

INSPECTION REPORT

LYME COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Newton-le-Willows

LEA area: St. Helens

Unique reference number: 104776

Headteacher: Mrs. C. Winstanley

Reporting inspector: Dr. B. Blundell
23868

Dates of inspection: 24th - 27th February 2003

Inspection number: 246407
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: Lyme Street,
Newton-le-Willows
Postcode: WA12 9HD

Telephone number: 01925 225657

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr. R. H. Knight

Date of previous inspection: N/A

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23868	Dr. B. Blundell	Registered inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Educational inclusion	What sort of a school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
31713	Mr. S. Roberts	Lay inspector		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? Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
23204	Ms. C. Wojtak	Team inspector	English Art and design Religious education Special educational needs English as an additional language.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

17913	Mr. B. Frost	Team Inspector	The Foundation Stage Geography History Music Physical education	
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London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Lyme Community Primary School is a new primary school for boys and girls, aged three to 11, situated in Newton-le-Willows, Merseyside. It was formed in 1999, following the closure of The Manor C of E Junior School. It was formerly Lyme Community Infants' School and catered for nursery and infant children age three to seven. There are 173 pupils on roll, including 13 children in the nursery. The ethnic background of the pupils is largely white with United Kingdom heritage, with a number of pupils being white with other backgrounds, Indian, mixed backgrounds and black with African heritages. Five pupils have English as an additional language; the major language spoken by these pupils is Yoruba. However, none of these children is in the early stages of acquiring English. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Both the percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs and the proportion with statements of special needs are broadly average. The nature of pupils' special needs includes moderate and severe learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties, and autism. Pupil mobility is relatively high. Whilst there is a wide range of attainment on entry, overall, it is generally well below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The overall effectiveness of the school is good. Standards for pupils currently aged 11 are below the national expectation in English, but match national expectations in mathematics and science. The overall quality of teaching is good and leadership and management by the headteacher are outstanding. The school is providing good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in all subjects except English and information and communication technology (ICT) match national expectations for pupils aged 11 in English, standards are below national expectations but in ICT, they are above.
- Leadership and management by the headteacher are excellent.
- The overall quality of teaching is good, with a high proportion of it being very good.
- Pupils' attitudes are very good, as are relationships; behaviour is good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The school cares very well for its pupils; the tracking of their academic progress is excellent.

What could be improved

- In order to raise standards further, the school should continue to raise standards in English by
- improving the opportunities for developing pupils' wider reading, by increasing library provision and by fostering a love for books from the earliest age,
 - ensuring that pupils are fully aware of their targets, and are crystal clear about what they need to do to improve further,
 - providing more opportunities for extended writing across the curriculum.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

This new school has not previously been inspected.

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	E	D	E	C
mathematics	E	D	E	C
science	E*	D	E	C

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

In the national tests in 2002 for 11 year olds, pupils' attainment was well below national averages in English, mathematics and science. However, compared with schools of a similar type, pupils' results were average in all three subjects. Over the three years from 2000 to 2002 taken together, pupils have left the school approximately six months behind pupils nationally in English, mathematics, and science. The trend in results at the end of the junior phase, up to 2002, cannot be compared with the trend in results nationally, because there is not a full set of data for this new school. Nonetheless, the school's targets are very ambitious.

Standards at the end of the infant phase in 2002 were above the national average in reading, average in writing and well above average in mathematics. Compared to schools of a similar type, pupils' attainment was well above average in reading, writing and in mathematics. Standards in the teacher assessments in science matched national averages in 2002. Over the three years from 2000 to 2002 taken together, pupils have left the infant phase approximately one term ahead of pupils nationally in reading and in mathematics, and half a term ahead in writing.

In the work seen during the inspection, standards for pupils aged 11 were below national expectations in English, and in line with national expectations in mathematics and science. Standards for pupils aged seven matched national expectations in reading, mathematics and science, but were just below in writing. For pupils aged seven and 11 in information and communication technology, standards were above national expectations; they met national expectations in design and technology, geography, history, physical education, music and art and design. Standards in religious education broadly met the requirements of the local agreed syllabus in religious education for pupils aged seven and 11. The majority of children aged five, whilst making good progress, are not all set to meet the majority of the Early Learning Goals. (The Early Learning Goals are the nationally expected standards for children at the end of the Foundation Stage.)

Pupils' achievement is good overall. Standards at this school are not yet sufficiently high at the end of the junior phase, but this is on course to improve in 2004.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to the school are very good. Pupils are enthusiastic, keen to talk about their work and explain what they are learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour, both in and out of the classrooms, is good. In assemblies, pupils listen attentively; they play harmoniously in the school playground.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is good; relationships are very good, both between pupils and with adults.
Attendance	Whilst pupils' attendance in the last full year was well below average, current attendance levels have improved and are broadly average. Levels of unauthorised absence have also improved from being average to now being minimal.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Particular strengths in teaching include the very helpful manner in which teachers share the purpose of most lessons carefully with their pupils, most especially in literacy and numeracy. Teachers' planning in literacy and numeracy in particular is very good. Management of children under five is very good. The overall quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good. The skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught.

The school meets the needs of all its pupils appropriately.

Particular strengths in pupils' learning include their interest and concentration; they generally **want** to learn.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of the curriculum are good in the foundation stage and throughout the infant and junior phases.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils' individual education plans are sharply targeted to their specific needs. Statements for pupils with special needs are very good; they are well written and promote very effective learning.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is good. No pupils are at an early stage in the acquisition of English and so this is not a factor in these pupils' learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' personal development is good. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good and for both their moral and social development, it is very good. Cultural development is satisfactorily provided for.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school's care for its pupils is very good.

The school works well in partnership with parents. A particular strength in the curricular opportunities offered to pupils is the provision of French. All areas of the curriculum meet statutory requirements. Procedures for child protection are very good. The school's tracking of pupils' academic progress is excellent.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management by the headteacher are excellent. She knows all her pupils extremely well indeed and wants the very best for them. The deputy headteacher manages special educational needs very effectively.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities well. The chair of governors, who is regularly in the school, is well known by staff and pupils alike.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school's evaluation of its performance is very good and thorough.
The strategic use of resources	The school's strategic use of resources is good. They use their resources well to support pupils' learning.

The adequacy of staffing is good. Whilst the accommodation is well maintained by the school caretaker and cleaners, some aspects of it are unsatisfactory. Currently, the four junior classes are located in mobile classrooms, with no additional space for them to move into for small group teaching. The library is inadequate, and the reception class has no direct access from the classroom to the outdoor play area. The very proficient learning support assistants work effectively and seamlessly with class teachers. Mid-day assistants help ensure the smooth running of the lunchtime break. Learning resources are good overall and support pupils' learning. The school applies the principles of best value very well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems. • Their children are making good progress and the school expects them to work hard. • Teaching is good. • Their children like school. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents would like to see a greater range of activities outside lessons.

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views; it finds the range of extra-curricular activities to be appropriate.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. **Until recently, a number of higher attaining pupils left the former Lyme Infants School at the age of seven and did not transfer to the associated junior school. The creation of Lyme Community Primary School has broken this pattern, but it will be 2004 before national test results at the age of 11 cease to reflect this loss. This needs to be borne in mind when reading about the school's results.**
2. **Children enter the nursery** with levels of attainment that are generally well below average. They make good progress and then proceed to the reception class. **In the reception class**, the children are assessed to see what they know, understand and can do; social and physical skills are also noted. This is known as the baseline test. The intake in 2002, whilst covering the full range of attainment, was judged to be well below average overall and this was broadly typical of other years.
3. **By the age of five, near to the end of their time in reception**, children are again assessed against national standards known as the Early Learning Goals. Not all of the children currently in reception are set to attain the majority of these goals.
4. **At the age of seven, close to the end of their time in Year 2**, pupils take the end of infant phase national tests in reading, writing and mathematics. The pupils who sat these tests in 2002 obtained levels that were above the national average in reading, average in writing and well above average in mathematics. Their attainment when compared to that of schools of a similar type was well above average in reading, writing and in mathematics. Those who took the tests in 2001 attained standards that were average in reading, below average in writing and above average in mathematics. Taking the results over the last three years from 2000 to 2002, averaged together, pupils' performance has been approximately one term ahead of the national averages in reading and in mathematics and half a term ahead in writing. In mathematics, boys have performed a little better than girls, with the reverse being the case in reading and writing.
5. **Inspectors find that pupils currently in Year 2, who will take their national tests in May, 2003, are reaching average standards in reading, mathematics and science, but just below average in writing.** Nonetheless the school's strategies to improve writing are already making an impact. Speaking and listening are being appropriately developed and meet national expectations. Standards in information and communication technology exceed national expectations. In art and design, geography, history, design and technology, music and physical education, standards meet national expectations.
6. **By the age of 11, near to the end of Year 6**, pupils take the end of junior phase national tests in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' performance in the 2002 tests in terms of national curriculum points scores was well below average in English, mathematics and science. It was average in English, in mathematics and in science, when compared with that of pupils in schools of a similar type. This group of pupils spent one year at a junior school that closed before returning to the new Lyme Primary School. Taking the three years from 2000 to 2002 together, pupils have left the junior phase around six months behind pupils nationally in English, mathematics, and

science. This does not necessarily mean that pupils' performance has gone backwards during the junior phase as other factors need to be taken into consideration. For example, when considering those pupils who took their tests in 1997 at the age of seven and then went on to sit the end of junior phase tests in 2001, or those who sat their tests as seven year olds in 1998 and then sat tests at the age of 11 in 2002, the results show that pupils have made satisfactory progress overall.

