

INSPECTION REPORT

**BILLINGE CHAPEL END PRIMARY AND NURSERY
SCHOOL**

Billinge, Wigan

LEA area: St Helens

Unique reference number: 104779

Headteacher: Mrs E Turton

Reporting inspector: Mrs P Cox
19178

Dates of inspection: 27 – 30 January 2003

Inspection number: 246410

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, Junior and Nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Carr Mill Road Billinge Wigan
Postcode:	WN5 7TX
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body at the above address
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Baron
Date of previous inspection:	10 November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs P C Cox 19178	Registered inspector	Design and technology	Attainment and achievement How well pupils are taught
Mr W Walker 19366	Lay inspector		How well the school cares for its pupils How well the school works in partnership with parents
Mrs K Campbell 22856	Team inspector	Mathematics History Music Special educational needs	How well the school is led and managed
Mr R Evans 20692	Team inspector	English Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Mrs J Fisher 19709	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Science Art and design	
Mr N Minns 32401	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Information and communication technology Geography Physical education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Chapel End Primary School is a larger than average primary school situated in the village of Billinge, about four miles from St Helens. About half of the pupils live in the village, the remainder travelling from further afield, and a significant number join the school during Key Stage 2. There are 419 full-time pupils on roll in the main school and 50 part-time in the nursery. The school population has grown by a sixth since the time of the previous inspection. There is a slight gender imbalance in the school, with more boys than girls. Almost all pupils are of white ethnic heritage and have English as their first language. Fifty-five pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, most of whom have a range of learning difficulties or emotional and behavioural difficulties. The proportion with special educational needs is below average and this reflects the attainment on entry to the reception classes, which is generally above average. Nine pupils have statements of special educational need, a higher percentage than the national picture. Six per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, a proportion that is below the national average. The school has achieved the Investors in People Award, the Activemark for sport and the Kitemark for early excellence.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides its pupils with a satisfactory standard of education. They achieve soundly and do well at Key Stage 1 in English and throughout the school in history and physical education. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, good at Key Stage 1 and very good in the nursery. The pupils behave well and have good attitudes to school. This is a caring school where the headteacher and her staff are very sensitive to the needs of the pupils. It is led and managed satisfactorily and provides sound value for money.

What the school does well

- The pupils do well in English at Key Stage 1, and in history and physical education throughout the school
- The teaching is good at Key Stage 1 and very good in the nursery
- The school provides well for the pupils' personal development and as a result their behaviour and attitudes are good; they become very mature and sensible
- The provision for the pupils with special educational needs is good, and for those with statements of special educational needs the provision is very good
- The school has a good partnership with the parents of its pupils, who support it well
- The pupils are provided with a good range of extra-curricular activities

What could be improved

- The provision for the more able, particularly at Key Stage 2
- The pupils' attainment in design and technology at Key Stage 2
- The systems for assessing the pupils' progress are not yet consistent or used fully
- The rigour of the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and the use of this information to plan for school improvement
- The role of subject co-ordinators in taking responsibility for raising standards in their subjects
- The planning of the timetable

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was previously inspected in November 1997. At that time it had many good features and some outstanding characteristics. Sound progress has been made in maintaining the pupils' standards in English, mathematics and science and their behaviour and attitudes to school. However, the quality of teaching has not improved as well as has been the case nationally. Leadership, management and assessment are not as strong as they were previously. Some of the issues identified during the previous inspection have been addressed: some financial planning is now linked to development planning and there are procedures to monitor the quality of teaching. However, the evaluations are not rigorous enough to ensure consistency. The targets for pupils' attainment are not incorporated into the improvement planning

as success criteria and there is insufficient checking of the way in which the curriculum is planned. However, the school has sound potential for improvement.

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	A	A	B	D
Mathematics	B	B	B	C
Science	A*	A	B	C

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

The test results at the end of Year 6 have, overall, been above the national average for some years and in English and science often well above average. The results in 2002 were above the national average in all three subjects and were average in mathematics and science when compared with those in schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. However, the results in English were below those in similar schools. A significant minority of the pupils had entered the school since Key Stage 1 and consequently many of the Year 6 pupils were not those who took the tests in Year 2. The test results were close to the targets the school had set for the pupils' attainment in mathematics, but not in English. The standards of the pupils currently in Year 6 are similar to those in 2002; their attainment in English, mathematics and science is above average and their achievement is satisfactory. The pupils are likely to reach this year's targets in English, but have not yet covered the full breadth of the curriculum in mathematics to be on course to meet those targets.

The test results at the end of Year 2 have been consistently in the top 5 per cent nationally, and in 2002 were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Compared with those in schools in similar contexts, the results were also well above average. However, the results in some subjects for both Years 2 and 6 have shown a decline over the past two years. The standards of the pupils currently in Year 2 are above average in mathematics and science and well above average in English. Their achievement is satisfactory overall, and it is good in English.

The pupils' achievement in most other subjects is satisfactory and their attainment is similar to that of pupils in other schools. In history and physical education they do well and their attainment at the end of both key stages is above that of others of their age. However, at the end of Key Stage 2, standards in design and technology are below those usually seen.

The children in the nursery do well and the attainment of most is well above those expected for their age. In the reception classes the pupils achieve soundly and their attainment by the time they enter Year 1 is higher than normal for their age.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The pupils are very enthusiastic about school and enjoy their lessons. They take care of their environment and the resources.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The pupils behave well in class and around school. Bullying is a rare occurrence and the pupils have a highly-developed understanding of the impact of their actions on others.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The oldest pupils display considerable maturity and willingly take the initiative. Even the youngest enjoy taking responsibilities around school.

Attendance	Above average. The pupils come to school regularly and on time.
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TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It was satisfactory in almost all lessons seen and was good or better in almost half. The teaching was very good in a seventh of lessons. The teaching was very good in all lessons seen in the nursery. At Key Stage 1 the teaching was good, and sometimes very good, in two-thirds of lessons observed. At Key Stage 2 it was good, and occasionally very good, in just over two-fifths. The best junior teaching took place in Year 5. These proportions were reflected in the other inspection evidence.

The teaching of English is very good at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. In mathematics, the teaching is good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. Throughout the school the skills of literacy are taught well and those of numeracy soundly. Science, history and physical education are taught well. The teachers throughout the school control and manage their classes well. When the teaching is at its best, the pupils are inspired and involved by lively teaching and interesting resources. The teacher has secure subject knowledge and gives clear explanations. The teaching is precise and the pupils have a good understanding of what they have learned.

There are some weaknesses in the teaching, particularly at Key Stage 2. While the pupils with special educational needs are catered for well, there is too little consideration of the needs of the more able. Expectations are often too low and, consequently, these pupils are not enabled to reach the standards of which they are capable in many subjects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school provides a broad curriculum that includes many interesting activities and visits. There are rich experiences in all subjects, but the school does not have adequate systems to ensure that the programmes of work for some subjects are taught consistently in all classes. There is good provision for extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. These pupils receive a high level of support to enable them to make good progress. Those with statements of special educational needs are catered for very well.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The provision for spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory and for the pupils' moral and social development the provision is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The staff have a good understanding of the pupils' physical and emotional needs and ensure that they are safe and secure. However, the assessment procedures are not consistent and not used well enough for planning the curriculum and school improvement.

The school works well with the parents of its pupils. There is a good level of information for parents, who provide the school with considerable support, financially and in classrooms.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher provides sound leadership and the school runs effectively. The actions taken to meet the priorities that have been identified are satisfactory. However, the subject co-ordinators do not take sufficient responsibility for raising standards in their subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors fulfil their statutory duties well and take a strong role in shaping the school's direction. However, while they have a clear understanding of its strengths, they do not have a sufficiently precise view of the areas that need improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. Although senior staff and co-ordinators have monitored teaching and standards in some subjects, their evaluations are not rigorous enough to identify the key aspects for development.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school has sound systems for using its resources to bring about the planned improvements.

The school has a good level of staffing and is well resourced. The accommodation is good and the school is set in an attractive environment. However, the outside area for the reception children is inadequate for their needs.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teaching is good and their children do well The school has high expectations and helps the pupils to become mature and responsible The school is led and managed well and is approachable with questions and problems Their children behave well and enjoy school The school works closely with parents, and pupils have the right amount of homework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents did not identify any issues for improvement

Fourteen parents attended the meeting held for them with inspectors and 94 returned questionnaires. They reflect a very positive view of the school. The inspection team confirms the general nature of these positive comments, but finds that teaching, leadership and management are satisfactory rather than good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children enter the nursery class at the age of three and the reception classes at the age of four with higher overall attainment than is usual for children of this age. These early learning skills enhance children's learning through the nursery and reception classes in all areas of learning. They achieve well in the nursery and satisfactorily in the reception classes. As a result they are likely to fully exceed the goals set out for children beginning Year 1 in all areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum.
2. The results of the Year 2 national tests in 2002 were well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. When compared with the results of schools with similar levels of entitlement to free school meals, all results were also well above the national average. In all three subjects the proportion reaching the expected level was well above the national average, as was the proportion reaching the higher level. Standards in 2002 were similar to those at the time of the previous inspection. The results in the national tests rose in writing and mathematics from 1997 to 2000, when they were in the top 5 per cent of schools nationally, but have fallen since then. In reading, standards were very high in 1997 and have declined in almost all years since then.
3. The teachers' assessments in 2001 indicated that the proportion reaching the expected level in science was in the top 5 per cent of schools nationally, and that a higher proportion than nationally reached the higher level. The 2002 assessments were lower, being above the national average and comparable with those of similar schools. Results in all subjects suggest that, although they have varied from year to year, the girls have done better than the boys over recent years. The boys and girls presently in Year 2 are attaining at a similar level to each other.
4. The standards of the pupils presently in Year 2 are similar to those of 2002 in English and science, but in mathematics they are not as high. Attainment is above the national average in mathematics and science, and well above in English. The infant pupils are doing well overall in English because the teaching and curriculum are secure. They achieve soundly in mathematics and science.
5. At Key Stage 2 the results of the 2001 national tests were well above the national average in English and science and above average in mathematics. Compared with the results in similar schools they were well above the national average in science, average in English, and below average in mathematics. In 2002 the results were above the national average in all three subjects; compared with those in similar schools the results were average in mathematics and science, but below average in English. A higher proportion reached the expected level in all three subjects than nationally. The proportion reaching the higher level was similar to the national average in English and mathematics, and above average in science.
6. Standards at the end of this key stage have also been variable over the years, but are similar to those at the time of the previous inspection. In 1998 they dropped significantly from a very high level but had then been rising steadily to a peak in 2000. However, they have declined in English and science since then. Nevertheless, the trend in the school's results is overall broadly in line with the national trend. Comparisons with the attainment of this year group when they were in Year 2 suggest that the pupils had made insufficient progress in English and mathematics but sound progress in science. However, a significant proportion of the year group had joined the school since Year 2, making comparisons more difficult.

