and support staff to the curriculum is good. The school is well staffed so that appropriate support is available to pupils who require it. There is a range of experience, with one teacher being newly qualified. She benefits from warm support from her mentor and other colleagues as well as being part of the induction process run by the local education authority. The school's performance management system helps teachers to contribute to the school's aims and priorities. Individual professional development is discussed and, in line with school training priorities, teachers attend appropriate training to enhance their skills. There are a large number of classroom assistants available, all having good levels of expertise to provide effective support to pupils and work well to give pupils in their care support and guidance. There is good teamwork and team spirit within the school. During the introductory stages of lessons where appropriate, they are used to good effect observing pupils and recording their responses.
57. The accommodation is satisfactory overall. Space is limited but all available space is used to best advantage. The school hall is small, but in the lessons seen the size of the hall did not affect the learning opportunities for the pupils. A new information and communication technology suite has been created which has been designed with imagination. It is visually pleasing and works well. School has a very good medical room and disabled facilities to meet the needs of some of its pupils. Staff have made good efforts to make all classrooms pleasant with bright displays in most classrooms and around the school. The overall impression is warm and welcoming. The Years 4 and 5 classrooms are small and as a result furniture layout cannot always be planned to best advantage in those rooms. Access to the reception and nursery classrooms is through the Year 1 classroom. This is not ideal, but does not adversely affect pupils' learning. Standards of cleanliness are good throughout

the school, reflecting the commitment of the premises staff. The kitchen staff and lunchtime supervisors make a valued and valuable contribution to the smooth running of the school.

58. School has provided playground equipment for pupils and work is due to begin this term to improve the playground used by pupils in Years 3 to 6. There is a large field adjoining the playground and in general the outside area looks predominantly green, spacious, clean and fit for the purpose. Funding has been secured and an orienteering course is planned for the summer term. Resources for learning are good in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, information and communication technology, music and physical education. In art and design, geography, history and religious education resources are satisfactory.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59. In order to improve further, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

(1) raise standards in writing by:

- implementing the action identified in the school development plan;
- improving pupils' presentation skills and ensuring that the skills taught in literacy lessons are transferred to other subjects of the National Curriculum;

(paragraphs: 1, 4, 72, 73, 102, 108 & 127)

(2) make the quality of teaching and learning more consistent by:

- raising teachers' expectations of what pupils are able to do;
- planning activities that challenge the more able pupils, particularly in mathematics and science;
- auditing existing resources in English and mathematics and ensuring that when these are used they are appropriate for the pupils' needs;
- limiting the amount of worksheets used for recording work in science and ensuring that pupils' misconceptions are appropriately rectified;
- improving the pace of lessons.

(paragraphs: 24, 26, 72, 75, 85, 87, 92, 97 & 107)

(3) involve pupils more in the learning process by:

- using the conclusions of lessons more effectively for pupils to assess how well they think they have achieved the learning intention of the lesson;
- pupils having easy access to their literacy and numeracy targets so they can easily remind themselves of what they need to do particularly when working in other subjects of the National Curriculum;
- improving the quality of written marking in all subjects so that pupils know the features of their work that are good and how to improve the quality of their work;
- providing more opportunities for pupils to use their initiative and take responsibility for their learning.

(paragraphs: 24, 26, 35, 43, 73, 75, 81, 87, 102, 108, 117 & 127)

(4) develop monitoring and evaluation procedures by:

- ensuring that lesson observations judge the quality of teaching by the impact on learning;
- rigorously using the information from lesson observations and from assessing attainment to raise standards;
- developing the role of the subject co-ordinator.

(paragraphs:49, 51, 52, 76, 78, 89, 99, 104, 109,& 128)

Other issues for the governors to consider when drawing up their action plan:

- using information and communication technology more effectively in the classroom environment; *(paragraphs: 73, 82, 91, 94, 97, 108, 110, 113 & 127)*
- improving the opportunities for pupils to learn about the issues of racism and how to become a tolerant citizen in Britain's multi-ethnic society. *(paragraphs:36)*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	52
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	48

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	17	11	21	3	0	0
Percentage	0	33	21	40	6	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	25	226
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	n/a	43

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	30

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.2
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	15	14	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	12
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	26	26	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (86)	90 (89)	96 (89)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	15
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	26	26	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (89)	90 (80)	97 (80)
	National	85 9850	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)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	21	14	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	20	16	18
	Girls	11	10	13
	Total	31	26	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89 (68)	74 (58)	89 (94)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	20	17	19
	Girls	12	10	13
	Total	32	27	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	91 (65)	77 (61)	91 (81)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	194	0	0
White – Irish			
White – any other White background			
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean			
Mixed – White and Black African			
Mixed – White and Asian			
Mixed – any other mixed background			
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani			
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi			
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background			
Black or Black British – Caribbean			
Black or Black British – African			
Black or Black British – any other Black background			
Chinese			
Any other ethnic group			
No ethnic group recorded			

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.6:1
Average class size	28.25

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	229

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25:1
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	15
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13:1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1

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	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	538949
Total expenditure	552273
Expenditure per pupil	2136
Balance brought forward from previous year	40295
Balance carried forward to next year	26971

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate: 41.4%

Number of questionnaires sent out	251
Number of questionnaires returned	104

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	27	1	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	65	34	0	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	42	0	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	43	6	1	6
The teaching is good.	74	23	2	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	39	12	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	74	24	1	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	76	20	1	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	55	39	4	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	74	24	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	73	23	1	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	65	26	4	2	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

60. The school has continued to provide a very good start to children's education since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching and learning in the nursery and reception classes is very good. The broad curriculum and the well-equipped classrooms, mean that children learn very effectively in the Foundation Stage. Most children join the nursery when they are three, and move into the reception class at the beginning of the school year in which they become five. During the inspection, there were 30 full-time children of reception age and 49 part-time nursery age children who attended either a morning or an afternoon session. The school provides nursery provision for the local area and therefore only approximately half of the nursery age children continue their education in the reception class. Most children have a range of skills typical for their age when they join the reception class. They achieve well and make good progress in both classes. By the time they enter Year 1, the majority of children achieve at least the 'early learning goals' in the six areas of learning recommended for children of this age and in personal, social and emotional development, many pupils exceed the 'early learning goals.'
61. Teachers have a very good understanding of how young children learn. They manage the children very well and provide a wide range of interesting and challenging activities. As a result, the children are happy and enthusiastic, concentrate well and work with interest. They play happily together both indoors and outdoors, co-operate sensibly when sharing equipment, and are well motivated. Their attitudes to learning and their behaviour are very good because teachers' expectations are high, lessons have clear learning intentions and work is well matched to the needs of individual children. Teachers assess children's understanding carefully and provide tasks in line with their progress. All staff have very good relationships with the children and provide them with good role models. Children with special educational needs receive good assistance both from their class teachers and from the nursery nurses and teaching assistants. As a result, they make good progress. Several volunteers provide valuable assistance in class and parents who encourage their children to read at home help to develop their learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