7. **Inspectors find that pupils currently in Year 6** are working at average standards in mathematics and science, but below average standards overall in English. Whilst pupils' speaking and listening skills are being appropriately developed and reach national expectations, reading and writing are below national expectations. Older pupils lack adequate library provision because when this new primary school was created, the only library provision it inherited was that of the former infants school; this inhibits wider reading. Extended writing across other areas of the curriculum is under-developed. Nonetheless, the quality and quantity of work in their books show that pupils have made good progress over the last 12 months in English, mathematics and science. As with pupils lower down the school, standards in information and communications technology exceed national expectations. Standards of attainment in physical education, art and design, history, design and technology, music and geography meet national expectations.
8. **This is the first inspection of this new school and so comparisons cannot be made with previous inspections.**
9. Pupils are generally achieving well, considering their prior attainments. Pupils achieve well in relation to their targets, and pupils with statements of special educational needs make very good progress and achieve their targets.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils show very good attitudes to school and their work. They attend school enthusiastically and enjoy participating in all aspects of school life, including extra-curricular activities. All parents and carers who returned the questionnaire agreed that their children like school. Most are confident and motivated learners and respond extremely well, especially to interesting and stimulating teaching strategies. Pupils are keen to join in, follow instructions well, and tasks are completed with pride.
11. The behaviour of the pupils, in class and around school, is good at all times. They are clear about what is expected from them and react in a positive manner to the school's disciplinary rules. The good standard of behaviour achieved as a direct result of high teacher expectations enhances their learning and contributes to the standards achieved. Close links are established between the class teacher and parents to monitor pupils with specific behavioural difficulties. This is successfully improving the behaviour and attitude of these pupils, and encouraging overall improvements in school.
12. Relationships within the school are very good, and are one of the outstanding strengths of this urban school. It is the key to the friendliness of the school and its family atmosphere. The pupils quickly distinguish right from wrong, understand the importance of rules in a social environment, and realise the effect their actions have on others. They respect their teachers and learn from them to be kind, polite and courteous to each other. During lunchtime, conversations with junior pupils result in lengthy and confident discussions, and they are able to elaborate easily on topics

raised. They are noticeably friendly and forthright to visitors, and respect the feelings, values and beliefs of others.

13. The personal development of pupils is good. Older pupils interact maturely with adults and, when given the chance, they seize the initiative and decide between them how to tackle a task, listening to each other's points of view. Pupils are generally keen to assume responsibility in daily routines, and carry out duties and tasks appropriate to their age group sensibly and conscientiously. Infant pupils are proud to be selected as 'helper for the day', whilst junior children plan seating arrangements and set up equipment for lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into school life and are encouraged to participate in assembly and concerts.
14. The established school council has been particularly effective in building pupil confidence through consultation and relationships with others.
15. There is a productive, working atmosphere in most classrooms for pupils with special educational needs, and the work set is suitably challenging. Both learning support assistants and volunteer parents are skilled at offering the right blend of support and challenge, and their relationships with pupils, with each other, and with other staff, are extremely good. As a result, attitudes are extremely positive. This also applies to the wider network of outside agencies. Pupils all receive their entitlement to an appropriate curriculum, but, on occasion, some pupils are not motivated by their work and switch off after a short time.
16. Attendance is satisfactory overall. Although the levels of attendance have progressively improved over the last two years, they remain slightly below the national average, but compare favourably with other similar schools in the area. Unauthorised absence has significantly decreased over the same period, and is now minimal. Registration is completed promptly twice a day, and the method used for recording attendance fully adheres to statutory requirements. Attendance records are fed into the computer weekly and the data is effectively used to monitor individual and group trends of absence. A number of pupils arrive late in the morning, and whilst it is often only a few minutes in most cases, it nevertheless disrupts an otherwise smooth start to the day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. The overall quality of teaching is good, with a significant proportion being very good or excellent. Overall, teaching in the lessons seen was good in the foundation stage, good in the infants and good in the juniors. In all except one of the lessons observed, teaching was at least satisfactory. Overall, it was unsatisfactory in two per cent of lessons, satisfactory in 27 per cent, good in 36 per cent, very good in 24 per cent and excellent in 11 per cent.
18. Whilst overall standards of teaching were at least satisfactory, examples of very good lessons were seen in each of the three sections of the school.
19. The biggest strengths in teaching include the helpful manner in which teachers often share the learning objectives for lessons with their pupils, most especially in literacy and numeracy and to a lesser extent in science; the way in which they manage the children under five, which is very good, and the use of the very skilled support staff, which is also very good.
20. Teachers work very hard and know their pupils well. Pupils are aware of what is expected from them in terms of behaviour, and nearly always respond appropriately. In

an excellent numeracy lesson for Year 6 pupils, in which the teacher showed excellent class management, the pupils' response was outstanding and they showed clear enjoyment for the subject; these pupils made excellent progress in their knowledge and understanding of tests of divisibility. In a very good physical education lesson for Year 2, the pupils also responded very well to the excellent class management. However, in the middle juniors, a minority of pupils attempt to disrupt lessons despite the hard work of the teacher. The arrangement of the classroom furniture does not aid learning, as some pupils are seated facing other pupils and have their backs turned to the teacher.

21. Classroom support assistants through the school make a most valuable contribution to pupils' learning. They work seamlessly with teachers and know their groups of pupils very well. Pupils with a wide variety of needs make good progress as a result of this additional tailored support.
22. The pace of lessons is good overall. In the best lessons, pupils are reminded of the time limits on an exercise, as in a very good Year 5 numeracy lesson on areas and perimeters.
23. Throughout the school, literacy and numeracy are well taught. Lessons generally start with effective question and answer sessions, to revise previous work and set pupils thinking. For example, in an excellent literacy lesson for pupils in Year 6, the teacher asked probing questions that thoroughly assessed pupils' level of understanding in the regular weekly writers' workshop.
24. Teachers' knowledge and understanding are generally good in all subject areas. The part-time teacher of information and communication technology has great expertise in the subject, and by spreading this to other staff, has made a positive impact on pupils' learning and the very high standards in this subject throughout the school.
25. In the infant and junior phases, day-to-day marking of pupils' work is good. Pupils' work is particularly well marked in the top two junior classes, with appropriate comments to praise pupils' efforts, together with comments to stretch pupils who have obtained full marks for a particular exercise.
26. Lessons in literacy, numeracy, and, to a lesser extent, science, have clear learning objectives and these are thoroughly explored again at the end of lessons, to see how far they have been met. The use of homework is good overall.
27. Teaching is very good for pupils with statements of special educational need. They are often seated next to peers and learning support assistants who offer sensitive, targeted support. Assistants are enthusiastic and dedicated. During literacy and numeracy lessons, when pupils are withdrawn to work in a smaller group, learning in these groups is very good. A very good example of learning was observed in the library when pupils from Year 2 were kept fully interested in number patterns. The support assistant was very skilled at motivating the pupils and knowing when to step in to help and when to let pupils use their initiative. In the classroom, learning is good because teachers take good account of the teaching group in front of them. On occasion, planning does not take the short attention spans of many pupils into account, and some pupils find it difficult to sustain concentration. Anger management strategies are beginning to be taught well and some teachers adopt additional strategies such as the use of background music to influence the mood in the room.

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

28. The curriculum provides a good range of valuable learning opportunities. The school meets all statutory curriculum requirements, and religious education is taught in accordance with the St. Helens Agreed syllabus. In addition, there is good provision for many aspects of personal, social and health education, including work on citizenship, in keeping with the advice received from the local 'healthy schools' initiative team. There is a clear policy for Personal and Social Health Education, and staff treat pupils gently and sensitively. Discussions and circle times are handled well. The school also goes further than many schools in its weekly half hour lessons in French as part of the curriculum for pupils in Years 3 to 6 Music clubs and drama enrich the curriculum, and the Christmas and summer term musicals provide rich opportunities for creative performance and teamwork, which was also evident in 'the magic mural' celebrating healthy lifestyles that adorns the hall walls.
29. This is a school that does not rest on its laurels and it is constantly evaluating its planning. The whole team is involved in planning, and link governors are very aware of developments in their particular subject areas. A particular strength is the provision for information and communication technology and French, and the good opportunities for speaking and listening that are helping to build confidence. Decision-making related to curriculum change is a shared, democratic process, and has been effectively managed since the new school was formed. Planning for the core subjects is particularly detailed and relevant. The addition of more opportunities for extended writing into the history, geography and religious education curriculum would further improve learning in some year groups. The school has adopted nationally recommended guidelines for all subjects, although some subjects are less developed than others. The geography curriculum is sound, but not as detailed as the scheme of work for history. The time allocated to subjects is appropriate overall, but time for structured play to promote physical development is insufficient in the Foundation stage, and the art and the design curriculum does not focus sufficiently on the progressive development of skills.
30. Pupils with special educational needs participate fully in lessons. On occasion, pupils are withdrawn from a lesson for additional support, but generally, the policy for including all pupils in all lessons prevails. There is no aspect of school life that is not available to all pupils. The school liaises well with outside agencies, such as the Social Services, ensuring that individual education plans are appropriate for all pupils, including those in care and those for whom English is an additional language. Good attention is beginning to be paid to different learning styles. The quality of short term planning is exceptionally good in most classes, and shows that considerable effort has gone into planning at all levels.
31. The provision for extra-curricular activities is sound and helps to promote social, moral and cultural development. The range of sporting activities available to pupils is limited by the nature of the school grounds. There are good football links with other local parishes. Non-athletic activities are also on offer, such as recorder groups, guitar lessons and the school orchestra. There is also tuition in the flute, clarinet and keyboard being offered at present. There is a pattern of outside visits for each year group, and there are many visitors to the school, including theatre groups and a musical duo. The community contributes to the curriculum in many different ways. The police, fire and oral health services visit regularly, and the school health nurse is very involved in the school. There are family learning courses available to all through

the 'Share' project, which enables parents to find out what their child does at school and how they can help at home.