7. The pupils at present in Year 6 are on course to attain above average levels in all three subjects. There is a lower proportion of pupils with special educational needs in this group than was the case last year. They are achieving satisfactorily overall because the teaching is sound. However, the more able do not do well enough because the tasks they are given do not challenge and stretch them to achieve the standards of which they are capable. The attainment of boys and girls is similar, although results vary from year to year.
8. Achievement in other subjects throughout the school is satisfactory overall, and in some subjects it is good. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in religious education, information and communication technology, geography, music, and art and design and reach similar standards to those in other schools by the end of both key stages. In history and physical education pupils' achievement is good at the end of both key stages; standards are higher than is usual for their age because the provision is good. The standards in design and technology are comparable with those in other schools at the end of Key Stage 1. However, at the end of Key Stage 2 they are lower than the pupils are capable of attaining because the planning and curriculum have not been consistent through the year groups.
9. The pupils' literacy skills are developed well across the curriculum. Those in numeracy are extended soundly through the use of measurement and the presentation of work in such subjects as science, design and technology, and geography. All pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Pupils with statements of special educational needs make very good progress and are supported very well. Support staff are of high quality and make a positive contribution towards pupils' learning. Pupils who show a talent or gift in music and sport have appropriate opportunities for developing those talents through class-work, extra-curricular activities and small group-work. The older pupils who show a gift for mathematics have the opportunity to receive teaching from the local secondary school. However, the school does not keep a record of those who are gifted or talented in other areas of the curriculum, and their progress is similar to that of the more able.
10. The school set targets for the results of the most recent national tests for the Year 6 pupils in English and mathematics. These were demanding and, although they were almost reached in mathematics, they were not attained in English. Similar targets have been set for this year; the pupils are on course for the English targets, but so far have not covered the breadth of the curriculum to be on course for those in mathematics.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Children settle quickly into the nursery and reception classes, because teachers establish good relationships and provide many interesting activities. This ensures that children are happy, well settled and involved. They make great strides in their personal, social and emotional development and comfortably exceed the goals established.
12. Pupils at both key stages have good attitudes to school. They are eager to attend and enjoy school. They arrive in good time and settle down quickly. Many pupils talk enthusiastically about current topics and extra-curricular activities. For example, a group of Year 2 pupils explained at length how a grandparent had produced a drawing in the style of Van Gogh. They were anxious to point out the drawing and added numerous details about Van Gogh's life. As well as enjoying a wide range of sports clubs, Year 6 pupils were particularly enthusiastic about a lunchtime mathematics club in the information and communication technology suite. Pupils are interested in and enthusiastic about their work. For example, pupils in Year 6 were extremely excited by the introduction of a new piece of hardware in the information and communication technology suite, and pupils in

Year 2 were very keen to make the puppet they had designed. Most pupils are eager to contribute to class discussions and to answer questions.

13. The pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into school life; they are valued and respected. These pupils have good attitudes to school. Their parents say that their children enjoy coming to school and are keen to take part in the lessons and activities it provides.
14. Overall, behaviour in lessons is good, while at Key Stage 1 it is often very good. The pupils respond quickly and quietly to teachers' instructions and have a good understanding of classroom routines. This was particularly evident in physical education lessons where highly excited and somewhat breathless Year 2 pupils responded immediately to an instruction to stop. The pupils sit quietly and listen carefully to explanations. They settle down quickly to the tasks given by teachers and work with concentration and enthusiasm, trying to complete the tasks set. Pupils take pride in their work, which is usually well presented. They treat property, including teaching resources, with a great deal of respect, though whiteboards placed on tables occasionally provide too much temptation and pupils are unable to resist fiddling with them and doodling. Although behaviour is never less than satisfactory, some pupils become fussy and chatty on occasions, although they usually respond well to teachers' reminders.
15. Behaviour around the school and outside is also good, although the pupils can sometimes be noisy at lunchtime and when moving around the school. They understand how they are expected to behave and are very aware of the school's code of conduct, which is reviewed annually by the staff and pupils. The pupils have a caring attitude towards their classmates and other pupils in the school. They are aware of the steps they should take in the event of teasing or bullying, but do not believe that there is any bullying in their school. In discussions, Year 6 pupils show a mature understanding of issues such as racism, religious intolerance and gender inequality, and demonstrate genuine respect for others.
16. The pupils develop very good relationships with adults and with each other. They work well collaboratively, for example when discussing the approach they would use to investigate the effects of dissolving solids in water in a Year 6 science lesson. Most pupils are very good at taking turns. Pupils in all year groups share computers in the information and communication technology suite with little or no fuss and work very well together. They are very polite and courteous, speaking confidently to adults, and are eager to explain the work they are doing. The working atmosphere in classrooms benefits from the positive relationships pupils enjoy with their teachers. As a result, on most occasions the pupils listen carefully to their teachers and work hard to complete tasks for them.
17. Pupils' personal development is very good. They make a valuable contribution to school life. All Year 6 pupils are expected to have at least one job, while many have more than one. They speak enthusiastically of tasks such as running a school shop and preparing projectors and music for assembly. They act as librarians and help teachers at Key Stage 1 and in the nursery and reception classes to set out equipment and file pupils' work. One pupil was particularly inspired by the opportunity this gave her to rake the sand in the nursery ready for the afternoon session. In addition, many Year 6 pupils volunteer for the 'Big Help', which involves them in activities such as litter collection and tidying the school. Pupils in every year group are given the opportunity to take responsibility on a daily basis. They enjoy these tasks and treat their monitors' duties seriously. The pupils also take a key role in organising school events such as the Christmas Fair and Sports Day.

Attendance

18. Pupils enjoy their schooling at Chapel End. The great majority attend regularly and in good time for a prompt start to be made to lessons. The overall rate of attendance continues to be high, comparing favourably with that for other primary schools nationally. There has been very little unauthorised absence in recent years and none in the past year. The school has worked hard to reduce the number of parents who take their children on holiday in term time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. Overall, teaching throughout the school is satisfactory. It was satisfactory in almost all lessons, and was good or better in 49 per cent of those observed. Teaching was very good in 14 per cent of lessons. There are, however, variations in the teaching at different key stages and in year groups. In the nursery the teaching is uniformly very good. At Key Stage 1 the teaching is good; it was always at least satisfactory and was good in 67 per cent of lessons. In 17 per cent of lessons it was very good. This quality was reflected in the other inspection evidence, such as the scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with them.
20. Teaching is satisfactory in the reception classes and at Key Stage 2; it was always at least satisfactory in reception, and was good, and occasionally very good, in 27 per cent of lessons observed. At Key Stage 2, teaching was almost always at least satisfactory, and was good, and occasionally very good, in 42 per cent of lessons. Teaching is almost always good in Year 5 and all the best teaching at Key Stage 2 was observed in this year group. However, although teaching is satisfactory overall, it is not as strong as it was at the time of the previous inspection and some weaknesses are apparent, particularly at Key Stage 2.
21. The teaching was very good in all lessons seen in the nursery class and, consequently, the children achieve well. The staff provide a warm and encouraging atmosphere where children can grow in confidence. Staff work well as a team, valuing each other's contribution, and planning a good variety of tasks. They take every opportunity to ensure a good emphasis on the development of children's personal, social and emotional development and of their language skills. The staff use their ongoing assessment effectively so that work is matched to the children's needs, and basic skills are established from the start. They are very aware of the needs of all the children, including those with special educational needs. The teaching in the reception classes is satisfactory overall. The children make sound progress because they experience regular routines and good relationships.
22. At Key Stage 1 the teachers have secure subject knowledge and plan their lessons well. Their management and organisation of their classrooms and pupils are good. The teachers have a very clear idea of what they want their pupils to learn and set tasks that are well designed to achieve these objectives. The challenging and interesting work they set for their pupils and the brisk pace at which lessons proceed demonstrate their high expectations. However, there are a few occasions when the pupils are required to sit on the carpet for too long, limiting the time they have to carry out their activities.
23. At both key stages, when the teaching is most effective, teachers carry pupils along through their own energy and enjoyment. In addition, they plan their lessons very carefully to ensure that work is matched well to all levels of attainment. There is a strong rapport with pupils, and humour is used well to encourage them and give them confidence to make a contribution. These strengths were apparent in a very good mathematics lesson in Year 5. The teacher used resources imaginatively and constantly developed the pupils' thinking skills through the focused use of questions. The level of work set and positive use of

control strategies reflect high expectations of achievement and behaviour. The teacher monitored their classroom well, aware of progress and concentration, adjusting the pace of the lesson to the pace of learning. All pupils were totally involved in the lesson and consolidated their understanding of place value very well.