62. Teachers are very effective in developing children's social skills. Children enter the nursery confidently in the mornings and afternoons and are quickly occupied by a wide range of continuous provision, both indoors and outdoors. This builds their confidence to make decisions and helps them organise their own time. In one session, several children chose to play in the home corner, using money for 'shopping'. They developed their social skills by tidying up the 'house' and putting things away. Other children acted out an adventure by chatting confidently as they spoke on the telephone to each other. By the time they join the reception class, children have learned to put their hand up to answer questions and they know how to take turns when sharing resources. In one lesson, reception class children listened carefully as they took turns to answer questions about the cultures and beliefs of different people. Children eat their morning snack sensibly and sit quietly while they drink their milk. They eat their lunch politely and treat staff respectfully. After eating, children

appropriately assist in tidying up the tables. At the end of the day or before going outside to play, most put their own coats on unaided. Teachers encourage children to be thoughtful and to look after each other. Consequently, children make good progress in developing social skills, and their level of personal, social and emotional development exceeds what is typical by the end of the reception year.

Communication, language and literacy

63. Teaching of language and literacy skills is very good in both classes. Most children have speech and language skills typical for their age when they join the nursery class. Adults constantly talk to children to introduce new words to their vocabulary. The teachers frequently ask open-ended questions in order to develop fluency and confidence in their speech. Children are encouraged to explain the activities in which they are occupied and to discuss the books they have been reading in class. In a nursery lesson, for instance, children discussed a book about 'Percy the Park Keeper'. Teachers make good use of role-play activities to encourage children's language development. In their work on homes and houses in the nursery, for example, children talked about being removal men, while children in the reception class imagined what it was like to be a fire-fighter. In the reception class, children discuss the weather every morning, and can identify different weather types, as well as naming the days of the week and the months of the year. As a result of the very good teaching, children make rapid progress, and their language development is better than that usually found at the end of the reception year. Children listen to stories enthusiastically, and enjoy looking at books. Children in the nursery class, for example, enjoyed listening to fairy tales, for example 'Goldilocks and the three bears'. They take reading books home regularly and share the stories with their parents and other adults. Children listen on their own to interactive stories on the computer and enjoy looking at books in the reading corner, holding the books correctly and turning the pages carefully.
64. Children in the reception class are taught the sounds and the names of letters and most can identify the initial sounds of common words. Most pupils recognise a range of simple words that occur frequently and are beginning to combine these together to read simple sentences. Some higher-attaining children read simple texts confidently. For example, one high attaining child read the word 'importantly' independently. Children make good progress and most can read better than is typical for their age. Children are given appropriate opportunities to develop their writing skills. Nursery children make good attempts at early writing, while children in the reception class can write most letters correctly. Children are taught to recognise the sounds associated with the letters of the alphabet. In reception most children are beginning to write simple words reasonably accurately without assistance and to write their own names unaided. Most can copy short sentences correctly by the end of the reception year. Overall, children make satisfactory progress, and standards of writing match those expected for children of this age.

Mathematical development

65. Teaching is very good in both classes, and children are given many opportunities to use numbers and to explore shape and size. In the nursery class, very good use was made of numbers on a 'washing line' to help children recognise numbers from 1 to 9. Children enjoy counting and the teachers rarely miss an opportunity to count objects such teddy bears or rooms, doors and windows in the doll's house. Nursery children sing a range of counting songs, sort objects, and use weighing scales to measure objects that are 'lighter' and 'heavier'. During outdoor play activities they recognise and name two-dimensional shapes.

Reception age children count up to 20 and back accurately, sort the numbers to 20 into the correct order, and identify numbers 'one more than' and 'one less than'. They recognise which items are 'long' or 'short', count accurately in tens and make simple addition and subtraction number stories. Two boys played a counting game on the computer and identified numbers that were 'more' or 'less' than others. Teachers and classroom assistants help children with special educational needs effectively so they are fully involved and make good progress. By the end of the reception year, most children have mathematical skills that at least match those expected for their age.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

66. Very good teaching in both classes ensures that there are many opportunities for children to learn about the world around them during lessons, outdoor activities and on visits in the local area. In the nursery, for example, children explore the local area, then draw and paint pictures of houses and the church. In the reception class, children used a range of resources to discover facts about people who help us. They learn about features of living things for example the names of their own body parts and the parts of a plant. They observe the local weather each day, and develop their understanding of time by sequencing pictures. Children learn to use a computer mouse to click onto the correct pictures on the computer screen. Children make good progress, and their levels of knowledge and understanding of the world match at least those expected for their age by the end of the reception year.

Physical development

67. When children join the nursery, their manipulative skills and co-ordination are usually typical for their age. Teachers provide many very good opportunities in both classes for children to develop better control and manipulative skills by using scissors, crayons and paintbrushes. They pour water and sand into containers, assemble construction toys, put jigsaws together and learn how to use scissors. More energetic activities often take place outside in the closely supervised play area. Here, children develop better co-ordination and balance on the climbing frame and large play equipment. The children co-operate happily, take turns and share equipment sensibly. They make good progress due to very good teaching and their physical development matches at least that expected by the end of the reception year.

Creative development

68. Very good teaching in both classes ensures that children make good progress in developing their creative skills. Children have access to a wide variety of paints, paper, card, fabrics and construction materials, and are encouraged to choose their own equipment sensibly. They make handprints and learn how to hold a brush correctly to paint homes and houses. They use tissue paper to make shapes to stick onto a collage, and use a variety of tactile resources to make string and spiral patterns. In one lesson, a child with special educational needs pasted pieces of wool and coloured paper onto card to create an interesting mask. During a lesson in the nursery, two boys used construction toys to make a garage, while two girls created the 'three bears' house'. Children in both classes enthusiastically sing a range of simple songs and nursery rhymes. They join in happily with the actions that often accompany the songs. As a result, children's artistic and musical skills match those expected for their age at the end of the reception year.