32. There are very good links with the local High School, and many valuable initiatives have been established, such as the weekly master classes for gifted and talented pupils. There are very good links with a local bank, which is funding the development of land adjacent to the school. This is to be developed into an area where the pupils will be able to take part in practical science activities, such as pond dipping, and which will offer scope for physical activity.
33. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Parents agree that the school encourages their children to become mature and to develop positive attitudes and values.
34. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual development. Religious education is well planned through the curriculum and appropriate opportunities are provided for reflection. The provision for acts of collective worship is slightly restricted, being either in the class or in weekly assemblies, but does allow pupils to develop a reverence for prayer. There is a strong ethos of valuing individuals, and pupils show concern for each other. One pupil fell in the playground and was immediately comforted by friends, who held her hand whilst the teacher attended to her injury. Throughout the school, teachers value pupils' thoughts and are always prepared to give time for them to express their opinions. The good concentration observed in drama sessions allowed pupils to develop feelings and a capacity for empathy.
35. Provision for moral development is very good. In each classroom, pupils have agreed rules, which are regularly reviewed. This encourages all pupils to observe the rules and to realise their importance. The staff have high expectations of the pupils' conduct, and encourage pupils at all times to care for each other and for the environment. There is a consistent behaviour policy, which is clear and straightforward. Praise and encouragement are used well, rewarding self-control and discipline as well as good work. Good opportunities for responsibility are given throughout the school, in taking registers, controlling overhead projectors and other useful tasks.
36. The adults provide good role models in how to socialise and interact with the pupils. This is the basis for the very good relationships in school and the mature way that most pupils conduct themselves. Teachers expect the pupils to be well mannered. A family atmosphere is created, in which pupils get on well together and help each other. Wider social issues are explored sensitively as pupils visit different localities in the area, particularly at Christmas time, when they act and sing for residents of the community. They are taught to consider the concept of caring for the elderly as part of their social development. Pupils are encouraged to think about worldwide social issues, particularly when they affect children in other countries. Nearly all parents who responded to the questionnaire agree that the school is helping their children to become more mature.
37. The school makes satisfactory provision for the pupils' cultural development. It tends to focus on local culture, with only a few references in the curriculum to the cultures and achievements of other societies and peoples, past and present. Through religious education, Year 2 pupils are taught about Torah, Year 3 about how and why Hindus worship at home and in the mandir, whilst Year 5 pupils are taught about the importance of Muhammed to Muslims. Pupils have regular opportunities to listen to music as they join and leave assembly. Visiting musicians and artists extend this

awareness and appreciation of the arts. Last year's Christmas performance for parents and people in the community involved all junior pupils in a presentation requiring them to be dressed in costumes representing different parts of the world.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. The provision the school makes for its pupils' welfare is very good, as are the support and guidance offered to the pupils. The school provides a close knit, secure and happy environment in which its pupils are well protected and their individual well-being is effectively promoted. The teaching and non-teaching staff work hard in the best interests of the pupils, and know the pupils and many of their families very well. The resultant trusting relationships give pupils confidence to share any concerns, and help them cope with the problems that arise in everyday life. Parents see the school as a caring community.
39. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are effective and supported by parents and governors. The behaviour policy contains an appropriate range of rewards and sanctions to encourage good behaviour. Positive behaviour is rewarded through praise and encouragement, and the headteacher is seen in all areas of the school, often taking the lead in discussing acceptable and unacceptable conduct with pupils. Whilst this system is very effective in most areas of the school, the behaviour of some pupils who have not developed the high level of self-discipline expected of them shows that continuous vigilance will continue to be necessary.
40. Procedures for monitoring and supporting the pupils' personal development are good. Class teachers monitor the pupils' personal development closely, and identify and evaluate strengths, such as persistence, application and self-confidence, as well as weaknesses. Whilst the school provides good support and encouragement, this monitoring is mainly through observation. Formal recording is not used to inform assessment, and the information is not collected for the annual progress report to parents. The school uses merit assemblies to celebrate pupils' achievements at home and at school, and to display individual and group awards. This does much to raise pupils' self-esteem and awareness of each other's talents and skills.
41. The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are generally good. The policy document is explicit and well known to parents. Attendance shows a continual improvement, with the school constantly striving to reduce absenteeism through conversations with individual parents, endeavouring to support them in a joint drive to improve their children's punctuality and attendance. Registration is completed promptly at the commencement of each session and the method of recording complies with local authority guidelines. Registers are retained in the administration office during the day.
42. The school complies with the local authority child protection procedures, and members of staff have received training in identifying indicators of possible abuse or unexplained changes of behaviour. The headteacher, who has overall responsibility for child protection in the school, receives good support from the education social worker and the school nurse, and the effective liaison arrangements ensure early identification of any child at risk. Efficient records of all cases are maintained.
43. The governing body has taken a responsible attitude to health and safety, but some areas of the procedures require a review. The nominated representative completes periodic checks of the premises but these are not formally scheduled and do not

include a corrective action plan. Risk assessment needs to be more rigorous, and include out-of-school activities and different subject activities. First aid provision is good and regular fire drills take place.

44. The assessment of pupils' work is very good, and the tracking of their academic progress is both excellent and comprehensive, most particularly in reading, writing, mathematics and science throughout the school. Teachers have the expectation that pupils' attainment will rise by two sub-levels every year as part of their performance management targets. (Note that nationally, pupils are expected to improve by just one and a half sub levels every year). Curriculum targets are set to ensure that these targets are met. The use of assessment, whilst good, could be further developed, in writing in particular. The school appropriately uses the optional national tests in Years 3, 4 and 5. The tracking of pupils' academic progress in the foundation subjects is in its early stages of development.
45. Assessment is very good for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils are identified as early as possible and there are regular meetings with the educational psychologist. Progress is tracked through both tests and assessments. Individual education plans are comprehensive, outlining targets, outcomes, resources, strategies and ideas for support assistants. Individual pupils themselves are now encouraged to take some responsibility for their learning and behaviour, and good practice in self-assessment procedures linked to targets and individual lessons is being developed. Support assistants make observations about progress during lessons and these are shared with the class teacher. Generally, pupils receive clear guidance on ways to improve, which raises their self-esteem because it is often linked to praise.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. Partnership with parents is good, most parents having a high regard for the school. They are very supportive of the school, particularly of the efforts of the headteacher. The school takes an interest in the home life of the pupils and plays an important part in the life of the community.
47. The staff at the school are very approachable and are prepared to meet parents at any time to discuss pupils' academic progress or any personal issues of concern. All the parents who returned the questionnaire agreed that they felt comfortable approaching the school, and that the school is well led and managed.
48. Regular newsletters contain details of school activities and provide progress reports on action plans, but have limited reference to the curriculum. The senior management team is aware of this requirement, and proposes to introduce curriculum topic charts for each year group in the next academic year. The annual written reports on pupils' progress are evaluative and constructive, and give parents appropriate information on what their children have learnt. They do not yet consistently include areas for improvement, targets or comments and suggestions for home help. The school provides appropriate opportunities for the exchange of information relating to these reports, and parents are invited to attend parents' evenings in October and February of each year.
49. The school encourages parents and carers to participate in many educational schemes, some of which are designed specifically to enable them to work closely with the children. The 'Share' project is now well established, enabling parents to share activities with their child and, on completion, given formal accreditation for their

work. The family literacy project for children in Year 1 and their parents has been successful in improving parents' literacy skills, as well as giving them confidence in their approach to the subject. The 'council for voluntary services' operates in liaison with the headteacher to encourage parents to help in the classroom for a targeted one hundred hours, to assist pupils learning. Currently, four parents are involved with reading, arts and crafts and information technology.