24. These elements were also evident in a very successful English lesson in Year 2. The teacher inspired pupils by her own enthusiasm and the rapid pace she employed. Her planning and subject knowledge were very secure and she made very good use of a range of interesting resources. Methods and techniques were reinforced constantly and the teacher used questions very effectively to promote and check understanding. She gave very clear guidance and assessed pupils' progress throughout the lesson, adjusting the pace to match that of pupils' speed of learning. The activities were involving, challenging and well designed to build on pupils' knowledge and skills. As a result, the pupils developed a good understanding of the themes of stories.
25. The teachers assess the pupils' learning throughout their lessons and use this information soundly to adjust the pace of the lesson and to plan further lessons. However, this is not consistent enough at Key Stage 2. Some teachers adjust the pace or direction of their lessons in the light of the progress being made, and use this information to plan for further lessons, but this is not consistent throughout the school. In English and mathematics, and sometimes in other subjects, teachers set different levels of work for pupils of different levels of attainment. This is effective for the pupils with special educational needs, who usually have work that is suitable for their needs. However, it is common for the more able to be set the same tasks as those of average attainment, particularly at Key Stage 2, and this limits the progress they are able to make. Expectations of what these pupils can achieve are too low and, consequently, they are rarely stretched.
26. Support staff and parents who work in classrooms make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. They are clear about their role, and work effectively to encourage and develop pupils' skills and language. There is a good level of high-quality support for pupils with special educational needs, particularly during literacy and numeracy lessons. Most teachers provide good additional support and an appropriate level of work. However, they do not make sufficient reference to pupils' individual education plans in their daily work. In addition, teachers do not always make best use of support staff when the latter sit unoccupied for lengthy periods during the introduction to lessons.
27. Overall, the skills of literacy are taught well throughout the school and those of numeracy are taught satisfactorily. Teachers use the literacy hour effectively and have developed a range of strategies that they employ to implement this programme. They ensure that pupils have good opportunities to develop their reading and writing in many other subjects, such as history and religious education. The National Numeracy Strategy is being used throughout the school, but the implementation of its methods is patchy at Key Stage 2. There are suitable opportunities for practical work throughout the school, particularly in science, and design and technology. Teaching in science, information technology, design and technology, and geography gives the pupils a range of opportunities to develop skills in numeracy through measurement and the use of co-ordinates, tables and graphs. Teachers plan some lessons appropriately to extend pupils' research and investigative skills and their ability to work independently. Pupils undertake some activities collaboratively, but some opportunities are missed to extend the pupils' ability to work together in pairs or groups.
28. Pupils' work is marked regularly and accurately. There are numerous encouraging comments, and some instances of marking being used to identify the next step for learning and set targets. However, this good practice is not consistent. Homework is used soundly; pupils throughout the school receive a satisfactory programme, which is often linked to classroom work.

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

29. The school provides a curriculum that is broad and balanced. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught and religious education is provided in accordance with the St Helens locally agreed syllabus. The previous report found that the content of the curriculum was good in most subjects, but that there were weaknesses in the provision of design and technology and some aspects of science. Provision for science is now satisfactory, but there are still weaknesses in the way that the school's sound curriculum for design and technology is implemented at Key Stage 2. The report also stated that information and communication technology was 'not yet fully operational'. The school's new computer suite is now fully in use and standards have risen accordingly. The curriculum meets most pupils' intellectual, social and physical needs, but its relevance for more able pupils is diminished by the lack of planning to stretch and challenge these pupils.
30. The curriculum for the nursery and reception children is good. It includes all areas of the Stepping Stones, the Early Learning Goals and religious education. The teachers know the needs of the children well and there is a good emphasis on teaching the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics. They provide good opportunities for role-play, practical activities and visits into the local environment that successfully stimulate children's creative development and their knowledge and understanding of the world.
31. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented successfully at both key stages and the school has introduced approaches to reduce the gap between pupils' attainment in reading and writing in the junior classes. The organisation of the timetable has not been given sufficient consideration. Many English and mathematics lessons last over an hour, even in Years 1 and 2. In addition, most classes allocate further time for other English activities, such as spelling and handwriting. Cumulatively this diminishes considerably the time available for other subjects. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 experience a range of activities, such as cycling and French, for an hour each week. They move through these activities, receiving a 'taste' of each, but this limits the time available for teaching the National Curriculum.
32. Teachers' planning is satisfactory. Subject policies and schemes of work are up to date and based on nationally published guidelines, which ensure that broad outlines are provided from which medium- and short-term plans are derived. Provision for personal and social education is satisfactory. Sex education is taught through the 'life processes' component of the science curriculum with the support, as appropriate, of the school nurse. Education in the use and misuse of drugs is provided through the good curriculum for pupils' personal, social and health education, again supported by appropriate agencies, including a biennial visit from the 'Life Education Centre' bus. Each class has a learning session in the bus that stays at the school for a week.
33. There is good provision for extra-curricular activities, particularly in music and sport, which enhance pupils' learning opportunities. These are mainly for pupils in Years 3 to 6, though a Share project in Year 1 helps parents understand the curriculum their children are experiencing. The pupils have the opportunity to join a range of sporting clubs, including netball and football, as well as judo for Year 4 pupils and fencing for Year 6. Both the netball and football teams are mixed. The teams take part in matches against local schools and are successful. The school netball team recently represented the local authority in the Merseyside games and won the competition. Good provision is made for pupils who wish to learn to play a musical instrument, with woodwind, keyboard, strings, guitar and brass lessons available, as well as a recorder group. There is also an active school orchestra, which rehearses each week. The large choir is in demand to perform in

the community. No auditions are held for the choir, which is open to all pupils in Years 3 to 6.

34. The community features strongly in the life of the school. There are good links with local churches and their clergy; classes visit the church regularly. The community policeman visits the school to advise pupils about personal safety, road safety and accident prevention. Members of the community visit the school to talk to pupils about their war memories or the history of Billinge Church. The school has good links with local secondary schools in mathematics and technology, with pupils spending a day or more in these departments. There are also good links in music.
35. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Those with statements of special educational needs receive very good provision. The curriculum is relevant and the new Code of Practice is securely in place. Documentation is of high quality and the procedures for referral are good. All pupils on the special educational needs register have individual education plans of good quality, with clear, realistic targets for improvement that are reviewed and updated regularly. All support staff maintain detailed records of progress. Arrangements for class-based work and the withdrawal of pupils from lessons for extra support are well balanced. However, the curriculum is not designed well for the more able pupils because much of it is aimed at the expected level for the pupils' ages.

Provision for pupils' personal development

36. The school continues to make good provision for pupils' personal development through its strong ethos and the very good relationships that exist across the school. There is a very good policy in place covering all aspects, including citizenship. This contributes to pupils' knowledge and understanding of how to lead confident, healthy and independent lives. A formal programme for personal, social and health education is developed well and links effectively with the citizenship curriculum. Provision for spiritual development is evident in the school's planning, where there is an appropriate emphasis on values beyond the functional. In some lessons, pupils are excited and interested and contribute fully in their work. For example, in the nursery the respect and care that the children receive contribute well to their spiritual development, and most children respond very well by being polite, kind and helpful to others. In a Year 5 science lesson, the teaching promoted in all pupils a feeling of self-esteem through sustained encouragement and appropriate praise.
37. Assemblies are planned well, but in some, while the lesson content is appropriate, teaching is too lengthy, not involving the pupils sufficiently. This curtails the time for personal reflection and results in some restlessness and lapses in pupils' interest and concentration. The opportunity to discuss issues such as foxhunting is a good example of the way in which feelings and a sense of values are nurtured. The school values pupils' achievements in and out of school and celebrates them well. The contribution that spiritual development makes to their personal development continues to be satisfactory.
38. The school's provision for pupils' moral development contributes very well to their personal growth. There is an extensive system of rewards and punishments, shared with parents through the school's prospectus and a compliance behaviour form, which parents sign when their children start school. The school's strong ethos and very good relationships underpin this successful provision for pupils' moral development.
39. Teachers nurture pupils' social development particularly well. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop self-esteem through co-operation, competition and involvement in social activities. Pupils take part successfully in inter-school competitions. Day visits, along with an annual residential visit for the pupils in Year 6, not only promote independence, but also social co-operation. The pupils learn to work and play together and to co-operate well, despite the larger classes in Years 4 to 6. They are encouraged to

think of people outside the school community, for example by collecting for UNICEF. The very good examples set by adults, and the relationships within the school, underpin the success of the approach.

40. The provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Opportunities for pupils to study their own cultural traditions are developed well through the curriculum, in subjects such as history, English, and religious education. In religious education they study the traditions and beliefs of other faiths. The pupils make visits to support their work in the classroom, such as in history, geography and science, but currently there are not many visitors to further enhance their work. Pupils are made aware of life in multi-cultural Britain. They are taught about festivals held by people of different faiths, such as the Chinese New Year. However, there are few opportunities for pupils to appreciate the diversity and richness of our society by meeting representatives and people from other cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. This is a caring school where the interests of the pupils are paramount and where the headteacher and her staff are very sensitive to the needs of those in their charge. The good practice found at the time of the previous inspection has been enhanced by more recent reviews of health, safety and child-protection procedures. Very effective policies are in place to promote good behaviour and eliminate bullying. The school has succeeded in maintaining the good levels of attendance. However, the procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are not yet developed sufficiently and are not being used to best effect in planning the curriculum and school improvement.
42. The warm and trusting relationships that most teachers develop with their pupils help to create an environment in which even the most vulnerable grow in maturity and self-esteem. From their earliest contacts with parents, and through their daily accessibility, teachers get to know their pupils in the context of their families, and this gives the pupils the confidence to share their worries and get the support they need to cope with the problems of daily life. All staff and governors have a responsible attitude towards health and safety matters. The policy reflects local authority practice and makes appropriate provision for regular risk assessment and routine maintenance. There is a dedicated medical room and all members of support staff receive training in first aid. The school complies fully with locally agreed child protection procedures. The designated person is very experienced and the headteacher ensures that guidance in this area is made available to all members of staff. Teachers make good use of the curriculum to promote healthy living and build the self-confidence of pupils.
43. Throughout the school, teachers and support staff continue to place a high emphasis on good behaviour, both in lessons and at play. Pupils know what is expected of them and are well aware that bullying, or any form of oppressive behaviour, is not tolerated. When misbehaviour occurs, it is dealt with promptly and properly. The policy for discipline and behaviour management is very effective and, although there are examples of challenging behaviour, the headteacher has not found it necessary to use the sanction of exclusion in recent years. Frequent reminders are given to parents and pupils about the importance of regular and prompt attendance. The school's approach has been successful in maintaining good attendance levels.