ENGLISH

69. Taken overall, the attainment of pupils now in Years 2 and 6 matches that expected for their age and their achievement is satisfactory. However, there is a marked difference between standards of reading and writing throughout the school and writing standards are below age related expectations. The school has identified this weakness and a good action plan is in place, which includes effective support from the EAZ. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Teaching assistants support their learning well in group tasks during the literacy lesson.
70. Pupils develop secure speaking and listening skills. Teachers promote speaking skills well, and most offer good models of spoken English, varying their speech to suit the changing situations that arise in lessons. Almost all pupils have good attitudes to learning and listen attentively. They learn to listen for different purposes. When working with partners, they exchange ideas equally and help each other. In Year 6, pupils use talk purposefully in small groups to discuss the features of humorous verse, for example. Teachers encourage speaking and listening by asking questions, setting group tasks or, as was seen in a very good Year 2 lesson, using drama as a stimulus for writing. The use of drama to support pupils' work in English is to be extended in the very near future through the work of the EAZ. The previous inspection reported opportunities for speaking as a weakness. In response, the school has extended the range of pupils' opportunities, for example in assemblies, 'circle-time', and through drama and discussion activities. The questioning techniques of teachers mainly encourage pupils to develop answers at a greater length and to use their developing vocabulary effectively.
71. In reading, pupils make satisfactory progress in learning basic skills, which they use satisfactorily to access different levels of meaning. Pupils in Year 2 benefit from systematic teaching of the patterns of relationship between sounds and letters. As a result, most pupils read simple texts accurately, and some with fluency and enjoyment. Very good teaching and routines, including homework, promote these basic skills and a growing knowledge of books. Year 2 pupils know how to distinguish fiction from non-fiction books and some know how to use an index. Throughout the school, pupils experience a range of quality texts, and this promotes positive attitudes to books and the habit of independent reading. By Year 6, pupils know how to choose and use books for different purposes, and are developing informed tastes and interests. They list their favourite authors and know why they prefer different types of books. Since the last inspection, good improvements in resources including library provision have created better opportunities for pupils to use a range of texts to support their learning. This range includes CD-ROM and the Internet.
72. In writing, achievement is satisfactory overall. Progress in handwriting is satisfactory and by Year 6 most pupils present their work well in a neat, fluent and fully-joined style. Where teachers have high expectations for example in Year 6, presentation is good, but this level of expectation is far from consistent in other junior classes, where standards sometimes decline. Spelling and punctuation also varies between classes. In Year 1 pupils learn to use capital letters and full stops and by Year 2 higher attaining pupils are writing simple sentences correctly punctuated. However, average and lower attaining pupils still need support in using simple punctuation correctly. Pupils in Year 2 are making satisfactory progress in learning to write creatively. Higher attaining pupils write imaginative and coherent stories that show increasing understanding of how stories work. For example, one pupil wrote a piece of persuasive writing arguing that it was grandmother who was bad not the wolf. Interesting phrases were used such as 'a blazing sunny day'. Other pupils are below this level. Average attaining pupils write more briefly and lower attaining pupils still

need adult help to record simple ideas. Most pupils spell simple words correctly and confidently 'have a go' at trying to spell more adventurous words. These they spell by sounding out the letters, for example, 'deesided' for 'decided'. The programme of work in literacy ensures that pupils learn the features and forms of different kinds of texts, such as autobiography, play script, argument and verse. However, Years 3 to 6 pupils do not always control length well, or understand how to vary sentence structures. Their oral work is far better than their written work. Independent writing in other subjects of the curriculum, for example history and geography shows insufficient attention is paid to handwriting, spelling and punctuation. By Year 6, higher attaining pupils use paragraphs and direct speech to develop the piece of writing but other pupils are less secure with the use of these devices. Some average attaining pupils confuse the use of 'their' and 'there'. Almost all pupils show evidence of use of good descriptive language for example 'trees howling in pain' during a hurricane. Pupils mainly spell words correctly and use a dictionary to check the spelling of words they are unsure of.

73. To raise standards, the school has introduced a weekly writing lesson for every class. This is a well-motivated and promising extension of the daily literacy lesson. It works hand-in-hand with a system of individual and specific learning targets. However, although pupils have specific writing targets they are rarely referred to during lessons and therefore they are having limited impact on improving the quality of pupils' writing. Similarly the quality of teachers' marking of pupils' written work has a limited impact on raising standards. For example, in one class all work had been marked thoroughly and the teacher's comments identified the gains that the pupils had made, and how to go on to make the next step. In another class, comments mainly related to effort or presentation. This prevents pupils from having a step-by-step record of their learning in relation to their targets. Planning for the use and development of writing skills in other subjects is not consistent and this leads to missed opportunities to improve writing quality. Teachers make increasing use of computers in English lessons. The EAZ has funded the use of six laptops for group work within the classroom. Sometimes this challenges pupils to compose and change their own texts on screen. At other times, however, the computer does not enhance the learning of the lesson and restricts progress rather than developing writing skills.
74. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are effectively promoted by this subject. Pupils are encouraged to work together, share ideas and respect other peoples' point of view. They learn to appreciate different writing styles and form opinions of why they like or dislike certain texts and authors. Cultural development is promoted through the use of texts from different cultures including poetry as was seen in Year 3 as pupils explored the form and structure of a haiku. Research opportunities allow pupils to find out more about different cultural traditions.
75. Taken overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Most of the lessons seen were satisfactory; some were good and in Years 2 and 6 they were very good. There was a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching but evidence of unsatisfactory teaching and learning over time is more evident in pupils' recorded work. All teachers value their pupils and manage them well. As a result, pupils' good behaviour, relationships, attitudes and effort steadily support their learning. In other respects, the quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent. A common shortcoming that hinders pupils' progress is unsatisfactory time management resulting in slow paced and unbalanced lessons, rushed conclusions to lessons. There is also too little use made of assessment information to ensure that work challenges pupils at their actual level of attainment. Published material does not always provide activities that are suitable to the attainment of pupils. This was seen in a Year 3 lesson

when a large number of pupils spent far too long practising handwriting joins. Homework is used satisfactorily to promote or extend learning in class and a homework club also supports this activity.