50. The school prospectus is reviewed regularly, and is comprehensive in its detail, although it does not give details of the school's equal opportunities policies. Governors invite parents to the annual parents' meeting, and issue an annual written report, which meets statutory requirements fully. Parents and carers of pupils with special educational needs are involved in their educational programmes, although not all parents attend annual statement reviews.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. Both the leadership and management by the headteacher are excellent. She has guided the creation of this new school skilfully. The headteacher is exceptionally hard working, committed and able; she knows every pupil's strengths and just what they need help with to maximise their full potential. She is very much a "hands on" headteacher and has a high profile around school; she is more likely to be seen "turning the skipping ropes" in the playground than seated in her office. Her leadership ensures very clear educational direction for the school, and she is fully backed by the governing body. The headteacher wants the **very** best for her pupils. The school prayer contains the words, "teachers and children helping one another", and this concept is truly reflected in the atmosphere of the school. The school's aims and values are easily seen in the daily routines of the school, and the school's aims are re-drafted annually, following discussions with staff, governors and parents. The deputy headteacher has responsibility for special educational needs through the school; this is a key role, which she carries out most diligently. The extended senior management team, which includes the subject managers for literacy, numeracy and science, together with the coordinator for the foundation stage, is extremely competent. The subject coordinators manage their subjects appropriately, monitoring planning and marking, although they are not yet all involved in the monitoring of teaching in their subjects.
52. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities well. The governors want the best for the school and are determined that this new school should succeed. Their contribution in helping to shape the educational direction of the school is good. They worked very hard indeed to ensure that this new school was launched successfully. Governors visit the school regularly, and have monitored the implementation of some of the curriculum appropriately, particularly numeracy and literacy. Risk assessment, however, is in the early stages of development. The governing body has a good understanding of the main strengths and weaknesses of the school and the chair of governors is regularly in school. He is well known to both teachers and pupils, and has a very clear insight into the day-to-day running and long-term potential of the school. Between them, the governors bring a wide range of expertise to the running of this school.
53. Whilst the headteacher, deputy headteacher, literacy and numeracy leaders have monitored teaching of literacy and numeracy in all classes, this has not yet spread to specific monitoring of teaching by other subject managers. The headteacher has provided all staff with both verbal and detailed written feedback. Subject leaders monitor the planning and marking of their subjects very thoroughly across the school.

54. The school's targets are appropriate and sufficiently ambitious. Pupil mobility has had an adverse effect on recent results, but inspection evidence and provisional test results suggest that the targets for 2003 in English, mathematics and science will be met. The headteacher has raised the school's targets for 2004; these also look on course to be met. The school has an excellent capacity to succeed.
55. Procedures for the induction of new staff are good. The recently appointed teachers have been appropriately mentored by the headteacher. Appropriate policies and plans are in place for performance management. Teachers have, as a part of their performance management targets, the expectation that pupils' attainment will rise by two sub-levels every year. (Note that nationally, pupils are expected to improve by just one and a half sub levels every year).
56. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is currently very good. The accommodation is unsatisfactory overall, although it is well maintained. Although there is now an outdoor play area for the under-fives, the reception class has no direct access to it, and there is currently no grassed area. The school library is inadequate, and the current accommodation for the juniors contains no areas for withdrawal of small groups. Classrooms have attractive displays. Resources are generally satisfactory in quality and quantity.
57. The school has fully implemented the recent changes to the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs, and is working towards the development of the disability access plan. This is clearly set out in the school's action plan. Provision for special educational needs is very good for the majority of pupils and accordingly well managed. The coordinator is well informed, knows the pupils extremely well, and is very approachable and clear-sighted about procedures. She leads and supports a strong and increasingly skilled team of educational support staff who enable individual needs to be met. Many of the team are undertaking training in their own time, and their skills and dedication are apparent in lessons across the curriculum. Appropriate computer software for the writing of plans has been purchased and all of the staff have been trained in its use. The coordinator manages and checks the writing of individual education plans, and records of progress and targets are kept meticulously. Pupils' specific learning plans indicate their weekly targets, in addition to their overarching targets, and appropriate strategies and resources. The coordinator generally receives a half-day per week to carry out the tasks involved in her role as coordinator, but the time available is limited because of the teaching demands of her class of Year 4 pupils. The nominated governor is very involved, and there are good links between the school and outside agencies. The school is providing good equality of opportunity for its pupils, and this reflects the aims and values of the school.
58. The effectiveness of the school's use of new technology for administrative purposes is very good. The school's competent office manager handles finances well, and the school applies the principles of best value very well. Specific grants are used appropriately. The school development plan is a most useful working document, and prioritises the school's needs clearly. There is a sharp focus on raising standards in the junior phase and carefully tracking and maximising pupils' progress.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59. In order to improve the school further, the headteacher, senior management team and governing body should:-

Continue to raise standards in English by:

- improving the opportunities for developing pupils' wider reading, by increasing the library provision and fostering a love for books from the earliest age (Paragraphs 7, 56, 79)
- ensuring that pupils are fully aware of their targets, and are crystal clear about what they need to do to further improve (Paragraph 84)
- providing more opportunities for extended writing across the curriculum (Paragraphs 7, 56, 79)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	56
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	16

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	6	13	20	16	1	0	0
Percentage	11	23	36	29	2	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one 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)	26	160
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	38

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4	46

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

Attendance

Authorised absence

%

Unauthorised absence

%

School data	7.1
National comparative data	5.4

School data	0.1
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	12	7	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	11	11
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	17	18	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89(90)	95(86)	95(93)
	National	84(84)	86(86)	90(91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	11	11
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	18	18	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95(90)	95(93)	95(90)
	National	85(85)	89(89)	89(89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	12	12	24

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	6	8
	Girls	8	10	12
	Total	14	16	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	61(61)	67(67)	83(89)
	National	75(75)	73(71)	86(87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	10	9
	Girls	10	10	12
	Total	17	20	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71(67)	83(83)	88(83)
	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	123	3	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	0	0

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)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	160

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	13
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	33
Number of pupils per FTE adult	6.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	430,893
Total expenditure	470,296
Expenditure per pupil	2,718
Balance brought forward from previous year	92,727
Balance carried forward to next year	53,324

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	136
Number of questionnaires returned	54

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	33	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	76	24	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	48	0	2	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	55	36	7	0	2
The teaching is good.	81	19	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	60	29	7	0	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	91	19	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	84	14	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	48	50	2	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	62	38	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	69	27	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	43	21	24	10	2

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 children at this stage are taught in the nursery before moving into the reception class. Although the full range of attainments are represented, standards are well below those expected nationally, in all areas of the children's learning.
61. The good quality teaching, in the reception class in particular, contributes significantly to the good progress that all children make by the end of the foundation stage, including those with special educational needs and those having English as an additional language. Nevertheless, not all are on course to reach the nationally agreed Early Learning Goals by the beginning of Year 1. The attainment of most of the children falls just short of this level.
62. The 35 place nursery is currently under subscribed, and this enables the school to provide extended education and care in the nursery, under the 'Educare' programme. For a small cost, parents can buy an additional half-day session on top of the free half-day place for their child. Resources in the foundation stage are satisfactory overall.

Personal, social and emotional development

63. In the nursery, children's personal, social and emotional development is the strongest area of the children's learning. The children are helped to develop an increasing understanding of appropriate behaviour, and of what is right and wrong. The children enjoy the activities provided and respond positively to the rules and routines that are in place. Sensitive teaching throughout the foundation stage helps the children in the progressive development of their social skills. Over time, the children learn to share equipment, take turns and co-operate sensibly with each other and with all of the adults who help them. Very good relationships exist at the foundation stage. All of the adults provide good role models for the children. Staff have a good understanding of the children's needs, and activities are generally well organised, relevant and interesting. The children are encouraged to exercise some choice in selecting their activities, and this helps them to begin to develop a measure of independence in their learning.

Communication, language and literacy

64. Many of the nursery class children have poor speaking and listening skills. However, well-organised activities, including imaginative play, modelling, construction work and role play, provide appropriate opportunities for the children to develop these skills. Their progress is much greater when adults interact with them. The nursery children enjoy listening to stories. For example, they listened intently to the story, "Harry and the bucketful of dinosaurs". They showed an increasing ability to recall the storyline, although few were able to use their own words when answering questions, relying on the language in the story to find the words they wanted. The nursery children are not inclined to turn readily to books, and very few choose to browse in the library area. As a consequence, there is scope in the daily planning of activities to encourage a greater interest in books than the children currently display. The reception class children take more interest in books. Many of the children are beginning to understand how words and pictures carry meaning. They are beginning to build up a bank of words that they can read confidently. Some of the higher attaining children

have a good knowledge of letter sounds. They use this to good effect in writing simple, regular words, and to make phonetically plausible attempts at more complex words. All of the reception class children can write their names, but few use upper and lower case letters correctly. Throughout the foundation stage, the children are encouraged to write spontaneously during imaginative activities. For example, in the nursery, the receptionist in the dentist's surgery booked patients in and recorded the treatment on authentic record cards. In the reception class, the children move from mark-making to shaping recognisable letters. Many form these correctly and are able to write on a line. Good assessment procedures result in the early identification of children with special educational needs. Good quality planning and helpful adult interaction enable these children to take a full part in lessons and their progress is monitored carefully.