Assessment

44. Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress are good in English and satisfactory in science, but they are limited in other subjects. The school is aware of the need to improve and standardise its approaches to assessment in other subjects and has identified this in its improvement plan. It has been beset by computer software problems, which have caused it to change its assessment system, thus delaying the progress of analysing

its statistical information. Therefore, the arrangements for assessment have not been sufficiently developed since the previous inspection. As a result, staff do not have enough precise information about what pupils can and cannot do in many subjects of the curriculum. New assessment systems were about to be introduced at the time of the inspection, but cannot yet have had a significant impact on pupils' attainment and progress or help to direct curriculum planning or school improvement.

45. The national test results for English, mathematics and science are analysed to identify areas of strength and weakness. These appropriate systems are used to distinguish pupils who require further support and to group and set pupils for work in English and mathematics. However, the school is at an early stage in using this data fully, particularly as a tool for evaluating the effectiveness of the provision. The use of assessment for grouping the pupils for different levels of work is not altogether effective. Many pupils are reading books that are either too easy or difficult for them. In group-work there are many instances of the pupils having work set at an inappropriate level and, consequently, it is apparent that they have been placed in the wrong group. The school is at an early stage of setting targets for pupils' attainment. Those targets that have been set are rarely referred to in marking and are not evident in most classrooms or many pupils' books. Teachers do not often use their marking to show whether the pupils have achieved their target or have made the expected progress in the lesson and, therefore, are not using fully this valuable tool for assessment.
46. Arrangements for the assessment of the youngest children in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory, with procedures based on the local authority profile. Children are assessed carefully through daily observations and regular assessments throughout the year, to plan the next steps of learning for individual children, and records are passed appropriately on transfer to Year 1. During their time in the reception classes, children are assessed regularly in all the areas of learning on their achievement against the Stepping Stones and Early Learning Goals. Clear records are kept. These provide useful guidance for all staff. Written detailed reports are completed yearly to inform parents of how their children have settled into school and the progress they have made at the end of the year.
47. Procedures for the assessment and review of pupils with special educational needs are very secure, although day-to-day assessment, as with other pupils, is less secure. The assessment co-ordinator is working hard to put in place more effective systems for the monitoring and evaluation of pupils' academic progress. She recognises that the collection and analysis of assessment data are key factors in raising standards, particularly in subjects other than English, mathematics and science, and that currently they are not having sufficient impact throughout the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. The beneficial partnership between school and home that was praised in the previous inspection report is still very much a feature of life at Chapel End Primary School. The governors, headteacher and members of staff continue their efforts to involve parents more fully in the education of their children. Those parents who completed the questionnaire or attended the meeting with the inspectors have expressed very positive views of the school. They show appreciation for the school's endeavours and for the dedication and professionalism of the teachers. With very few exceptions they have indicated that their children enjoy school, make good progress, and benefit from good teachers who have high expectations and help them to become mature and responsible.
49. Parents are satisfied with the homework provision and have great respect for the leadership and management of the school. A small number of parents would like to see more activities outside of lessons. The inspection evidence is that the school provides well in this area. The provision of extra-curricular activities by a school is voluntary and is very

much dependent on the personal circumstances and goodwill of individual members of the school community.

50. The quality of information provided for parents is good and there are very good features. The school has clear lines of communication and parents have ample opportunity to become aware of events and developments at the school. The prospectus and governors' annual report are well-presented documents that fully comply with legal requirements. The regular and frequent newsletters are informative and interesting. The notice board is up-to-date, accessible and used well. Parents of younger children have access to a dedicated book to record messages when they have been unable to speak directly with teachers.
51. The pupils' annual reports are detailed and give parents a clear idea of their children's work and effort over the previous year. They identify targets in the major subjects, which is helpful, but most lack the precise terminology that would enable later evaluation to be made. The parental consultation evenings make appropriate provision for parents to discuss children's personal progress and development in a formal way, whilst the daily accessibility of teachers provides very good opportunities for parents to discuss any concerns they may have.
52. Parents of children with special educational needs are properly involved in diagnosing problems and are given good support by the teachers. They are kept well informed of progress and attend review meetings regularly. They regard the work of the school highly and appreciate its strong commitment towards helping all pupils to succeed. Links with outside agencies are also very good.
53. Parents generally respond well to being treated as partners in their children's education. Most support their children with their homework, often contributing artefacts to enrich the teaching opportunities. They make very effective use of the reading diaries as a means of communication with their children's teacher. Many parents and other members of the community come in to school to work with teachers, listening to readers, supporting classroom activities, and helping to extend the curriculum in such areas as French language tuition, woodwork and cookery. Others work very hard to organise fundraising occasions. Their efforts are well supported by the wider community and they have been very successful in contributing to the learning resources, notably for information and communication technology and the development of the outside play area. In these and other ways they have been able to increase the learning opportunities for their children and enhance the quality of life within the school.
54. The headteacher and her staff have worked hard to build on this goodwill by extending the skills of parents as educators. They have had mixed success. A course designed for parents new to the school suffered from a lack of space, and most parents have shown a reluctance to travel to meetings where they may learn more about the curriculum. Nevertheless the school is continuing with its efforts, following a strategy outlined in the school improvement plan for the current year. The partnership between school and home is fruitful in many ways and makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning, behaviour and personal development.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

55. Overall, the quality of leadership and management provided by the headteacher is satisfactory. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work hard and have a strong commitment to the care of pupils. They work well together and are held in high regard by parents. However, despite their dedication, the leadership and management are less effective now than at the time the school was previously inspected. Although some issues from the last inspection report have been addressed successfully, others have not. The focus on providing a new computer suite has been very effective and has resulted in higher standards in information and communication technology. However, not all priorities have focused on raising standards by targeting areas of weakness with enough precision. Consequently, no one has an accurate perception of why the more able pupils do not reach the standards of which they are capable. The overall quality of teaching has not improved sufficiently and the school's strategic planning still lacks a clear long-term vision.
56. The headteacher has been in post five years and has managed well the organisational difficulties of an expanding school. Her focus on improving the provision for pupils with special educational needs has also been effective. These pupils achieve well and are totally integrated into every aspect of school life. The staff as a whole show a strong commitment towards achieving the school's aims of developing pupils as well-balanced members of society. The headteacher has shown good judgement in appointing high-quality new members of staff who are skilled practitioners. These teachers are a positive presence within the school. However, whilst most staff have adapted well to change, some have been too slow to alter outdated practices, impeding the ability of the whole staff to work as a team. The lack of consistency has contributed to lower overall standards of teaching and learning in the juniors than in the infants.
57. The headteacher and other senior members of staff maintain a regular commitment to observing classroom practice and this is an improvement since the last inspection, when it was identified as a weakness. However, this monitoring lacks depth and rigour. The systems to monitor or, more importantly, to evaluate provision are not sufficiently focused on standards or the impact of teaching. Consequently, weaknesses have not been identified or prioritised with accuracy. This lack of rigour is a major factor in the school's inability to identify some areas in need of development and to raise the overall quality of teaching.
58. Although planning for school improvement is adequate overall, some aspects are not effective enough. This aspect of strategic planning was criticised in the previous report. The school improvement plan does not provide a clear sense of direction for the school after the current academic year or pinpoint priorities with sufficient accuracy. Although the plan rightly takes careful account of government initiatives, it does not include major areas of concern, highlighted after an analysis of pupils' test results. These concerns are being identified too late to be included. For example, although current planning adheres well to subject priorities, it does not focus attention on major issues, such as the declining number of pupils achieving higher levels at the end of the juniors. Some priorities are very appropriate, but others are not. All subjects are included and there is no clear understanding of which issues should be the most important.
59. The senior management team is hard working, highly committed and supportive. It has wide-ranging responsibility and there is a strong commitment to joint decision-making. It meets regularly to discuss issues, prior to whole-staff discussion. However, the team does not have a clear enough overview of the whole school's strengths and weaknesses.
60. The school is aware of the need to develop the role of subject co-ordinators and has taken appropriate steps to ensure that the staff who are new to their responsibilities receive relevant training. Co-ordinators manage budgets and resources effectively. They identify

areas for future development, but, because most do not monitor the quality of teaching, they do not always target areas in most need.

61. The two co-ordinators for special educational needs make a good contribution to the arrangements for pupils. There is a well-structured policy, which has been updated to take into account the recommendations of the new Code of Practice for special educational needs. Pupils are included in the full range of curriculum opportunities. Records are well organised, detailed and up to date. Resources have been carefully arranged to make them as accessible as possible to teachers and classroom assistants. The headteacher takes a particular interest in special educational needs. The school deliberately invests more of its resources in special educational needs than allocated, which ensures that a good level of classroom support can be provided. This has a beneficial effect on pupils' progress.
62. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good. The work in these classes clearly reflects the published aims and values of the school, and its positive ethos underpins all aspects of its work. Relationships are good and pupils and staff work very well together. Personal behaviour and development are promoted and successfully achieved. Adults establish trust through care and commitment, which successfully promotes good relationships and supports the inclusion of all pupils. As a result, a positive, caring atmosphere and an effective learning environment permeate the Foundation Stage.
63. The school has a commitment to equal opportunities and the inclusion of all pupils. In most areas, particularly in the provision for the pupils with special educational needs and ensuring the equal treatment of boys and girls, this works well. However, although results of national tests show a decline in the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels, classroom monitoring has not identified the reason for this group's underachievement.
64. The headteacher has handled the implementation of performance management well. It is fully in place. Targets that stem from discussion are linked effectively to whole-school and personal professional development needs. There are encouraging signs of constructive improvement. The induction programme for teachers, newly qualified or experienced, ensures a secure start and provides a good level of support.
65. The governors make a purposeful contribution to the work of the school and fulfil their statutory duties well. They show considerable enthusiasm, commitment and loyalty. There is a good balance of experience and expertise. The chair of governors is well informed and has a good working knowledge of the school. Governors have improved their working practices since the previous inspection through more-active committee work and, to some extent, by becoming more involved in the monitoring process. The curriculum committee receives regular updates from subject co-ordinators at governors' meetings. However, governors do not monitor or evaluate the work of the school with sufficient rigour. They rely on information provided by the school. Consequently, they do not have a clear enough view of the weaknesses in provision and have only been aware of some, but not all, of the reasons for the recent decline in standards.