76. Leadership and management of the subject are good. Although only recently appointed, the subject co-ordinator has a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve provision and standards in this subject. A good action plan is in place. The school is very committed to improving standards in writing which it rightly has identified as an area of weakness. The National Literacy Strategy has been established and it has been adapted to suit the character of the school. Numerous national support strategies have been introduced to support pupils with difficulties in English. The literacy co-ordinator from the EAZ is working with target groups of pupils in Years 2 and 6 and this is having a marked impact on these pupils' progress and achievement. The quality of teaching of this teacher is also very good. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress, and for checking the quality of teaching and learning are in place. However although the intentions are good, the practice is in need of improvement. This is because these two sets of procedures need to work more closely together. The senior management team observes teaching in literacy lessons without assessing its impact on learning and they examine test results to identify where standards are weak, but not why in relation to the quality of teaching and learning. The subject co-ordinator has not had the opportunity to observe teaching although she has had the opportunity to examine teachers' planning and scrutinise pupils' work. The quality of resources is good and teachers use available resources well to promote pupils' learning. Overall there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

MATHEMATICS

77. Pupils' currently in Years 2 and 6 are attaining standards which match those expected for their age and their achievement is satisfactory. All pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. When pupils with special education needs are given additional support, their progress and achievement are good.
78. The school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy satisfactorily and teachers have adopted the structure and format of a numeracy lesson as suggested by the National Strategy and a mental mathematics session has become an integral part of every lesson. The Framework is used as the basis for planning, to ensure that learning is continuous throughout the school. However, one of the published resources used in most classes offers little challenge for more able pupils and in most lessons observed there was little evidence of challenge. Teachers, in the main, match work to pupils' needs by extending or simplifying the numbers with which pupils work. No account is taken of whether the pupil has learnt the concept and could, therefore, enhance their skills more constructively. This in part accounts for the low proportion of pupils achieving level 5 in the National Curriculum assessment tests taken at the end of Year 6 and their well below average performance based on their prior attainment.
79. Pupils cover a wide range of work during Years 1 and 2. By Year 2, the majority of pupils recognise, sequence and record numbers accurately to 100 and count confidently in 2s, 5s and 10s. They are beginning to use multiplication, using these values. They work with simple fractions and are able to produce some complex symmetrical patterns. They know the names of mathematical symbols and understand mathematical vocabulary, such as subtraction and minus. By Year 6, pupils demonstrate confidence in using a range of strategies for addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, across a range of numbers,

including decimals. Most pupils are secure in solving two-step problems and they are beginning to check their answers, sometimes by using a calculator. Pupils are growing in confidence in using percentages and fractions and are beginning to calculate percentages and fractions of quantities and measurements.

80. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. In a good Year 2 lesson, the teacher was aware of the prior knowledge of individual pupils and asked them direct and specific questions to assess their learning. She used a good range of resources to ensure full participation of pupils. During the mental starter, the classroom assistant was effectively observing and recording assessments for the lower attaining pupils. During the conclusion of the lesson, higher attaining pupils were asked to evaluate their learning by reporting upon how easy or difficult they found their tasks. In a good Year 6 lesson, there was a brisk pace and pupils were all using whiteboards providing an effective method for the teacher to assess the pupils' progress. During the main activity the pupils understood the process well because of the teacher's clear explanations and they used appropriate written methods to solve number problems. The pace of working was good and all pupils made good progress in their learning.
81. In all the lessons observed teachers displayed satisfactory subject knowledge and teaching of the basic skills. However, in most lessons, the conclusions to lessons were rushed and did not consolidate or enhance pupils' learning. Nor did they encourage pupils to participation in their own learning. Pupils' numeracy targets are inconsistently used throughout the school and little reference was made to them during the week of the inspection. Marking does not always effectively challenge pupils' mathematical thinking.
82. Pupils throughout the school show consistently good attitudes to their work in mathematics. Their behaviour is also good. Insufficient use is made of class based computers in mathematics lessons, although this has been identified on the school development plan as an area for improvement. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are effectively promoted by this subject. For example, pupils are encouraged to work together, share ideas and resources and respect each others' answers.
83. Pupils with special education needs make good progress when supported by teaching or classroom assistants. This is evident in the good Year 4 numeracy group lesson for the pupils with special educational needs. In this good lesson pupils were investigating statements about familiar numbers using cubes to construct shapes. This task followed the planned activities of their peers. The activity very effectively, developed the pupils' understanding of number. The teacher showed great perseverance and patience in ensuring all pupils were able to succeed.
84. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory with the subject co-ordinator having satisfactory knowledge of the subject's strengths and areas for development. This has enabled the co-ordinator to plan well to improve provision in order to raise standards of pupils' attainment. At present, individual methods of assessment and review are used. The co-ordinator is looking to make this more consistent across the school. National Curriculum test results are analysed appropriately by the co-ordinator to explore reasons for individual and group achievement. Teachers' plans and samples of pupils' work are part of the checking and evaluation aspects of the role and opportunities to undertake classroom observations of teaching and learning should also be provided. Resource provision is good and resources are used well by staff. Since the previous inspection there has been satisfactory improvement.