Mathematical development

65. In the nursery, the children make hesitant progress in counting, sorting and ordering objects through their play. Few are able to count reliably and many have difficulty writing digits correctly. The planning of mathematical activities is not always well thought out and missed opportunities occur to develop the children's mathematical thinking. For example, in a dressing up activity, the children put on exotic 'Royal clothing' when engaged in role play involving a queen and her lady-in-waiting. The queen wanted a necklace, but had a limited choice of single coloured beads to thread rather than a selection of different colours to devise a simple repeating pattern. By the reception class, the children make better progress in their mathematical development. They demonstrate an increasing understanding of terms such as 'more than' and 'less than' when ordering numbers. Some of the higher attainers can answer questions accurately using numbers to 20. However, many of the children have yet to realise the efficiency of starting with the larger number when totalling two digits. The older children make increasing progress in developing their understanding of shape, space and measures. This occurs through formal activities and also through exploratory play. However, in activities such as construction, sand play and painting with sponge shapes, too little adult interaction restricts the children's progress, because the activities are not sufficiently well structured from a mathematical perspective.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

66. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is generally good in the nursery and in the reception class. The children are well supported in computer work. They are confident, in the nursery, moving the screen cursor to achieve their desired intentions. In the reception class, they make good use of information and communication technology to consolidate their reading and number skills. The nursery children are helped to understand the passage of time through the celebration of birthdays, talking about days of the week and the changing seasons, and looking at photographs. In the reception class, they make good progress in talking about their own lives and families, and are beginning to understand more fully the differences between the past and present. The children are presented with many experiences that help to develop their skills in shaping, assembling and joining materials. For example, in the reception class, the teacher referred them to the story of 'The Billy Goats Gruff', relating it to bridges prior to a brief discussion on different types of bridges. Good use was made of relevant photographs, with one child remarking, "That's the Forth Bridge in Scotland. I've seen it." The children then went outside to construct their own bridge with ramps at each end. Each part of the bridge sparked a mini debate on suitability, access and strength. The children came up with some good initiatives before acting

out the story. At the end, the teacher asked if the children could actually cross the bridge they had made. Two of the girls said, "Wait a minute. A safety check is required!" In this area of learning, good use is made of outside visitors to the school. For example, a member of the St. Helen's Primary Care Trust came in to talk to the children and some of their parents about healthy eating. The parents helped to prepare a range of fresh fruits and vegetables which were then served to the children, evoking much discussion on names of the different foods and the children's likes and dislikes. At the end of the session, the children were each given a new toothbrush. This was a valuable experience which provided the children with the knowledge to begin to make informed choices, now and in the future.

Physical development

67. The nursery children start from a very low baseline in this area of their learning, but they soon respond to the good range of activities provided. They make progress in handling a variety of mark-making tools, modelling tools, paint brushes, scissors, construction toys and malleable materials. In the reception class, they demonstrate developing skills of control and co-ordination. They show increasing confidence and understand how to use equipment safely.
68. Whilst the nursery class has direct access to the secure outside play area, the reception class does not. Neither class has timetabled sessions to promote the children's physical development, nor is the space available always well used. Many of the activities lead to isolated play, and opportunities for developing not only physical skills but also the children's language through role play, for example, are often missed. The time allocated to physical development in both classes is insufficient, and the timing of outside play in the nursery, at the end of each session, is inappropriate.

Creative development

69. The teaching is broadly satisfactory and sometimes good in this area of the children's learning. Well-organised activities enable the nursery and reception class children to make good progress.
70. The children enjoy frequent opportunities to paint, model, engage in imaginative play and listen to music and play some instruments. Helpful interaction with the adults in the nursery enables the children to make progress. For example, some of the higher attaining nursery children were helped to develop their own storyline in the dentist's surgery. One child in the role of the receptionist asked, "Can you tell me your name, please, and initial?" Another child remarked, "We've run out of stickers for the patients." The perceptive reply suggested they would have to make some more. Towards the end of the session, another child, undaunted after undergoing treatment in the dentist's chair, asked, "Can I come back tomorrow? I want to make another appointment!"
71. Although the teaching promotes the children's creative skills to good effect, the planning of work in three dimensions is under-emphasised. When this does occur, the work is often over-directed so that the children have too few opportunities to develop their own creative ideas during the foundation stage.
72. The provision for music is generally good. In the nursery, for example, the children listened to Ravel's 'Bolero' during a period of quiet reflection. Skilful teaching linked this music to a peaceful forest scene with dinosaurs at rest. By introducing some

percussion instruments, the children were helped to tap out rhythms representing the dinosaurs plodding, then running. The children had time to explore the qualities of some instruments, and to practise and rehearse different rhythms during choosing time, but too few opportunities occur for the children to explore and perform spontaneously using a sufficient range of instruments.

73. By the end of the reception year, the children can sing a developing repertoire of songs and rhymes, which they recall with growing confidence.

ENGLISH

74. Standards in the National Curriculum tests taken at age 11 in 2002 were well below average when compared with national results. In comparison with those of similar schools, however, results were broadly average and consistent with pupils' previous performance. The main reasons for the well below average performance at age 11 are the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, which brought overall results down, and new pupils who joined the school late in the year. Additionally, the school lost many higher attaining pupils when they were in Year 2; they did not transfer to the juniors due to the then uncertainty about junior education. This situation has now been resolved with the creation of the new primary school and pupils in Year 5 and below are on course to meet national expectations; higher attainers now remain at the school. Standards at age seven in the national tests were average in writing and above average in reading when compared with national results. Compared with those of similar schools, results were well above average at seven. Achievement is good at age seven and at age 11.
75. Inspection findings show that pupils aged seven are reaching nationally expected standards in reading, but below nationally expected standards in writing. This reflects some improvement from 2002, but overall standards are still below average in writing. Standards are below national expectations for pupils aged 11 in both reading and writing. This is partly explained by the level of instability that arose from the period when the junior pupils were taught on a separate site. During this time many pupils left, and a small number joined the school. This disrupted learning over time, as can be seen in some of the work of the older pupils who are now being taught well.
76. The effective implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has ensured that standards of speaking and listening and reading are now average by the age of seven. Standards in writing are not as high, and do not meet national expectations for approximately one third of pupils. Since standards on entry to Year 1 are below average in all aspects of English, this means that pupils' achievements by the age of seven are good, with good progress made in speaking and listening, and reading, and satisfactory progress in writing. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to that of their classmates, and pupils with statements of special educational need make very good progress, in relation to their ability, when supported in lessons by teaching assistants. The opportunities for speaking and listening throughout the school and the targeted help given by the very skilled support assistants have led to sound standards by the age of 11, which is good achievement. Standards are below average in reading and writing, however, although they are consistent with the pupils' earlier performance at the age of seven. There is a lack of sufficient opportunities for pupils' extended writing.
77. Standards in speaking and listening at age seven and at age 11 are average. Pupils make good progress from a below average starting-point on entry to reception. There are many opportunities for pupils to work in pairs, to talk and to re-consider their work.

This is consistent practice across all subjects throughout the school. Pupils are given time to answer questions, and are encouraged to refine their thinking. This results in confident and competent speakers, who listen to and respect what others have to say. On occasion, there are a few pupils who do not concentrate fully. In Year 1, higher attaining pupils speak clearly, and during the class activity focusing on letter sounds, all of the pupils play games such as 'Full Circle' - changing letters in a word to make new words into spelling patterns – with confidence. There are some pupils who have a tendency to lose concentration and allow others to volunteer suggestions, but they will answer questions when directly involved by the teacher. By Year 6, pupils have learned to listen attentively during lessons and are willing to express their feelings fully and confidently. In a Year 5/6 lesson, pupils enthusiastically entered into a role play in which they complained about the conditions at a theme park to an interviewer from 'Watchdog.' They also engage in good levels of conversation with adults, covering a wide range of topics. The skills of pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 are more limited, and several need more practice in active listening.

78. Reading standards match national expectations at the age of seven, but are below expectations by the age of 11. By the age of seven, the majority of pupils are independent, fluent and confident readers of both fiction and non-fiction. They have a sound understanding of the text and are beginning to recognise the structure of stories and use the correct vocabulary to evaluate the book. Pupils use a limited range of strategies to read new words and to self correct more difficult ones. They talk about breaking words down and 'skipping' words to guess the meaning. The materials to support the literacy hour, and particularly the use of big books, result in increased enjoyment in reading, and are being effective in increasing pupils' ability to read with expression. By the age of seven, pupils show a good understanding of alphabetical order in using indexes. Higher attaining pupils use a dictionary competently. By the age of 11, the best readers are able to discuss the text they have read with clarity and understanding. However, the majority are not as fluent and articulate in their reading as they should be. Many of the boys are not keen on reading outside of school, although the school has purchased much reading material that should appeal to boys. In a Year 5 lesson, the class were focusing on an audio-tape of a football commentary, which was used for teaching about structure, punctuation and expression. Pupils do read a wide range of texts, but there are few opportunities for junior classes to dip into books in the library and there are insufficient opportunities for Year 6 to use the ICT suite for research. However, given their low starting point, pupils achieve well. Hesitant readers have a sound knowledge of strategies to use, and are gaining confidence and independence in their reading through the high profile given to guided reading.
79. The library is small and organised for infant pupils. It is not well-situated for developing study skills for junior pupils to make use of a catalogued system, or sufficiently well stocked to promote wider reading. Hence, older pupils' higher order reading and research skills are under-developed and are not used as well as they might be in other areas of the curriculum.
80. By the ages of seven and 11, pupils' attainment in writing is below national expectations, although achievement is good given the low starting point of many pupils. By the age of seven, handwriting is clear and legible, and improving as pupils move from class to class. A lack of marking of handwriting has slowed the progress for some classes. In the junior phase in general, handwriting is clear and well formed, but there are some pupils in Year 6 who are printing capital letters in the middle of words. Spellings are not always accurate and, because pupils have not developed the habit of checking their written work, the use of punctuation and grammar is

sometimes unsound. There are frequent opportunities during the literacy hour to practise phonic rules to improve spellings, and this is leading to success in the infant phase. Although the teacher corrects errors thoroughly and consistently, some pupils in Year 6 still mis-spell some basic words such as 'went'.