Financial management

66. The school's day-to-day finances are in good order. The school's administrator manages them efficiently and provides the headteacher and governors with up-to-date information, enabling them to monitor expenditure in a routine way. Proper records are maintained on specific grants and the school is able to demonstrate that they are used appropriately. All persons concerned with finance have a sound understanding of the how to gain the best value from the decisions they make. They liaise closely with the local authority in seeking to ensure that the school gets good value for expenditure.

67. Following the points raised in the previous inspection report, governors have reviewed the arrangements for presenting financial information. There is now a clear and explicit spending plan identifying the amount and source of intended expenditure over the coming year for premises and maintenance. There is also an itemised list of planned expenditure for the various areas of the curriculum. However, weaknesses remain in two aspects of the planning. There is no identifiable link between the intended expenditure and the educational priority of raising standards. The plan does not outline the school's educational priorities over the longer term, showing how the use of resources is linked to the achievement of the school goals.
68. The governors take a very responsible view of their role in financial planning. Their deliberations are open to scrutiny and they are able to account fully for their decisions on expenditure. However, they do not focus sufficiently on raising standards as an educational priority, or take a broad, strategic approach to monitoring and evaluation. Consequently, there are no precise targets for the future that guide the school's improvement plan for the longer term that can be used to inform the budgetary process.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

69. Teachers are well qualified and appropriately experienced to teach the school's curriculum to all pupils, including those with special educational needs. They are well assisted in their teaching by skilled and enthusiastic support workers who fully understand their role and make a valuable contribution to the quality of education provided. Induction procedures are good and the school works in partnership with teacher training colleges to provide effective initial teacher training. The accommodation is good. Most classrooms are light and bright. In the main they provide attractive teaching areas, although conditions are cramped in the more senior classes due to the large numbers on roll. The additional teaching spaces provided in the open-plan design are, however, not always used to best effect to reduce the crowding.
70. The main assembly hall, used also for dining, is of inadequate proportions to comfortably house the whole school. Good use is made of display about the building to celebrate pupils' work and to enhance the learning environment. The outdoor facilities are very good. They have been developed imaginatively to provide a stimulating area for creative play, and the nature area is a very attractive learning resource. A weakness is in the provision of a shared outdoor play area for both the nursery and reception children. This arrangement inappropriately limits access to the facility for the reception children. Learning resources are good for English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, geography, physical education and music. In other subject areas they are satisfactory. Most resources are of good quality. They are readily accessible and are used appropriately.
71. Although the school has modified its external access for disabled pupils and has fitted stair lifts and ramps, it recognises that it still has work to do to comply with the forthcoming Disability Act.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

72. In order to improve the provision for pupils and the standards they achieve, the governors, in partnership with the headteacher and staff, should ensure that:

(1) the more able pupils receive a curriculum and teaching that meets their needs, so that they reach the standards of which they are capable in all subjects;

(paragraphs 7, 9, 25, 29, 35, 55, 63, 102, 104, 108-111, 114, 122-3, 127, 136-7, 144, 157, 167 and 178)

(2) the design and technology curriculum is covered consistently at Key Stage 2 so that the pupils reach the expected standard in all aspects of the subject;

(paragraphs 8, 29, 134, 136-7 and 140)

(3) * the assessment procedures in all subjects are developed so that:

- the pupils' attainment and progress are tracked through the school;
- realistic and specific targets are set for them;
- assessments are used accurately to group pupils and match the work they are given to their abilities;

(paragraphs 28, 41, 44-5, 47, 58, 117, 133, 140 and 178)

(4) the monitoring and evaluation of standards of the quality of teaching are rigorous and are used:

- to identify the key areas for improvement;
- to give precise success criteria for planning for school improvement;

(paragraphs 55-9, 65 and 67-8)

(5) * the role of the subject co-ordinators is developed so that they take responsibility for monitoring and planning for raising the standards in their subjects;

(paragraphs 57, 59-60, 63, 106, 117, 127, 133, 140, 145, 152 and 168)

(6) the organisation of the curriculum and its timetabling is revised so that all subjects receive sufficient coverage through the school.

(paragraphs 29, 31, 113 and 161)

In addition to these issues, governors should consider the following when preparing their action plan:

- * the play area is inadequate for the reception children.

(paragraphs 70 and 90)

* These issues have already been identified by the school for improvement.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	95
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	43

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	0	13	34	46	2	0	0
Percentage	0	14	35	49	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.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	25	419
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	27

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	5	50

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	37
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	20

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	27	23	50

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	25	25	26
	Girls	23	23	23
	Total	48	48	49
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	96 (98)	96 (100)	98 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	25	26	26
	Girls	23	23	23
	Total	48	49	49
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	96 (100)	98 (100)	98 (100)
	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	38	30	68

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	29	32	37
	Girls	28	29	29
	Total	57	61	66
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	84 (94)	90 (83)	97 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	23	25	33
	Girls	28	26	29
	Total	51	51	62
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	75 (88)	75 (80)	91 (100)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
410	0	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
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)	15
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26:1
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	312

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25:1
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	45
Number of pupils per FTE adult	10:1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

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	2
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.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-02
	£
Total income	849,974
Total expenditure	857,670
Expenditure per pupil	1,985.35
Balance brought forward from previous year	56,531
Balance carried forward to next year	48,835

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 21%

Number of questionnaires sent out	469
Number of questionnaires returned	97

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	33	3	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	62	36	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	40	3	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.97%	48	46	2	0	4
The teaching is good.	66	32	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	49	6	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	22	1	3	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	75	25	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	52	38	5	3	2
The school is well led and managed.	67	28	3	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	60	37	3	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	43	10	2	12

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

73. The provision for all children in the Foundation Stage, including those with special educational needs, is sound, with some very good features, and there has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. Relationships are very strong and supportive and this helps create the children's very positive attitudes to school. All children have access to all opportunities whether working individually, in groups, or with the whole class. Overall, teaching is satisfactory. It is very good in the nursery and satisfactory in the reception classes. Its particular focus on play and the provision of a broad and relevant curriculum, along with the effective organisation of the classroom resources, enhances the children's learning. The experienced learning-support assistants give effective support.
74. The liaison between the nursery and the reception classes has improved and this enables staff to build better on the children's attainment. Teachers regularly check children's progress against the Stepping Stones and Early Learning Goals identified for children in the Foundation Stage, and record their findings. Progress in all areas is satisfactory. Teachers are clear about what children need to do next, but in some reception lessons the same level of work is provided for all children, and the activities are over-directed, so that all children, particularly the more able, do not always work to their full potential. The designated outdoor space is inadequate for the reception children. The school is aware of this and it is itemised in the school's improvement plan.
75. Children enter the nursery class in September when they are three years old and they transfer to the two reception classes in the September when they are four. A good range of information for parents, pre-visits and initial part-time attendance mean that children are well prepared and soon settle happily into school. Most children enter the nursery with a range of skills above those usually found. In the nursery, the children achieve well in all six areas of learning, and in the reception classes their achievement is satisfactory. Incidental opportunities to promote skills in these areas are incorporated skilfully into all aspects of the curriculum, particularly in the nursery. Children are on course to exceed the goals set for them by the end of the reception year.

Personal, social and emotional development

76. The teachers place an appropriate emphasis on developing personal and social skills. Effective systems of transition between home and school help nursery children to settle quickly into the school routine, and they are happy and feel secure. They are eager to learn and behave very well, which establishes a good springboard for future learning. The adults, through their relationships with each other and effective teamwork, provide very good role models for children, and as a result the atmosphere in all classes is positive. Children are happy, well settled and busy because they enjoy the many interesting activities set out for them. They become more independent, move confidently round the activities, and dress and undress independently for physical activities in the hall. However, when they work with adults they sometimes wait for prompts or instructions before tackling tasks that they know how to do.
77. A good example of this is during the well-ordered nursery 'snack time' during which the children sit quietly and chat to one another whilst receiving their snacks and cartons of milk from the adults. This adult support limits the number of choices and decision-making opportunities, such as the sense of a 'family' occasion, with children learning to share and pass round the food on offer and thank each other for these small services. Teachers place a great emphasis on developing social skills. Adults are aware of individual needs and provide good opportunities for these aspects to be fostered through a range of well-

organised activities. The love and care that the children receive contribute well to their spiritual development, and most of them respond very well by being polite, kind and helpful to others.

78. All adults are very good at valuing children's contributions and effort. The children are interested, play collaboratively and are keen to contribute in lessons. They concentrate without supervision for an appropriate length of time and express opinions with adults. They are given good opportunities to reflect on the beauty of nature, and become aware of moral codes of behaviour through the study and care of animals, pets and plants. Teachers make sure that children understand the routines so that they appreciate the need to abide by the simple rules, and they share and play fairly. In the reception classes, children's understanding of right and wrong is deepening. They share, collaborate and generally listen well, not only to adults, but also to each other in discussions. Individual and class endeavour is acknowledged very effectively. In one very good reception class end-of-lesson activity, all children watched with bated breath whilst 'magic dust', which enabled the recipient to wish, was sprinkled on a child's head and a 'rocket' was launched as an appreciation of the class's effort. The atmosphere was electric.

Communication, language and literacy

79. Most children get off to a good start in acquiring communication, language and literacy skills, because staff are very effective in providing opportunities for the children to talk, and to clarify their thoughts, ideas and feelings, particularly in the nursery. Most children achieve well in lessons as a result of good teaching by experienced and effective adults. Standards are similar to those found at the previous inspection. Speaking and listening skills are taught well through a variety of songs, games and stories, and question-and-answer sessions. The children listen closely and there are many opportunities for them to engage in extended discussions. As a result, speaking skills are developed well. Many children show a developing knowledge of language construction in their vocabulary, and have the skills and confidence to communicate effectively in formal situations. Most children in the nursery communicate well and answer, in simple sentences, questions posed by books. Interesting role-play situations such as 'Postman Pat's Post Office' and 'The Three Bears' house contain appropriate costumes to enhance role-play and help in developing language and social skills, but at times there are missed opportunities to exploit speaking and listening.
80. The children are given many early opportunities to develop their writing and handwriting skills, which are introduced systematically throughout the Foundation Stage. In the nursery all children write their own name legibly. They post 'letters' they have written, using random letters, mark making or scribble, and some more able children write short, recognisable words and sentences. In all classes the adults make frequent use of scribing children's ideas so that writing and the associated reading skills can be developed. Many reception children write short simple sentences well with neat and well-presented handwriting. Opportunities have improved for spontaneous independent writing, but, although there are note pads in the role-play areas, other related resources are few and adults do not intervene sufficiently to extend this activity. A structured approach to handwriting in the reception classes ensures that these skills develop well and children take a pride in their achievements. Resources are good overall and classroom computers are used well to reinforce literacy skills.
81. Elements of the Stepping Stones curriculum in the nursery and the literacy framework in the reception classes are used appropriately. There are good opportunities from the nursery onwards for children to acquire basic reading skills and activities. Shared reading activities and recognition of letter sounds are used well to promote children's understanding. There are early opportunities for the nursery children to recognise the letters of the alphabet and associate them successfully with the initial sounds of familiar words. For example, the nursery staff asked the children to identify the sound of the initial

letter of their name on their snack mat before collecting it to take to their snack table. All adults exploit all opportunities to draw children's attention to letter shapes, sounds and words. In all classes, regular story-telling sessions promote enjoyment and familiarity with a range of books.