SCIENCE

85. Standards match those expected for Year 2 pupils and their achievement is satisfactory. In Year 6 pupils are also working at the expected level but a significant minority are working at a level higher than that expected for their age. This is because of the well-planned curriculum in Year 6, which gives very good opportunities for discussion and open-ended investigations. Pupils with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. There are good opportunities for more able pupils in Year 6 to be challenged in their thinking and achieve well. In Years 1 to 5 those with higher ability do not have learning tailored as adequately to their needs and the achievements of pupils with an aptitude for science should be better.
86. Year 2 pupils acquire appropriate scientific knowledge as they learn about electricity, health and food, forces and movement. They carry out simple investigations and record their findings in an appropriate way. Year 6 pupils investigate forces and friction by using devices to measure force. They discover that a brick, shoe or pencil tub can be pulled more easily on a smooth surface than a carpet. They read scales accurately and use their mathematical skills to work out the average of multiple readings on their Newton meters, which measure force. They understand the importance of making the test fair and work well together. They hold a very good quality discussion about forces of gravity and understand the difference between gravity on the earth and on the moon. They research information and produce informative posters using facts about gravity which they have discovered on the internet.
87. The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory. There is very good teaching in Year 6. Teaching in all but one year group is satisfactory. In a Year 4 lesson, teaching and learning were unsatisfactory as pupils' misconceptions and mistakes were not satisfactorily addressed. Pupils mistakenly reached the conclusion that salt was a liquid. This misconception was left unidentified by the teacher and consequently pupils learnt incorrect information. In Years 3 to 5 the over use of worksheets limits the higher attaining pupils by the constraints of the answers required. This means that they fail to achieve as well as they should. In Year 6 where teaching and learning is at its best, open-ended investigations, effective questioning and very good opportunities for discussion enable pupils to be challenged in their thinking and to achieve well. Safety issues are highlighted and a brisk pace is maintained. There are high expectations of pupils and links to mathematics and information and communication technology are successfully implemented. Links to literacy are evident in all pupils' recorded work from Years 1 to 6 but there are few recorded links to other subjects. Pupils show good attitudes to the subject in particular when they are given opportunities to investigate and explore independently and they usually co-operate well in pairs or groups. The quality of their discussion has improved since the last inspection. Behaviour overall is good with older pupils showing good concentration but the presentation of pupils' work is variable. The standard of writing in all year groups is mainly below that expected for the pupils' age. Marking by teachers is not consistent across the school and it seldom identifies what it is that pupils need to do next to improve the quality of their work. Conclusions to lessons are not always used effectively to assess how well pupils have learnt and progressed in their scientific thinking.
88. The use of visits, for example, to Sankey Valley to study habitats or Martin Mere Wildfowl Trust, enhance the quality of teaching and learning and promote spiritual development. Social development is effectively promoted when pupils are given opportunities to

undertake investigative science and discuss their findings. The study of scientists such as Newton and his discovery of gravity enable pupils to recognise how scientific discoveries affect the way people think and believe.

89. Leadership and management are good. The science co-ordinator sets a good example in lessons but other teachers are not benefiting from observing these in order to improve their own skills. The subject co-ordinator has updated the policy and programme of work, based on national guidelines and secure assessment procedures are in place. Test results and teachers' planning are carefully monitored and evaluated and consequently the lack of investigative science has been highlighted and training given to staff. The co-ordinator, has however, not yet been given time to observe lessons and form a clear view on the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. This also means that the school is unable to monitor the impact of the training on teaching and whether it is satisfactory value for money. Resources are good and adequately support learning but there is insufficient use of information and communication technology in all classes apart from Year 6. There has been good improvement in many aspects of science since the last inspection but there is still much to be done to raise standards in the teaching and learning across the school and subsequently achieve a consistently satisfactory proportion of Level 5 results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6.

ART AND DESIGN

90. Standards match those expected for pupils of their age by Years 2 and 6 and achievement is satisfactory. Pupils' attitudes to art and design are very good and pupils respond very well in lessons especially in Year 2. Pupils with special needs are given good support and this helps them make good progress. Where teaching is good and pupils are well managed, pupils work effectively together in pairs or groups and develop good social skills.
91. Pupils in Year 1 paint portraits of themselves, mixing two colours of paint to make a new colour. Pupils in Year 2 have produced good large-scale paintings of characters from stories. They mix colours to make flesh tones and select different size brushes for different purposes. Good links with literacy are maintained by painting scenes from stories for covers of their own "Big Books". The quality of this work is good. In Year 4, pupils make patterns from symmetrical designs using a computer program. This was one of the few examples of the use of information and communication technology. Pupils in Year 5 use clay to make clay pots linked to a geography topic on Kenya and have looked at some painting of still life pictures by famous artists and discussed their similarities and differences. In Year 6, pupils paint portraits of "mood" having studied famous paintings showing different moods. They also use a range of materials to make mixed-media collages.
92. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall but is very good for pupils in Year 2. Where teaching is very good, rich and stimulating provision provides a range of interesting activities for all pupils. In this lesson on texture, Year 2 pupils in each group were provided with a range of interesting objects including peacock feathers, cones, shells, rocks, leaves and magnifying glasses to observe them in detail. The pupils were well behaved due to the teachers' very good classroom management and made very good progress. They described the colours, patterns and textures and made simple sketches in preparation for detailed sketches in the next lesson. The pupils co-operated well with each other and the teacher made good assessments of learning by discussing progress with each group of pupils. Good use was made of the teaching assistant who was also involved in this assessment process.

Where teaching was unsatisfactory as in one Year 3 lesson, too little was expected of the pupils. The time allowed for the lesson was far too long and the colouring of photocopied patterns was not an appropriate activity for these pupils. The pupils became bored and lost interest in the activity. Progress in this lesson was unsatisfactory.

93. Curricular opportunities are satisfactory with evidence of good practice in Year 6. In Year 6 there is good evidence of the use of the immediate environment but in other year groups there could be more use of this resource as a stimulus for future work. Whilst the range of resources for teaching art and design are generally satisfactory, there are some deficiencies. The range of planned activities is limited and there is an over-emphasis on two-dimensional work. The range of art materials available and processes used is narrow. Little art was seen which acknowledged the art of other times in history or other cultures. Provision for pupils with special needs is good and there is equal opportunity for all pupils to take part in lessons.
94. The leadership and management of the subject coordinator are satisfactory although there has been limited opportunity to monitor and evaluate the teaching of this subject. The subject reflects the ethos of the school well. Whilst there are some good links with other subjects, this could be further developed. The policy document for art and design is good as are the graded assessment sheets which inform well how pupils are progressing. There is insufficient use of information and communication technology in this subject. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' social and moral development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