81. Pupils demonstrate a very good awareness of the structure and sequencing of events in a story. Their ideas are imaginative, varied and clear. Year 2 pupils produced some high quality work about characters from *Cinderella*. Opportunities for pupils to write at length are now beginning to be more structured, but many junior pupils find it difficult to write quickly because they have not developed a style of handwriting that encourages fluency. Pupils edit their work, but often are unable to spot spelling and punctuation mistakes. In junior classes, there are too few opportunities for developing library skills.
82. The quality of teaching and learning are good. No teaching was unsatisfactory and, in over half of lessons observed, it was good. Main strengths include the teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject and of the many needs among their pupils, the class relationships based on mutual respect, the use of imaginative teaching methods, and detailed planning. The very good support staff are used most effectively. Areas that could be further strengthened include the teaching of spelling in the junior classes through the editing of writing, and a more consistent use of marking. Sometimes the introduction to a lesson is too slow or lengthy. More emphasis could be placed on the application of literacy skills across the curriculum, including the use of the library.
83. Staff have worked very hard to improve strategies for the teaching of literacy. A particularly good example was in a shared writing activity that captured the imagination of Year 2 pupils when they created their own versions of the poem 'On The Ning Nang Nong', by building their own descriptive verses. The teacher very skilfully kept all the pupils thinking stimulated creative choosing and motivated all pupils to attempt the task by thinking imaginative phrases. This resulted in high quality work. In the literacy hour, teachers have established good classroom routines for pupils and there is an industrious working atmosphere. Many pupils have positive attitudes to learning and work hard, with enthusiasm and interest, to complete their work successfully. Pupils support each other well, giving help and encouragement to anyone who has a problem. In less effective lessons, pupils' concentration wanders away from the task. Sometimes lessons are too long, or teachers focus for long periods on a particular aspect of literacy, and, although pupils are always well behaved and compliant, they are not inspired to produce their best work. Teaching assistants are skilled at intervening and using their initiative, but in some lessons, the pupils' activity is rather rushed because the introduction has taken too much time. Homework is used well, particularly when it is brought into the literacy hour in a meaningful way. A weaker area of teaching is the use of marking, which is not always used to support pupils' learning well enough. At its best, the marking in the upper juniors is exemplary; however, lower down the school, some work is not marked and pupils are not being told how they might improve. Pupils are not always sufficiently aware of their targets for improvement, nor, of what they need to do in order to meet the targets.
84. The leadership and management are good and provide good support and guidance for staff. The checking of teachers' planning and the monitoring of how the subject is taught have highlighted areas for development, such as spelling, writing and the use of I.C.T. There are very good systems for assessment in place that provide a clear picture of pupils' achievements. The practice of setting pupils individual targets that

provide a focus on what they need to do to improve the standard of their work is developing, but procedures are inconsistently applied. There are better resources in the infant classes than in the junior classes, although steps have been taken to begin to improve this situation.

MATHEMATICS

85. On the basis of 2002 national test results based on average national curriculum points scores, attainment was well above the national average at the end of the infant phase. The percentage of pupils obtaining level 2, the expected level, was above average; the proportion obtaining the higher level 3 at the end of the infant phase was well above the national average. Pupils' performance in the mathematics test for seven year olds was well above average in comparison with that of schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. The average attainment of pupils in the three years 2000 to 2002 was above the national average. On average, pupils leave the infant phase one term ahead of pupils nationally. The performance of girls was slightly lower than that of boys.
86. In the 2002 national tests at the end of the junior phase, pupils' attainment in terms of points scores was well below the national average. The proportion of pupils obtaining level 4, the expected level nationally, was average, but the proportion reaching the higher level five was well below average. When compared with those of pupils from schools of a similar type, standards were broadly average. The performance of boys and girls over the last three years has been similar.
87. For the current groups of pupils, evidence from the lessons observed, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils indicate that attainment is in line with national expectations at the end of the infant phase and also by the time pupils leave the school at the end of the junior phase. The main reason for the difference at the end of the junior phase between previous test results and inspection findings is that this is the first group of pupils to have received all their education at Lyme Primary School. Nonetheless, there are two adverse factors affecting standards in that class. There is a high proportion – 40 per cent - of pupils having special educational needs. Additionally, many parents withdrew their children at the end of the infant phase because there was uncertainty about junior education. This depleted numbers from 35 to 20, and many of the higher attaining pupils left.
88. In the work seen during the inspection, many pupils in the infant phase demonstrated a satisfactory level of attainment related to investigative mathematics and number. Pupils in the junior phase generally do not have sufficiently good knowledge of their multiplication tables, because they are not always practised in each class with sufficient regularity. This is hindering further progress in other areas of mathematics. Pupils aged 11 can make mathematical statements about sequences of odd and even numbers appropriately. They have good knowledge of common multiples, and use the rules of divisibility sensibly. They offer competent explanations of their strategies for mental calculations, tackling problems such as 14×6 in their heads. Pupils use correct mathematical vocabulary throughout the school, and this greatly helps their learning. They develop their own strategies when solving problems in their heads, can interpret charts appropriately, and are familiar with different ways of presenting data. Pupils aged seven are appropriately familiar with patterns in numbers, counting in threes, fours or fives; higher attainers appropriately recognise these sequences when starting other than from zero, for example, 2, 7, 12..... There was no discernible difference in the performance of girls and boys in the lessons seen. To raise standards of attainment further in both key stages, there is a need to

continue the emphasis on a coherent mathematical vocabulary, and to ensure that all pupils have instant recall of their multiplication tables.

89. Overall, the learning of pupils in mathematics is good in both the infants and the juniors; this includes those pupils having special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Factors aiding progress include the very positive attitudes and good behaviour of the pupils, and the overall good standard of teaching. The teaching observed was excellent in one of the six lessons seen, very good in two lessons, good in two lessons and satisfactory in one. The features that made the best lesson excellent, and contributed to outstanding learning, were the infectious enthusiasm of the teacher, the highest possible expectations, coupled with a brisk and purposeful pace in which the teacher set time targets for pupils. In numeracy lessons, teachers explain the learning objectives clearly at the outset, and re-visit these at the end of the session to see how far they have been achieved. Teachers in most numeracy lessons begin with effective question and answer sessions, to revise previous work and set pupils thinking. In the satisfactory lesson seen, pupils' attitudes were unsatisfactory and did not support their learning and, at times, the level of challenge was insufficient. Factors militating against progress are a lack of pupils' instant recall of multiplication tables and an occasional over-reliance on commercial worksheets in some classes. Pupils' achievements are good.
90. The subject leader for mathematics, who is the very competent Year 2 teacher, has monitored and evaluated the teaching of mathematics throughout the school. She regularly checks planning for consistency and coverage, and samples marking effectively. The analysis of pupils' performance in external examinations has only been informal to date, but, appropriately, is set to become far more rigorous from this summer. Whilst the assessment of pupils' work on particular topics is regularly carried out, overall assessments only take place annually, using the available national tests. Targets for improvement are suitably ambitious; the tracking of pupils' academic progress is excellent. Resources, including those based on information and communication technology, are good in quality and quantity, and are used to promote learning effectively.

SCIENCE

91. The test results for the year 2002 show that pupils' attainment at the end of the junior phase was well below the national average, but matched that found in similar schools. Teacher assessments at the end of the infant phase also matched the national average. Results at the end of the junior phase have been adversely affected by some higher attaining pupils not transferring from the former infants' school to the former junior school.
92. In the work seen during the inspection, standards of attainment met national expectations for pupils aged seven and 11; the school's large input into investigative work is having a most positive effect on raising standards.
93. The overall quality of teaching is good. Teachers plan and prepare well for lessons. Class management is good throughout the school overall, and the orderly environment creates a very good atmosphere for learning. In a very good lesson for Year 6 pupils, the teacher explained the aim of the lesson on circuits carefully. Pupils joined in the discussion and showed awareness of key scientific terms. They then carried out an investigation into factors that could affect the brightness of bulbs and the loudness of buzzers. Their experiments were successful and pupils' learning, overall, was very good. Throughout the lesson, there was a buzz of excitement from the pupils, the buzzers and the teacher! Her infectious enthusiasm translated to the pupils in inculcating a love for science. In another lesson for middle juniors, pupils compared the properties of solids and liquids appropriately, sorting a variety of substances, using a 3-dimensional Venn diagram. Higher attaining pupils appreciated, without prompting, that a carton of milk has both solid and liquid components and could be placed in the outer-section of the diagram. Pupils describe the properties of solids and liquids correctly, using appropriate scientific terminology. There were useful and interesting discussions about what category a lit candle should be placed in.
94. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are well supported by their teachers and other adults, so that their learning is similar to that of the majority of pupils. Good discussions take place in the introductions to many lessons, and the teachers are clear about what they want the pupils to learn. Occasionally, teachers do not use correct scientific vocabulary, as when they ask pupils to draw a picture rather than a labelled diagram. This does not help pupils' learning.
95. Pupils aged seven, in Year 2, successfully investigated the effect of planting beans under a variety of conditions. Their learning was good, and they appreciated the importance of light and water. Numeracy skills are used appropriately. The pupils' recording of their investigations is just starting to develop progressively through the school, with the use of planning sheets. This should accelerate pupils' learning. In an excellent Year 2 lesson on forces, pupils demonstrated their knowledge that forces can be pushes, pulls or twists, by performing a series of useful investigations.
96. Pupils' attitudes are very good, as are relationships. Pupils want to learn and they are most enthusiastic. They really enjoy their science.
97. The subject leader monitors pupils' exercise books regularly throughout the school, giving appropriate feedback to staff, and is now successfully seeking to extend pupils' investigative work throughout the school. Resources are good overall, and support pupils' learning. ICT is appropriately used to reinforce pupils' learning.