Mathematical development

82. Teaching of this aspect is good overall. In the nursery the children develop sound mathematical skills through the effective use of practical activities, number rhymes, games and songs. They count to five and beyond, compare weight and size, know some colours and attempt to write numbers to five. They sing a range of songs, nursery rhymes and jingles to reinforce their understanding. Teachers also use number jigsaws, construction bricks and puzzles to encourage recognition of shapes, patterns and familiar colours.
83. In the reception classes, elements of the National Numeracy Strategy are used well to develop number concepts. Children recite numbers to 10, accurately recognise numbers to 9 and count forward and backwards in ones with some prompting. The more able children order and use numbers to 20, and confidently count forward and backwards in ones to 15. The teachers use a variety of resources, such as 'wipe cards', games of dice and play dough, to enhance the teaching and reinforce learning. In one well-planned activity the reception teacher made good use of an animal game so that the children, working as two teams, rolled a dice and collected 'animals' for their team.
84. The children co-operate very well in the oral part of lessons and at tabletop activities, but often they all complete the same task or worksheet and this limits the progress the more-able children might make. Children recognise shapes, such as squares, rectangles, triangles and circles, and use them to make houses, trees, rockets and figures of 'My Mummy'. Activities such as number jigsaws, role-play in the 'Post Office' and counting exercises on the computer are used effectively to improve number recognition. The nursery nurses, learning-support assistants and parents are used well to support groups and individuals during mathematical activities, including sand and water play, to ensure that all children are fully involved and make appropriate progress. Standards are above those expected by the time children move into Year 1.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

85. The teachers provide many sound opportunities for learning within the classroom, during outdoor activities and on visits out of school, to ensure that children achieve soundly in their knowledge and understanding of the world. As with other areas of learning, standards are above those usually found on entry to Year 1. Teachers plan well around themes such as habitats, buildings and local services, and these help the children to see the connection between ideas and interests. For example, reading *Postman Pat* and *Fireman Sam*, and then having visitors such as the fireman and the postman, helps them to see the connection between real and fictional situations.
86. Reception children used toy vehicles to identify, mostly successfully, the difference between pushing and pulling. The teacher used their excitement and wonder to extend their scientific knowledge of other creatures, through reading books such as *The Three Little Pigs*. Children in all classes have sound opportunities to explore sand, water, colour, shape and texture. Most children observe carefully, ask suitable questions, and are able to predict outcomes and test out their ideas. They explore materials by baking, dissolving and melting. For example, nursery children were able to discuss their 'ice cube' experiment and exclaimed, excitedly, 'It melted in the water and in my hand'.
87. Effective use is made of the school grounds, the immediate locality and other places of interest to extend children's knowledge and understanding of the world. For example, the reception children went on a 'Spring Walk' in the school grounds and the nursery children explored the movement and feeding habits of birds, after observing them in the

playground. The children learn about significant events in the calendar year and the church year, such as Harvest and Christmas. There is less provision for children to learn about other major world faiths by way of resources, visits and visitors.

88. All children enjoy using their computer skills and make sound progress. They use the classroom computers regularly and several adults give good individual support so that children can operate the mouse well to use counting and reading programmes. The richness of the provision always provides staff with a fertile opportunity for developing reading, writing and mathematical understanding in a meaningful context. As a result of the good teaching, most children are likely to achieve above the levels expected for their age by the time they move into Year 1.

Physical development

89. The children make good gains in developing physical skills, particularly in the nursery, as a result of good teaching and the opportunity to experience a range of appropriate resources. They have a developing sense of space and bodily awareness, and use tools and equipment safely and with good dexterity. The children acquire satisfactory skills in movement. They learn to develop control and co-ordination, to express their feelings and emotions and to work co-operatively in groups. They learn to take turns and share resources well, using space safely and imaginatively. The outdoor provision available for physical development is used effectively. The nursery children use their outdoor area daily, weather permitting. Adults ensure that they challenge the children to develop an awareness of space, with the 'push/pull' toys and creatively through the imaginative selection of other resources and the large climbing equipment available.
90. The children in the reception class have only limited access to the nursery outdoor playground, which restricts the use of an area for spontaneous outdoor play. When they have access, the children use the space well as they ride, pedal, steer and run confidently, using the range of wheeled toys and climbing frame available. They enjoy the session and learn to co-operate and work as a team. One indoor physical education lesson was seen. In this reception class lesson, good use was made of the video and the teacher encouraged the children to create different kinds of shapes and to use their imagination as they skipped between and around other children. The majority of children moved with confidence and imagination, and in safety, and showed awareness of the space in the hall and of others around them. However, at times creativity was lost, because of the teacher frequently reprimanding some children.
91. The children make good use of a variety of tools for drawing, colouring and cutting, and most show a high level of dexterity as they work with pencils, crayons, scissors and paintbrushes. They roll, squeeze, push and kneed malleable materials, and their manipulative skills are developing well. For example, the nursery children made pigs' faces from clay and reception children made faces from paper bags and collage materials. All the planned activities provide the staff with opportunities to develop children's hand control, for example in building with bricks, writing, colouring, cutting out, painting and sticking.

Creative development

92. Good teaching in the nursery and a sound experience in the reception classes ensure that the children are given a rich variety of opportunities to develop their creative skills and to express their feelings through exploring media and materials, music, dance, story-making and imaginative play. They have access to a wide range of tools and equipment. This promotes sound achievement and standards are likely to be above those found nationally on entry to Year 1. Children experience colour, texture, shape, form and space in two-dimensional art and enjoy regular opportunities to explore colour through painting, printing, collage and crayoning. Teachers ensure that activities help to develop the main themes and topics of the lesson. In the nursery, for example, following the study of 'People Who

Help Us', the children created large, attractive paintings of the local lollipop lady, the visiting fireman and the fictional Postman Pat, using vivid colours.

93. No music-making session was seen, but the children sang *The Muffin Man* enthusiastically and confidently in one video lesson. The children sing tunefully and with zest the familiar songs, nursery rhymes and jingles that are used to reinforce their knowledge and understanding of literacy and numeracy. There are good opportunities through role-play to explore ideas which the staff have introduced through investigation, stories and shared experiences, for example working in the nursery 'Post Office', mark making, and acting out the characters in traditional stories such as *The Three Bears*. Adults intervene well to extend the children's learning, and a good quantity and quality of resources stimulate their imagination, language extension and decision-making skills. Children use a painting program on the computer to create imaginative artwork. Their computer skills, overall, are good and used with enjoyment and confidence.

ENGLISH

94. By the end of Year 2, the pupils' standards are well above the national average in all aspects of English. They are also well above the standards found in schools of a similar background. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils' standards in Year 6 are above average in speaking, listening and reading. In writing they are average. These standards are similar to those attained by last year's pupils in the national tests and assessments. In comparison with those in similar schools, pupils' standards in Years 3 to 6 are below average overall. Pupils did not attain the targets that the school had set.

Speaking and listening

95. In Years 1 and 2, pupils speak readily and articulately. They answer questions in whole sentences and often at length. Teachers provide good opportunities for developing pupils' speaking, for example in role-play about learning in a Victorian classroom. Very good relationships in the classroom mean that pupils listen attentively to the teacher and to each other.
96. The good progress in speaking and listening made in Years 1 and 2 is maintained in Years 3 to 6 and the pupils achieve well. They enjoy discussions, value each other's opinions and are eager to contribute. A good example of this occurred when a group of Year 6 pupils considered bias in newspaper reporting. They saw how the arguments over foxhunting could be swayed by controversial headlines. They used good vocabulary in composing their own headlines. When talking about their reading, the pupils spoke enthusiastically about favourite books and authors and gave several good reasons for their choice. For example, 'The author doesn't talk down to children'; 'She makes you want to go on reading'. Discussions about school life were well ordered. Pupils at all levels spoke in good English, taking turns to speak, and enjoyed describing their activities.

Reading

97. The pupils make good progress in reading in Years 1 and 2. Year 2 pupils read fluently and accurately. They read dialogue with good expression and observe punctuation marks carefully. During the inspection those heard reading gave good accounts of their stories and the characters in them. Reading an unseen non-fiction text, they coped well with more difficult ideas and vocabulary, suggesting that their reading books are at too low a level of challenge. When reading unfamiliar words, they showed good knowledge of how to sound out the syllables and build up the words. Questioned about what they had read, the pupils showed good understanding and recall of facts. All pupils read with interest and enjoyment. Their reading records show that they read regularly at home, both school books and their own books.

98. The above average standards of reading are maintained in Years 3 to 6. Progress is particularly apparent in Years 5 and 6, where some pupils reach very high standards of reading and comprehension. The more able pupils successfully read passages from non-fiction texts and show that they understand them. Many pupils belong to local libraries and explain readily how to find a book using the computerised Dewey system. They have a good knowledge of how to find information through either the Internet or encyclopaedias and other information books. Less able pupils, including those with special educational needs, also make good progress. They read with a good degree of accuracy and understanding.