95. Although no lessons were seen during the inspection, evidence from pupils' work, teachers' planning and displays of work indicate that attainment of pupils in Years 2 and 6 match those expected for pupils of their age. Pupils' achievement overall is satisfactory. This represents overall good improvement since the last inspection. No judgements can be made about teaching as no lessons were observed during the inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress due to the quality of the support and high expectations. Particular care was taken in one class where furniture was used to allow all pupils access to the activities in the lessons.
96. The pupils in Year 1 use a range of fruits to make a fruit kebab. They plan their work satisfactorily and make comments on the success of the finished product. Pupils in Year 2 have made good quality vehicles with working axles. The teacher displayed a large model with essential vocabulary to support pupils in their written work. The pupils evaluated the finished model sensibly and suggested appropriate improvements. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding in most aspects of the subject as they move from Year 3 to Year 6. Pupils in Year 3 have made photograph frames of various designs. They select a variety of materials to make their frames. Some have brought pictures of themselves from home and some have taken photographs of themselves using a digital camera. This was one of the rare examples seen of the use of information and communication technology in design and technology. Pupils in Year 4 identify a range of functions and design for chairs. The teacher has made a large display of photographs of chairs from magazines, which provides an interesting source of discussion for pupils. Pupils successfully identify the materials used for different kinds of chairs and comment on their function such as deck chairs, wheelchair and high chair. The teacher provided a simple planning sheet for pupils to sketch their initial designs and to write about the range of chairs. They sketched their proposed designs and made an appropriate

selection of tools and materials before construction. Pupils in Year 6 recognise the conflicts between cost, function and fashion when designing a pair of slippers. They select appropriate materials and sketch their initial designs. These were very detailed and showed each stage of the making process. They showed flair and imagination in their designs and an awareness of how the finished product would be used.

97. Although the work in design and technology is satisfactory some aspects require improvement. The standards of written work are not satisfactory except in Years 2 and 6. It was evident that insufficient attention had been paid to the quality of layout and presentation. In several instances, teachers had not insisted that pupils use a ruler when drawing grids and charts. Also there is an insufficient use of information and communication technology in the subject. The subject co-ordinator is aware of this and has attended courses with a view to planning developments in this area.
98. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good by the end of Year 2 and satisfactory by the end of Year 6. There is a satisfactory supply of tools and equipment for design and technology and sufficient time is devoted to it. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and the school is successful in ensuring all pupils can take part in lessons. Teachers keep a record sheet of pupil's progress but there are inconsistencies in how this information is subsequently used to plan future work. The subject provides a good contribution to pupils' moral and social development as pupils are encouraged to share ideas and resources and to evaluate their own and each others' finished products.
99. The subject co-ordinator ensures that the subject is planned to a nationally agreed programme of work and leadership and management are satisfactory. There is a policy and useful programme of work outlining the progression of skills through the school. At the end of the year the co-ordinator appropriately produces a review of the subject and priorities are fed into the school development plan. However, there is insufficient time for the co-ordinator to monitor the subject in any depth, especially the quality of teaching and learning. Resource provision is good.

GEOGRAPHY

100. Standards match those expected for pupils of their age in Years 2 and 6 and the school has maintained these standards since the previous inspection. By Year 2, pupils describe accurately the main features of their local environment and express their views on what it is like to live there. They are aware of appropriate geographical vocabulary such as hill, mountain and river, and use these terms in relation to features in the locality. Year 1 pupils linked their work to a literacy topic based on "Rosie's walk around school". Pupils had walked round school and used simple map symbols to describe different areas. Year 2 pupils continue the work on developing mapping skills and describe a journey to Ruthin in Wales. They use and understand a range of map symbols and use compass points to describe direction: "You get to Ruthin by going south and west". They consider environmental issues and study traffic congestion and pollution in city centres. Pupils use a simple grid to give two figure map references. A wide range of geography topics is studied in Year 2.
101. In Year 3, pupils continue to develop their knowledge of maps and correctly name countries in different parts of the world. They name the main rivers and mountain ranges of the British Isles and have studied the journey of a river in detail using appropriate geographical

terms such as source, tributary and meander. Further work on rivers is done in Year 4 and pupils locate the sources of the main British rivers and draw them on a map. A field study has been undertaken and pupils have studied a local river, Sankey Brook. Year 5 pupils contrast life in the locality with life in the Derbyshire Peak District. They have studied life in Kenya as an example of a developing country. Discussions with pupils in Year 6 showed they had a great enthusiasm for geography. In this class, they study environmental change through flooding. Weather and climate are studied in detail. Pupils use detailed weather symbols to mark a weather map. Pupils study the town of Plymouth and describe the reasons behind the changes from 1600 to the present time. They draw good maps with descriptive keys to support their work.

102. Pupils' attitudes to geography are good and they particularly enjoy field studies. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress especially when supported by an additional adult. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection. Teaching in this lesson was satisfactory. The lesson was well planned and a range of resources were used to enable pupils to research life and physical features of St Lucia. Pupils could use the content and index to locate information. Good use was made of the Internet to find information but even the more able pupils did not select or organise the information they had found. Whilst the standard of the geographical work was satisfactory the standards of written work were not. Insufficient attention was paid to the quality of handwriting, spelling and punctuation. Overall teachers' expectations pupils are not sufficiently high for the more able pupils and more could be expected of them. Marking focused too much on the grammatical features and was rarely used to develop or extend geographical thinking even for the most able pupils. Insufficient use was made of information technology to support teaching and learning in geography.
103. Good links are made with music and art as a means to study other countries and cultures. A display of work in the school hall showed figures in national costume alongside paintings and models of musical instruments from various countries; a guitar from Spain, Peruvian pan pipes, a sitar and flutes from India and a Welsh harp. This helps pupils identify types of music with their source country. Other links with other subjects were seen in Year 5 when pupils made clay pots and secret boxes as part of their topic on Kenya. The subject promotes pupils' moral, social and cultural development well.
104. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Although the subject coordinator was absent at the time of the inspection, information was gathered from interviews with the headteacher. There is a useful programme of work based on nationally agreed guidelines in place and this is used well to ensure that learning is continuous throughout the school. The coordinator presents a formal review of the subject at the end of the year and strengths and areas for development identified for improvement feeds into the school improvement plan. Monitoring and the evaluation of the impact of teaching upon learning is an area for improvement. Teachers complete an assessment sheet to show how pupils have responded to what has been taught but it is unclear how these assessments have an impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Resource provision is satisfactory.