ART AND DESIGN

98. Standards at the age of seven and 11 meet the expectation for their age. Throughout the school, all pupils including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language make satisfactory progress.
99. By the age of seven, pupils have experienced a range of media, styles and materials, including using a paint program on the computer. They draw plants such as a pineapple, but work is often a little rushed. Sometimes they do not look carefully when drawing objects. When using a viewfinder, they produce some accurate work and are able, with support, to take a digital photograph of the image they have sketched. They have a developing knowledge of texture and blending colours, and are able to use glue sticks and scissors. Good use is beginning to be made of textiles, including collage and weaving, resulting in effective work. Work in three-dimensions is less evident. Pupils are not used to selecting a range of brushes to obtain different effects, and their knowledge of shades of colour is limited.
100. Standards of work in Years 3 to 6 are sound, and teaching and learning are sound overall. There is evidence of careful pattern work in Year 3, and Year 4 enjoyed investigating seats. Still-life compositions produced by Year 5 during the inspection week and some of the work in their sketch books, such as the hyperbola design, were of good quality. By the age of 11, pupils are evaluating each other's work, such as the mask designs they produced for their work on carnivals and masks. One pupil commented, "He has used red, which is an aggressive colour!" However, pupils have not fully consolidated and developed their drawing skills. Pupils' sketchbooks provide a record of the work they have done, but this work is not always dated and labelled. Sufficient attention is not always given to showing pupils how to improve their work. Work with the artist in residence, however, has helped to develop skills in aesthetic appreciation and inspires enthusiasm in the pupils to share their work with the wider community.
101. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. There were examples of good and very good lessons seen during the week of the inspection, but the children's learning in their art sketchbooks indicates slow progress in the development of drawing skills, and pupils could not recall many experiences of working with three-dimensional compositions. Teachers demonstrate skills satisfactorily, and some teachers prompt pupils to analyse their own work critically. For example, as pupils in Year 1 created their three-dimensional collages, they were regularly prompted to experiment with materials, and their techniques became more sophisticated. The teacher had modelled a collage at the beginning of the lesson, and this sparked a lot of imaginative ideas. The teacher encouraged free expression within a structured framework, and all pupils were given the time and the equipment to experiment in an enjoyable way. Some pupils took their inspiration from the materials themselves, and used the cotton wool material to form the basis of a sheep. Another pupil was fascinated by the texture of the bubblewrap before he started making his collage. The concluding session at the end of the lesson is often used to inform as well as to celebrate individual talent and effort. Good links are made with other subjects in Year 5. Teachers use good questioning to enable pupils to make decisions about their work. Support staff work well with pupils with special educational needs in lessons, ensuring that they understand instructions and techniques such as using the viewfinder. As a result, they make good progress. In a Year 5 lesson, soothing music sung by Andrea Bocelli was played in the background, which had a calming effect on a few pupils who had been unsettled earlier in the day.

102. The leadership and management of the subject are sound. The subject has not been given a high profile in the school improvement plan in the last three years, and the monitoring of learning and skill development is insufficiently rigorous. Portfolios of work are not being used by staff to analyse standards. Attainment over time is not being checked and the expectation of what pupils can achieve is not sufficiently high. The profile of the subject has undoubtedly been helped by the excellent work produced with the local artist-in-residence. The chair of governors was the driving force behind the outstanding series of murals in the hall. This enables pupils to be confident and successful as artists. All staff display work sensitively and well, but there is not enough attention paid to a range of cultures within the art curriculum. There is no specialist art teaching room and the resources to support the subject are limited.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

103. A scrutiny of work carried out at the school shows that pupils aged seven and 11 are achieving standards that match national expectations. Owing to timetable constraints, it was only possible to see one lesson in design and technology for pupils in Year 3. This was well taught, with pupils making good progress.
104. Learning is good overall for all pupils, including those having English as an additional language and those pupils with special educational needs throughout both key stages. Pupils are systematically building up the key skills of designing and making as they go through the school. In the one lesson observed, the teacher managed her pupils well and set high expectations; this helps to ensure that pupils' learning is good. Examples of previous work carried out include useful disassembly and assembly of musical instruments by the older juniors and angels with moveable wings made by seven-year-olds. Pupils respond very well indeed and show great enthusiasm for the subject. They enjoy the subject and are keenly interested in their work; they persevere well when meeting minor problems, as exemplified in the Year 3 lesson on finding out the different ways in which containers are made. They work sensibly and co-operatively with one another and show respect for the school's resources.
105. The subject leader, who is also the headteacher, is enthusiastic and has attended relevant in-service training. Resources, including those linked to ICT, are satisfactory and are stored appropriately.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

106. Owing to the timing of the inspection and the school's timetabling arrangements, it was not possible to observe the teaching of geography or history in the infant phase, or geography in the junior phase. However, discussions with some of the pupils in Years 2 and 6, scrutiny of planning, records and samples of the pupils' previous work indicate that by the age of seven and 11, standards are generally appropriate for the ages of the pupils. Pupils at different levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make broadly satisfactory progress during their time in the school. By the age of 11, standards in history are appropriate for the age of the pupils and they make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment.
107. By the age of seven, the pupils have a basic sense of place in relation to their own locality, and are beginning to develop an awareness of places beyond their own area, recognising some differences and similarities. They spoke knowledgeably about an

island locality they had studied in a project called 'The Isle of Struay.' The work they are given provides a suitable basis for developing appropriate geographical skills. By Year 6, most of the pupils develop a satisfactory understanding of maps of different scales, and can interpret them with reasonable accuracy. They recognise some of the ways in which human activity affects the physical environment. They are able to express their own views on issues involving local traffic, and relate these to some global problems. The pupils are helped to make comparisons between their own locality and contrasting areas, such as Chembakolli in India. In Year 6, the pupils make effective use of secondary sources, such as the Internet, to research aspects of physical geography, including mountains, rivers, climates and erosion. The oldest pupils spoke knowledgeably and accurately when describing the formation of ox-bow lakes. Although the pupils make satisfactory progress developing their geographical knowledge, many of the tasks in which they engage do not challenge them sufficiently to develop their geographical study skills to the levels of which they are capable.

108. By the age of seven, in history, the pupils make satisfactory progress in the development of their knowledge and skills. They know how to use a range of sources including pictures, books, paintings and photographs. In their study of the Great Fire of London, the pupils understood some of the reasons why the fire spread so quickly, and they knew how to place the events of the fire in chronological order. The pupils show increasing awareness of the distinction between past and present, and use appropriate vocabulary to describe the passing of time. In the junior phase, the pupils make satisfactory progress, extending their knowledge of ancient civilisations such as those of Egypt, Greece and Rome. When given the opportunity, the pupils demonstrate increasing skills searching for and finding appropriate information to support their work. For example, in Year 6, studying the impact of World War II, the pupils understood how to use an appropriate range of historical sources such as books photographs, artefacts, CD-Roms and the Internet to research key events and important people of the period.
109. The quality of teaching is generally good in the junior phase. The pupils enjoy the work and show enthusiasm for and interest in the topics covered. Lessons are well planned and organised. Good use is made of probing questions to assess the pupils' understanding and to extend their thinking. This was a very successful feature of the teaching in Year 6, where the pupils were helped to understand some important social issues related to the changes in Britain since the end of World War II.
110. In both geography and history, throughout the school, too little attention is given to the development of the pupils' written English. Missed opportunities occur for the pupils to communicate their knowledge and understanding through more lengthy pieces of writing than is presently the case. Too little is expected of the pupils, in this respect, and as a result, the pupils' ability to talk about key places, people, events and issues is much in advance of their written work.
111. Subject leadership in geography and history is broadly satisfactory, although an effective strategy for monitoring and evaluating standards of work and the quality of the teaching and learning has yet to be implemented. However, the content of the work is generally appropriate and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum in geography and history.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

112. Standards of attainment at the end of both the infant and junior phases exceed national expectations. By the age of seven, pupils use information and

communications technology (ICT) to assemble text in literacy. They are able to generate text and insert appropriate pictures, and save and retrieve information. By the age of 11, pupils are able to import bitmap images into databases successfully. They use appropriate software as a matter of routine to produce musical compositions. Pupils present information in different forms, and are aware of their audience and the need for quality in their presentations. Work on control, monitoring and modelling slightly exceeds nationally expected levels. Pupils routinely use ICT as a tool to help their work in other areas of the curriculum.