Writing

99. In Year 1 many pupils write sentences confidently, using capital letters and full stops correctly. They have a good knowledge of vocabulary and use words like 'musician', 'flying saucer' and 'favourite' in their sentences. Many link sentences together with 'and' and 'but'. Their spelling is good, with familiar words spelt correctly and others spelt recognisably. Pupils, including those of lower attainment, correctly write and sequence sentences, for example when giving instructions on 'How to make a jam sandwich'. Most pupils are carefully forming and spacing letters and words.
100. Year 2 pupils build well on this foundation. Their writing is extended by good descriptive words and phrases, for example 'my heart pumps blood around my body' and 'there is a terrible flood in town'. In stories again there is dramatic use of language: 'suddenly Sarah screamed' and 'the twinkling stars'. A good number of pupils use speech marks correctly. Most pupils take good care with the presentation of their work and successfully change their printing style into joined-up writing. Over the two years the pupils develop high standards of punctuation, vocabulary, and sentence and paragraph construction, and an awareness of different styles. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support from teachers and classroom assistants. Tasks are appropriate for their level of development and they make good progress in writing, achieving well.
101. Grammar, vocabulary and sentence construction are developed well in Years 3 and 4. Pupils gain a sound understanding of technical features such as parts of speech and tenses. Much of this work is concentrated into sentence writing and the completion of work sheets. Although pupils write in different styles, such as stories, description, letters and poems, they do not have sufficient opportunity to transfer their successful sentence work into extended writing. This slows the good progress made in earlier years.
102. In Years 5 and 6, pupils concentrate more on extended writing, particularly in Year 6. For example, in a good Year 6 lesson pupils were given sufficient time to write a newspaper report on a foxhunting episode. A good number of pupils completed this, writing in an appropriate style and using strong phrases such as 'the frenzy of it all was overwhelming', and 'the saboteurs were fuming with anger'. Pupils write in a variety of styles such as play-scripts, narratives, poems and descriptions, for example about Henry VIII in history, some of which is of good quality. However, there is insufficient development of pupils' extended writing in the junior classes to raise their standards beyond the average.
103. Pupils enjoy English. Their behaviour and attitude to learning in lessons are good and often very good. Pupils maintain their interest and concentration to the end of what are often long lessons. They work together productively when asked and are anxious to complete tasks successfully. Most pupils present their work carefully and have developed neat and legible handwriting. This makes a positive impact on the progress they are able to make.
104. Teaching is good overall. In the infant classes it is mostly very good. Teaching is satisfactory in the junior classes, sometimes good in Years 3 and 4, and good and sometimes very good in Years 5 and 6. The teachers plan their weekly work in

accordance with the framework of the National Literacy Strategy. Planning is detailed, but does not sufficiently specify tasks appropriate to pupils' different levels of attainment. In most of the lessons observed, most of the pupils were expected to work on similar tasks. Whilst teachers expect the more able pupils to achieve more, they do not sufficiently challenge them to do so through their planning. Weekly evaluations and good procedures for assessing pupils' reading and writing achievement enable teachers to adjust their planning to focus on particular areas for development. Planning for pupils with special educational needs is concentrated in the group-work activities. There is insufficient reference in this planning to the pupils' individual education plans. The introduction of the Further Literacy Support scheme in Year 5 is already supporting the less able pupils to develop their reading and writing skills.

105. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject and most lessons are interesting and stimulating to the pupils. Good use is made of information and communication technology in producing finished pieces of written work. For example, Year 4 pupils produced 'acrostic' poems using the letters of 'JANUARY' to begin each line. As well as writing some good lines of poetry, they used different fonts, colours and graphics to create individual pieces. Teachers' questioning of pupils is good. They allow pupils to develop answers and often target those who would otherwise remain passive. Teachers take care to ensure that all the pupils are included in the teaching and learning. They manage their lessons well, even when they are too long, especially in Years 1 and 2, when some lessons last well over the hour. Marking of pupils' work is good. Teachers give pupils detailed comments on their work and how they can improve it. However, sometimes marking does not correct basic errors of punctuation and spelling, or criticise poorly presented work.
106. Resources for English are good. There are well-stocked libraries for both infants and juniors, and graded sets of reading books for every level. The junior library is well organised and run, and has recently introduced a lending section of non-fiction books as a result of a questionnaire completed by pupils. The English co-ordinators regularly monitor teachers' planning and evaluations, and have compiled a portfolio of work assessed to National Curriculum levels to assist teachers with their own assessments. Some monitoring of teaching and learning has been carried out.

MATHEMATICS

107. In the 2002 National Curriculum tests, the school's results at the end of Key Stage 1 were well above average when compared with those in schools both nationally and in similar contexts. Just over half the pupils reached higher levels. At Key Stage 2 the results were not as high. They were above the national average, and average when compared with those in schools in similar contexts. However, the results are only part of the picture. Standards at both key stages have declined since 2000. Although the progress the pupils make has been maintained at Key Stage 1 since the previous inspection, it has not at Key Stage 2. The test results suggest that progress between the ages of 7 and 11 in 2002 was well below average. Girls consistently outperform boys at Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2, girls recently reversed a trend and outperformed the boys. This was attributed to the fact that all the Year 6 pupils with special educational needs in 2002 were boys.
108. The factors that contribute to the pattern of results are complex. The popularity of the school has led to an increase of pupils in the juniors and, consequently, many of the Year 6 pupils were not those who attained the test results in Year 2. Pupils who start in small infant classes may be taught at Key Stage 2 in classes with 10 or more extra pupils. Understandably, despite the school's best efforts to compensate, they do not receive as much individual attention in Key Stage 2. Many new pupils transfer from other schools. Approximately half of these pupils do not reach the expected level. The school has started to address the problem, to some extent successfully, by providing extra high-quality

support staff in class to support less able pupils. These pupils achieve well, but at the expense of the more able. The school has also reduced its admission number in order to reduce class sizes in the long term. At the time of the previous inspection, pupils of all abilities made good progress. Currently, more able pupils, particularly those in large junior classes, do not make as much progress as they should and the school has been too slow to respond to their underachievement.

109. However, these factors only present part of the picture. Further evidence taken from examples of previous work gives greater insight into why the overall quality of teaching and learning is not high enough to raise standards, particularly in Key Stage 2. Teachers throughout the school do not allow pupils enough opportunity to think for themselves, and many rely heavily on textbooks and worksheet-based exercises that neither challenge nor inspire. Some pupils only have superficial knowledge of concepts because they have little opportunity to devise their own strategies for working out answers. Marking is not used well to help pupils who do not understand. Often, pupils of all abilities complete the same work. The less able make most progress; the most able do not make enough.
110. The standards of pupils currently in Year 2 are above, rather than well above, average. Although pupils develop very secure basic numeracy skills and have a sound knowledge of space, shape and measures, they have weak independent learning skills. Consequently, standards in this area of the mathematics curriculum are not as high. The pupils currently in Year 6 display good knowledge within a narrow range of the mathematics curriculum. The majority have good numeracy skills, but weaknesses in the development of problem-solving skills remain. Their data-handling skills are also weak. The pupils are not yet on course to meet the targets set for this year group in the 2003 national tests, because many are not acquiring a secure breadth of knowledge and understanding. In addition, the more able pupils are not presently achieving the standards of which they are capable because they are not always receiving work that matches their needs or ability.
111. By the age of seven, the more able pupils display secure knowledge of the concepts of odd and even, and order two-digit numbers confidently. Some already understand equivalence in their fraction work. Pupils of average ability count competently forwards and backwards in twos and fives. Less able pupils are reasonably secure with simple addition but less confident with subtraction. In the lessons observed, all but the most able made good progress. However, further evidence taken from samples of previous work demonstrates satisfactory, rather than good, progress over time, because pupils of all abilities cover the same work at the same level. For some it is too easy, whilst others need considerable adult support because it is too hard.
112. By the age of 11, pupils of all abilities demonstrate confidence with up to five- and six-digit numbers. Their mental recall is generally fast and they display secure understanding when plotting positive and negative co-ordinates or defining the properties of more complex shapes. Once again, however, work is very directed and pupils follow prescribed strategies for working out problems rather than developing their own methods.
113. The overall quality of mathematics teaching is not as high as that of English teaching. The school's monitoring and evaluation programme has had little effect on raising standards because it lacks rigour and has not identified or rectified weaknesses in any systematic way. Currently, not all teachers are secure with the structure of the National Numeracy Strategy format. In addition, lengthy mathematics lessons do not encourage them to make the most effective use of time. Activities frequently stretch to fill the time available and pupils lose concentration.
114. Overall, standards of teaching in lessons observed were good in the infants and satisfactory in the juniors. The higher quality of infant teaching goes some way towards

explaining why standards are higher at the end of Year 2. In Key Stage 1, teaching was always at least satisfactory, and was good in two-thirds of lessons. In a successful Year 2 lesson the teacher used very interesting and effective methods to introduce work on subtraction. Pupils understood words such as 'minus' and 'less than' and were able to justify their answers because the teacher constantly challenged and questioned. By the end of the lesson less able pupils could use number lines confidently to find '11 fewer', whilst more able pupils were beginning to identify the pattern to their answers with a good level of understanding. However, even in this good lesson the most able did not have enough time to move on to their 'challenge' work because they had to complete other, simpler, work first.

115. In the juniors, a more varied picture emerges. The teaching was satisfactory in half of lessons observed, with a small amount of good and very good teaching. There was also some unsatisfactory teaching. Some teachers provide pupils with a variety of interesting activities that are very appropriate to individual needs. Others provide one activity that is too easy for some and too hard for others. The clearest example of the two extremes was most evident in two junior classes. In one very high quality lesson the teacher moved rapidly from a review of the week's work to a revision of place value and decimals. Every part of the lesson had a good level of challenge for even the most able. Expectations were very high and pupils gave of their best. As a result, pupils of all abilities made very good progress in their understanding of decimals and achieved high standards. By contrast, pupils in another lesson spent almost half the lesson listening to the teacher's careful introduction. For some pupils who needed extra support this time was used very appropriately, but for many the lengthy introduction left them with too little time to move on to work that matched their ability. Consequently, a significant proportion of pupils made too little progress.
116. Planning is detailed in all lessons and teachers manage pupils particularly well. Pupils have positive attitudes towards the subject. They are extremely resilient. Even in lessons where they are bored, they behave well. Homework is used well to support class work. Activities are often interesting and provide rewarding opportunities for parents to work with their children. Pupils develop mathematical skills adequately in other subjects, such as when they link tally charts and line graphs with their science work. Information technology programs are starting to be used to support pupils' learning and the new computer suite is already used very effectively on a regular basis to extend numeracy skills.
117. Recent initiatives, such as implementing new assessment procedures and analysing data, have signalled a move in the right direction. However, much remains to be done. Data analysis does not identify weaknesses with enough precision and does not relate sufficiently well to the specific needs of individual pupils. Target-setting is not yet firmly established and the school has only recently started to track individual pupils' progress. Subject monitoring is another area in need of improvement. The two subject co-ordinators have a strong commitment to improvement, but do not yet have a clear overview of whole-school provision or standards. In addition, although much monitoring has taken place, the huge variations in the quality of marking, the volume of work produced and inconsistencies in teaching methods have not been identified effectively enough.