HISTORY

105. Standards match those expected for pupils of their age in Years 2 and 6. This is the same judgement reached at the previous inspection. Although there is satisfactory progress by the end of Years 2 and 6 there is an inconsistency in standards and progress between

- individual classes. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress by the end of Year 6. Teachers manage these pupils well and make good use of the supporting adults.
106. In Year 1, pupils know the differences between houses in the 1940's and the present day. They use timelines to show how homes have developed through time and by Year 2 pupils know about famous people for example, Mary Seacole and about life in Victorian times. In Year 4 pupils have a sense of chronology using time lines as they study the ancient Egyptians. They divide events into the Old, Middle and New Kingdoms and know the dates associated with each period. They list the similarities and differences between life in ancient Egypt and the present day. In Year 6, pupils use old photographs and artefacts as sources of evidence to find out more about the Victorians.
107. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and is very good in Year 2. In a very good Year 2 lesson, the teacher had high expectations of all pupils and the good use of the Internet meant pupils' learning progressed at a very good pace. Although the level of questioning was demanding, the pupils were capable of good responses. Pupils effectively followed up the lesson with some homework involving personal research. Where teaching is satisfactory, the learning intentions are not clearly expressed and the level of demand is less challenging. However, pupils' attitudes to the subject are good and pupils enjoy history. In some classes, good use is made of the local glass museum for historical enquiry. At this museum, pupils gain first hand experience of historical development and use a range of sources of information such as artefacts, and original documents to study change and development.
108. Written work in history is unsatisfactory. Standards of presentation overall show limitations in how pupils present their work. Insufficient attention is paid to handwriting, spelling and punctuation. Limited use was made of graphs, charts and other forms of visual presentation. Comments in the marking focused mainly on praise or reinforcement of learning and rarely is marking used to pose challenging historical questions or extend pupils' historical knowledge. Good use is made of information and communication technology, for example, CD-ROMs and the Internet to support teaching and learning in history.
109. Although the subject coordinator was absent at the time of the inspection, interviews with the headteacher showed the leadership and management of history to be satisfactory. The school has an appropriate programme of work based on nationally agreed guidelines. A formal review of the subject is undertaken at the end of the year and the information obtained is fed into the school development plan. Teachers complete an assessment sheet to show how pupils have responded to what has been taught but it is unclear what impact this is having on the quality of teaching and learning. The quality of learning opportunities is satisfactory. Monitoring and the evaluation of the impact of teaching upon learning is an area for improvement. Although overall resources are satisfactory the school is aware of the need to improve historical artefacts. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

110. Standards attained by Year 2 and Year 6 pupils match those expected for their age. In Year 6 a significant number of pupils attain at a higher level. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. However, pupils are not making enough use of their information and communication technology (ICT) skills in the different subjects of the National Curriculum. Pupils make satisfactory progress in ICT from Years 1 to 5 but in

Year 6 the progress and achievement of the majority of pupils are good. The more able pupils in Year 6 are making very good progress and have acquired good skills in a variety of programs. Pupils with special educational needs when supported by an adult also make good progress.

111. The school's provision for this subject has significantly improved since the last inspection. This is mainly as a result of the installation of the ICT suite, the purchase of a satisfactory range of software and the extra opportunities provided for pupils at the City Learning Centre.
112. By Year 2, pupils can word-process using different fonts and produce graphic images using paint and draw programs. They use database programs to draw graphs that link to their mathematics work. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils can access the Internet to research information about gravity and cut and paste information to make posters about work in science on forces. They use the multimedia program 'PowerPoint' to design the first few pages of the pupil section of the existing school website. They organise, refine and present information in different forms; they can also incorporate pictures and text. Their learning is enhanced by their motivation and enthusiasm and those pupils of higher ability use their skills effectively to work faster than their peers. This means that they progress well in the amount of work they achieve during the lesson.
113. Teaching overall is satisfactory with some very good teaching in Year 6 as a result of the expertise and enthusiasm of the class teacher. He is able to set up very challenging tasks, which take full account of the needs of more able pupils. Teachers show satisfactory subject knowledge and make full use of the interactive whiteboards in their teaching. In Years 2 and 6 very good use is made of the interactive whiteboards to support pupils' learning. However, insufficient use is made of opportunities for pupils to use their classroom computers which often remain untouched during lessons. The involvement of the community in the teaching and learning of ICT is very good through the use of the City Learning Centre. There are good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development for example as pupils work together and share ideas in Year 1 when pupils edited pieces of writing and in Year 4 when pupils researched information about other countries using the Internet.
114. The leadership and management of ICT by the two subject co-ordinators are good. They have written and carried out useful action plans to improve provision and this is a major factor in the improvement of standards from the last inspection. The constructiveness of the relationships with partner institutions also means that there are opportunities for the school to raise standards even further. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are satisfactory although there has been limited opportunity for the co-ordinators to observe teaching in this subject. Resource provision is good.

MUSIC

115. Standards in music match those expected for their age by Year 2 and are above those expected for their age by Year 6. Progress throughout the school is good for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. The good range of curricular and extra-curricular activities provided by school, for example musical performances, the choir, orchestra and recorder activities give opportunities for those pupils with a talent for music to achieve well. Parents can enjoy music at the harvest festival and concerts at Easter,

Christmas and the summer. Recent highlights were the school's millennium concert, which involved the whole community and the Young World concerts in Manchester.

116. Pupils by Year 2 sing tunefully with a sweet tone, clear words and rhythm. They enjoy their singing and know some songs by heart. Year 5 pupils listen to music and describe the style of playing, for example, as exciting or dramatic. From a video excerpt of the overture and opening scene to Mozart's 'Magic Flute' they recognise orchestral instruments and that there are repeating musical patterns in the overture and an aria. Years 5 and 6 pupils begin to learn songs from 'Jesus Christ Super Star' by Andrew Lloyd Webber for their Easter performance and make very good attempts to sing the complex rhythms and melodies.
117. The quality of teaching and learning of music is good. The use of two skilled musicians to teach most of the music enhances the quality of learning. Their skilled accompaniments and tuneful voices support the teaching of music and enable pupils to achieve good standards, particularly in singing and the playing of the recorder. Teaching assistants unobtrusively enable all pupils, including those with special educational needs to be fully involved in lessons. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and they use the correct musical vocabulary for example, quavers or rhythm. Their management of pupils is good. Conclusions at the end of lessons do not reflect and revise sufficiently well what has been taught which means it is difficult for pupils to know how to improve their singing, listening or playing.
118. The quality and range of learning opportunities for music are good. The extra funding provided by the EAZ enables the purchase of more instruments and the music workshops at the local high school adds much to the pupils' musical experiences. Visiting performers, visits to the theatres and pantomimes, events such as the Guinness World Record Sing all help to develop enjoyment in performing and performances and help pupils appreciate the world of music. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are well provided for by good opportunities for listening, analysing and evaluating music both in assembly and in lessons. They develop socially by sharing their music making and are encouraged to develop morally by valuing their own performances and those of others.
119. The leadership and management of music are good. The two co-ordinators are gifted musicians who use their talents to the benefits of the children's learning. They have revised the scheme of work since the last inspection and this is a good improvement. Resources for music are good and they are used effectively to support pupils' learning.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