113. Learning is very good in both the infant and junior phases, for all pupils, including those having special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. The school has employed the services of a part-time ICT specialist teacher for the last two years; his input is greatly helping the raising of standards. It was possible to see four lessons in this subject, which were all taught very well indeed, two of them being excellent. The school makes efficient use of its ICT suite; all classes are timetabled for two sessions per week there, and the computers are networked to the computers in the classrooms, enabling further work to be carried out in class. Assessment is not yet used effectively to monitor pupils' progress in this subject. This is an area appropriately identified for development in the school improvement plan.
114. Pupils' response is very good indeed. They show great eagerness for, and interest in, this subject. Pupils work hard in practising their skills and work co-operatively very well. They are not afraid to volunteer their own suggestions; relationships are excellent.
115. The subject leader is hard working and keen to spread her skills through the school. Whilst she has already provided in-service training for colleagues, she has not yet had time to monitor and evaluate the work of all colleagues. There are appropriate computers in every classroom, which are all networked together and networked to the small suite. There are plans afoot to create a newly extended suite and this is a good step for the development of the subject. The school is linked to the local intranet, There is an appropriate range of cross-curricular software.

MUSIC

116. The standards achieved by pupils aged seven and 11 are in line with those expected nationally. The vast majority of the pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make at least satisfactory and often good progress during their time in the school.
117. By Year 2, the pupils sing tunefully. They use their voices expressively when singing songs and hymns. Their singing is clear, and they understand how to maintain a steady pulse. The seven year olds demonstrate increasing skills playing a range of percussion instruments correctly to obtain open and closed sounds. The teaching introduces them to appropriate language. For example, in Year 2, the pupils could identify and name some less common instruments, including Indian bells and claves, before playing them with confidence and increasing attention to duration, dynamics and tempo.
118. The older pupils sing with increasing maturity. They are taught to breathe correctly so that their singing has shape, is well pitched and has clear diction. For example, in Year 5, the pupils sang 'Frere Jacques' as a round. They built successfully on two-part singing by adding accompaniment on glockenspiels. Their good quality singing

showed a developing ability to listen to others while holding their own part. The instruments were played beautifully and the final performance was of a high standard. The pupils' learning is enhanced by the very good specialist teaching they receive. For example, in a Year 4 class developing their skills in composition, the pupils were helped to write basic notation for their own compositions on glockenspiels. By the end of the lesson, most made very good progress, composing their own melodic ostinato pattern using the notes of the pentatonic scale.

119. The quality of the specialist teaching in music is very good. Lessons are well planned and delivered with pace and enthusiasm. As a result, the pupils respond very well and put much creative and intellectual effort into their work. Some of the pupils benefit from teaching provided by peripatetic staff, and these pupils make good progress, particularly, learning to play the clarinet and flute. In addition, the pupils are taught to play the recorder as an extra-curricular activity. The advanced group make very good progress and know how to read staff notation while playing together pieces that have more than one part.
120. The use of information and communication technology to support the music curriculum is a positive feature of the provision. For example, a class of older pupils were able to select time signatures based on their previous learning using the computer. In writing their own music on screen, they demonstrated a good grasp of note values and used the piccolo' sound to good effect when playing their own compositions.
121. The subject is well led and organised. Care is taken to enable all pupils to take a full part in lessons and to benefit from the good range of available resources. The content of the work is planned carefully and adequately reflects the requirements of the National Curriculum.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

122. The standards achieved by the pupils aged seven and 11 are consistent with those expected nationally. Throughout the school, the vast majority of the pupils, including those with special educational needs and those having English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment.
123. In dance, the youngest pupils develop increasing control and co-ordination devising their own dance sequences, in response to well chosen music. However, their ability to vary the height and direction of their movements is less well developed. The older pupils understand how to incorporate greater variety and interest in their dances, making progress in using a wider range of appropriate skills and techniques. For example, in one class, the pupils used facial expression and bodily gestures to good effect when devising a dance based on 'The land of ice and snow'. They understood how to vary the height and direction of their movements in order to give greater impact to their dance sequences.
124. In gymnastics, by Year 2, the younger pupils understand how to perform basic skills in travelling, finding space effectively and using it safely. They know how to balance on different parts of their body, and to hold these positions for an appropriate length of time. The higher attaining pupils demonstrate increasing progress, linking their movements together skilfully when performing sequences that show a clear beginning, middle and end. The great majority of the pupils have yet to achieve this level of performance because they have yet to master sufficient smoothness in linking together balancing, turning and rolling movements.

125. By Year 6, the pupils make satisfactory progress in games. They work with increasing control and co-ordination. For example, the oldest pupils took part in an outdoor lesson to develop their skills in mini hockey. They demonstrated good precision handling their hockey sticks, and knew how to apply basic safety principles when dribbling with the ball.
126. At other times in the year, the infants take part in games and the juniors take part in gymnastics, swimming, athletics and outdoor and adventurous activities. However, school records indicate that about 50 per cent of the Year 6 pupils have yet to swim 25 metres unaided by the age of 11.
127. The standard of teaching is at least satisfactory, and good overall. In most lessons, sound teaching of basic skills supports the pupils' learning. In addition, effective questioning emphasises safety. For example, in a Year 1 class, the pupils understood the importance of bending their knees when landing, responding to the question, "What do you need to remember when you jump?" In most lessons, effective use is made of evaluation to help the pupils improve their performance. However, in some lessons, the pupils have too few opportunities to comment on their own work or that of others. Classroom assistants support pupils with special educational needs extremely well, making a significant contribution to these pupils' achieving the targets they are set.
128. In all lessons, the pupils demonstrate very good attitudes towards their work. They enjoy the activities provided and respond enthusiastically. They change into appropriate dress without fuss and move sensibly through the school to the hall and playgrounds.
129. The subject is well led and organised, so that a good balance of the different elements of the subject is achieved. Physical education makes a good contribution to the aims of the school and the content of the work meets the requirements of the National Curriculum.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

130. By the age of seven and 11, pupils' standards in religious education match those expected for their age, as set out in the St. Helen's Agreed Syllabus. There is clear evidence that skills in Year 5 are better than those expected and many pupils show in discussion that their knowledge and understanding is often greater than can be seen in their written work. Achievement is sound for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. The school complies fully with statutory requirements, and attractive, informative displays in classrooms demonstrate the high profile given to the subject. The breadth and relevance of the syllabus are evident in the variety of activities that have been organised, most notably the pattern of visitors from the local churches. These are helping to make the subject come alive for pupils and increase the depth of their understanding. Developments since the new school was formed are good. Attitudes are good, as the profile of the subject has been raised in response to the well-planned lessons. Communication skills have improved through role-play and collaborative partnership work, but the quality of written work is limiting further development for many pupils.
131. By the age of seven pupils have a broad knowledge and understanding of Christianity and Judaism. They can identify a wide range of artefacts and symbols, and understand their significance to Christians and Jews. One Year 1 pupil had written, "The cross reminds us that Jesus died to save others." Pupils in Year 2 learn about the Torah and understand that a synagogue is a place of worship. They understand about Christian beliefs and know that these have an effect on life today. For example, they know that the Ten Commandments give a set of rules by which we live, and that Christians have a responsibility for helping others, as Jesus did. They attempt to put them into their own words, such as, "Don't steal things that are valuable to other people!" Pupils know a good range of stories from the Old and New Testaments, and relate these to their own lives. They have a sound knowledge and understanding of the significance of symbolism in religion. The quality of written work is often not very high, because many pupils have weak literacy skills, although the ideas expressed are often thoughtful and show that interpretive skills are well-developed. The loose leaf work produced in the infant classes often becomes dog-eared and does not reflect high expectations.
132. By the age of 11, pupils have deepened their knowledge about world religions and have considered some of the deeper questions about life. Their affective and social skills have developed well. Year 3 draw their own ideas of Jesus, and discuss that there is no authentic visual image of Jesus. Year 4 remember the story of Zachaeus and have some ideas about life in Jerusalem in Biblical times. They are unsure about the geographical location of Jerusalem, and several pupils did not find it easy to concentrate on the events that take place on Palm Sunday. Year 5 understand that the Qur'an is very precious to Muslims and one pupil describes Jesus as, "God in human form." Year 6 are beginning to differentiate between objective and subjective judgements and form reasoned opinions based on evidence. They can explain when they might feel emotions such as anger, fear, dislike and joy. In writing about the mosque, a Year 6 pupil had written, "I think worship means that you look out for other people."
133. The quality of teaching and learning is good, although teaching ranges from unsatisfactory to very good. Strengths include well-planned lessons, teachers' subject knowledge and varied methods that will accelerate learning in a meaningful way to a particular age group and bring the subject to life with a range of authentic

resources. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, a significant group of pupils were not paying attention to the lesson, which was not very interesting because few resources were used to stimulate interest and there was a weakness in pupil management. Learning is accelerated when teachers engage pupils in discussion by skilful questioning and make links to other subjects. Although assessment within lessons is generally good, marking is very inconsistent, and expectations of written work are variable. At its worst, this can result in lost work or work of poor quality, which hinders learning over time. Speaking and listening skills, however, are reinforced well and there are some good examples of the use of information and communication technology. One example is the "Happy Hannukah" cards made by pupils in Year 2. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and to their own sense of self in the world.

134. The leadership and management of the subject are good, with areas for development. The coordinator has drawn up a detailed scheme of work for Years 1 to 6, in full consultation with the staff. This follows the locally agreed syllabus, and is now reflected in all levels of planning, which is monitored along with pupils' work. The quality and quantity of resources have been improved, and these are used well in most lessons and assemblies. The school is fortunate in having a named governor who has strong links to the local religious communities. Areas for future development include consolidating a whole-school approach to assessment that is clear, manageable and allows each individual's progress to be seen at a glance. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching and learning is another area for further development.