120. As only three lessons were seen during the week of the inspection, two of which were in Year 1 and one in Year 3, it is not possible to make a secure judgement on standards, achievement or the quality of teaching and learning in this subject.
121. In Years 1 and 2 all lessons are taken by one of the joint co-ordinators for the subject. In a good Year 1 dance lesson, the teacher had good subject knowledge and high expectations of the pupils and what they could achieve. Pupils were constantly reminded about the learning of the lesson. The planning of the lessons was thorough, with clear learning identified that linked to suitably challenging activities. The teacher set a good example by dressing appropriately and, as a result, was able to demonstrate techniques in an effective way. This was particularly evident in the lesson when pupils were learning to put together a sequence of movements to music. All pupils were able to vary their actions in response to the music

and some were able to produce quality movements showing good examples of skills and activities being linked together. There is suitable emphasis placed on the teaching of basic skills, as was seen in another very good Year 1 lesson where pupils were balancing on different body parts. In this lesson, pupils were able to demonstrate the ability to move in a variety of ways, on different pieces of equipment such as benches, mats and padded low beams, with a suitable awareness of space. Pupils co-operated well and recognised the need for safety when moving or using equipment. It is testimony to the teacher's very good class management skills that a pupil with special educational needs was fully included in this lesson, with an extra adult for support. In lessons pupils are encouraged to make simple judgements and discuss what they and others have done.

122. In the Year 1 lessons observed, pupils' attitudes to learning were good, showing enjoyment and enthusiasm in their activities. In a lesson, in Year 3 where attitudes were unsatisfactory the music chosen was inappropriate for the task set and this resulted in pupils becoming over-excited and silly in their response. As pupils move through the school the boys and girls are provided with a wide range of activities, giving them confidence and opportunities to learn from each other. The older pupils have the opportunity to attend swimming lessons on a regular basis resulting in the majority of pupils able to swim at least 25metres by Year 6.
123. The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to all pupils. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good, with many extra-curricular opportunities available. Pupils are offered a range of enjoyable activities including athletics, gymnastics, rugby, cricket, netball, rounders and hockey. An orienteering course is planned for and is being built during the summer term. A residential trip to the Kingswood centre takes place each year. Pupils also have the opportunity to pay for outside tuition in judo and dance. There is a good match of teachers to the curriculum and all teaching staff are trained appropriately. The school is at present working towards an Active Mark Gold award in the light of all their sporting activities, whilst competitive team games serve to enrich the subject curriculum. Provision is enhanced by the use of outside agencies, such as the football coach from a local professional football club, an Olympic gymnast coming into school and its links with a local rugby club. The EAZ project funds extra sessions of dance for pupils. The subject contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
124. The leadership and management of the subject are good. One of the joint subject co-ordinators is a link teacher for the schools sport co-ordinator programme. During the week of the inspection she was invited to become a trainer for other schools in her subject. Together with her expertise she has also brought an enthusiasm for the subject and, together with the subject co-ordinator for Years 3 to 6, they have a good, effective overview of the subject priorities and action needed to achieve these targets. Programmes of work are regularly reviewed, resulting in new programmes for gymnastics, games and dance introduced into school. Continuity and progression is enhanced by the fact that the Years 1 and 2 co-ordinator teaches all the lessons in those year groups. There is opportunity for assessment in the subject by support staff in the lessons and the monitoring and evaluation of teaching in the subject are satisfactory. The accommodation is satisfactory. Although the hall is smaller than would normally be seen in a school of this size this does not adversely affect the activities of the pupils. A large storage safe has been purchased, but not yet fitted, to house much of the equipment stored round the hall at present, giving much needed extra room. Learning resources are good and are used well. Tokens are collected and grant monies, from external sources, have been well used in this

area. The current provision shows that the school has made good improvement since the last inspection.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

125. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 are working at the level expected for their age as set out in the locally agreed syllabus and their achievement and progress are satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs, when supported, make good progress. This represents a decline since the previous inspection, when standards of attainment and progress for all pupils were judged to be good.
126. The teaching of the subject is satisfactory overall. There is good structure to most of the lessons seen, particularly for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and teachers are skilled in questioning their pupils in order to assess their understanding. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop an understanding of respecting other people's feelings through listening and discussing stories. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils were discussing a pig's attitude to rules, from the story book 'A Word in Pig's Ear'. Pupils were able to articulate well where and why rules were needed and how people would feel. Pupils in Year 2 talk at length about the celebrations of Christmas, Easter and birthdays, but have little knowledge of other faiths' celebrations at this stage. They discuss special people and work shows how pupils have reflected on who is special to them. Pupils make visits to the local church for Christian celebrations and during the week of the inspection a visit to the church gave pupils a good understanding of why the church is a special place to worship. This visit impacted well on the pupils' learning. In a good lesson in Year 2, pupils were very motivated to learn new things and showed real pleasure in recounting their new knowledge and understanding of the Church. By Year 6, pupils can reflect on their own faith and beliefs and discuss them articulately. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the main parts of a Christian church and display some knowledge and understanding of other faiths such as Hinduism and Islam. Throughout the school, pupils show a good level of interest in religious education and their behaviour is good. Pupils value the contributions of others and listen well. This was particularly evident in the lessons seen in Years 1 and 2 where pupils listened attentively to their peers.
127. The breadth and balance of the curriculum is good and pupils' learning experiences are enhanced by the good links with the local community. The local vicar is a regular visitor to the school and takes assemblies regularly. At present, visitors to the school usually represent the Christian faith, despite attempts by the subject co-ordinator to involve visitors from other faiths. There are few opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology to support their learning in the classroom. Written marking is not used effectively to identify what the pupils do well or how they can improve the quality of their work.
128. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. There is a good policy and scheme of work in place, which appropriately follows the recommendations of the locally agreed syllabus. The co-ordinator has produced an action plan which assesses the needs of the subject well. The subject is monitored and evaluated by talking to pupils, looking at pupils' books and scrutinising teachers' planning. There has been limited opportunity to observe teachers teaching this subject. Resource provision has improved since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory. The subject contributes effectively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.