SCIENCE

118. Standards of attainment at the ages of 7 and 11 are above the national average in all strands of science. For 7-year-olds this is slightly weaker than at the time of the previous inspection, and for 11-year-olds it is similar. In 2002, the pupils were performing well above the national average at the end of Year 2 and above at the end of Year 6. Over time there have been variations in achievement between boys and girls, with older girls outperforming boys. However, the inspection now shows no significant difference in attainment between boys and girls. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in their acquisition of scientific knowledge, and their progress is now enhanced by improved curricular provision and planning. Careful attention is given to ensure that all elements of science are included in pupils' learning and there is a developing emphasis on practical and investigative work. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress, due to the additional help and support they receive, and all pupils are included in all science activities.
119. Pupils throughout the school achieve a good volume of work, ensuring that all aspects of the science curriculum are covered. All pupils have secure first-hand experience of observing, discussing and recording what they see and know, although there remains a tendency for some teachers to over-direct their pupils' work. From Year 1 onwards, pupils learn to plan their own investigations competently to make predictions and observations about changes taking place, but the use of worksheets in some classes inhibits the more-able pupils' learning. Pupils understand that, when they are carrying out tests, conditions must be the same and that information can be recorded by using graphs and charts. This makes them learn to think and act like scientists and has a significant effect on their learning and the progress they make.
120. By the age of seven, pupils have a sound knowledge of humans, animals, plants and materials and are beginning to understand the principles involved in electricity and forces. They recognise the differences between living things, recognise the properties of materials and carry out simple experiments on forces such as pushes and pulls, light sources and basic electrical circuits. For example, through topics such as 'Ourselves' and 'Habitats', pupils confidently recognise, compare and label the major parts of plants and the bodies of humans and other animals. Most pupils, including the less able pupils, have a good understanding of the needs of living things, such as the conditions necessary to sustain life and growth. They understand the different stages of growth in humans and make attractive 'Senses Books' to demonstrate their developing understanding.
121. Most pupils make accurate predictions; they concluded from their investigations that materials such as balls, sponges and rubber would revert back to their original shapes when squashed, bent, twisted and stretched. Most Year 2 pupils record their results competently and use their knowledge and understanding thoughtfully to explain their findings.
122. By the age of 11, pupils have developed their skills in observing, recording and explaining their observations. They make sensible predictions, understand fair tests, test their ideas and record their work using different methods. Pupils write accurate descriptions of what they have done, work well in groups to solve problems and draw sensible conclusions from their investigations. Most pupils organise their work carefully. In a successful Year 6 lesson the pupils were able to predict logically what was likely to happen in an experiment, for example when dissolving various substances in water. They used set criteria to conduct a fair test and recorded their findings accurately. However, in some other lessons there are fewer opportunities for the pupils to investigate and record their work independently. Most pupils record their work effectively, using an increasing variety of strategies such as block graphs, charts, diagrams and text. However, the more able pupils are not always given enough challenge in their work. Literacy and numeracy are well

supported. Science also supports the school's strategies for personal, social and health education, and pupils learn about the importance of a healthy diet, how to achieve a high standard in personal hygiene and the care necessary when using medicine and other drugs.

123. The quality of teaching and learning in science continues to be good overall. It is always at least satisfactory, often good, and sometimes very good. Improvements have occurred since the previous inspection and teaching has several good features. Lessons are planned carefully from a scheme of work based on national guidelines to ensure that all elements of the science curriculum are present. The pupils develop skills and knowledge in a logical order as they progress through the school at their individual level of work. However, whilst work is generally well matched to different groups of pupils so that work is meaningful and most pupils make good progress, the more able are not always catered for adequately. While there is provision for pupils to conduct their own investigations, in many classes they do not have sufficient opportunity to plan their investigations.
124. Where teaching is good or better, teachers have a good command of the subject and well-planned lessons build on pupils' prior knowledge. The lessons are structured effectively so that an appropriate amount of time is spent on good questioning and answering, and the ends of the lessons are used purposefully to discuss and demonstrate pupils' work. For example, in one investigative lesson on gravity in Year 5, the teacher's effective question-and-answer session and subsequent tasks challenged all pupils to strive for greater attainment. Very good use was made of everyday resources to measure, with a Newton meter, the downward pull of gravity, and the teacher's insistence on the correct interpretation of results led to pupils' increased knowledge and understanding, not only of science, but also of the correct use of decimal places.
125. Some teaching, although satisfactory overall, does not focus sufficiently on the needs of individual pupils. Teachers encourage pupils to use correct scientific vocabulary, which they do well, and mostly with understanding, but some less able pupils find difficulty in remembering. Sometimes the length of the instructions at the beginning of the lesson and the lack of opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their findings at the end result in many losing interest. In these lessons pupils are sometimes restless and lack concentration, and more able pupils are not challenged sufficiently to work with intellectual effort.
126. In the past there was limited regular access to computers to record the results of pupils' investigations, such as in the form of graphs and charts. This has now been resolved with the installation of a computer suite. Marking takes place regularly, remarks are encouraging and most praise effort, but there are fewer comments on how pupils can improve their work.
127. The two co-ordinators work well together and have identified appropriate areas for development. They are beginning to improve the teaching of investigative work as the teachers' confidence improves, particularly in the area of physical processes. However, throughout the school the impact is less effective in the classes where teachers use worksheets inappropriately. This limits pupils' opportunities to develop independent planning and recording skills. Teachers assess pupils' skills regularly. The school has adopted new formal assessment procedures to track the pupils' progress and identify strengths and weaknesses in the different areas of science. These are intended to give the teachers a clearer picture of how well the pupils have progressed and how to plan future work. Only limited use is made of assessment information to set targets to track pupils' progress. Co-ordinators monitor planning and sample work, but do not yet monitor classroom practice or standards over time, or analyse trends in attainment. This limits their ability to share good practice or support other staff. Overall, resources are good, accessible and used well.

ART AND DESIGN

128. Standards of attainment are at the level expected for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress due to the additional help and support they receive, and all pupils are included in all activities. Few lessons were seen, but the pupils' past work, planning and displays show that the key elements of art and design are taught, the statutory requirements are met and some of the work is linked to topic work. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. The provision throughout the school has improved with the newly-introduced curriculum and planning, and the introduction of a regular and systematic study of famous artists and their work. Art enhances work in other subject areas, such as history and English, and attractive displays provide good stimuli for further learning.
129. Throughout the school, pupils' two-dimensional work is based on observational drawing and sketching. Sketchbooks show that pupils develop their ideas and have satisfactory knowledge and understanding of drawing techniques, using pencils, pastels and paints. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are given many opportunities to explore colour, pattern, texture, line and tone, and to combine and organise them for different purposes. They experience a suitable range of media and apply colour effectively in pastels, chalk, paint and crayon. Pupils' still-life drawings are of sound quality. Pupils in Year 1, for example, draw self-portraits and appliances from the 1950s, such as telephones and transport, representing carefully what they see. They sketch still-life compositions resembling Cézanne's paintings of fruit, linked to their work on food. Year 2 explore further the elements of line and tone and recreate attractive sunflowers in the style of Van Gogh, using crayons, paints and tissue paper. They link their art and design skills effectively with history and produce large collages of Victorian houses and scenes, using junk and reclaimed materials, and create wax-resistant pictures of 'The Great Fire of London'.
130. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 build satisfactorily on the knowledge and skills acquired earlier, but the sketchbooks used from Year 3 to Year 6 to develop and refine ideas show that some pupils' knowledge and understanding of different skills and techniques are limited. Attractive work linked to pupils' work in history, such as Egyptian art and hieroglyphics, Roman mosaic pictures and Tudor portraits, indicates a good understanding of historical and cultural influences on art. While some pieces are in paint and collage, many rely on a more limited range of pencil crayons and felt pens. Little work on textiles was seen. However, in one Year 3 class, attractive samplers, depicting a 'Winter Scene', illustrated the successful combination of a range of weaving and embroidery techniques and the use of appropriate colours, such as silver, white and blue.
131. Pupils examine body gestures, movements and facial expressions in different artists' work and re-create pictures in similar styles. In one of the Year 5 classes there was a wide range of good-quality pupils' work in the style of a range of artists. Pupils had successfully created, in collage and white paint, stickmen in the style of Alberto Giacometti and they had made carefully balanced compositions using vivid coloured paper in the style of Piet Mondrian. LS Lowry's work was well represented; for example, pupils had skilfully applied pastels to sketch 'The Funeral Party' and 'Yachts'.
132. In the few lessons seen the teaching was satisfactory. The curriculum is planned to ensure that pupils experience a wide range of activities. The teachers were clear about what they wanted the pupils to learn and resources were prepared well. In some lessons, although teachers demonstrated the appropriate techniques satisfactorily, the pupils' skills were weak. In one lesson the teacher's input to the lesson was limited as time was shared with other pupils doing design and technology work. In another class, although the lesson and resources were well prepared to support the mixing of primary colours, there was little intervention to take the pupils' knowledge forward. There are no visits to art museums to stimulate creativity.

133. There are two co-ordinators, who share the responsibility for art and design. The new co-ordinator for Key Stage 2 brings specialist knowledge to the subject and has a clear understanding of what the school does well and where improvements could be made. The school recognises that assessment of pupils' art and design skills and the monitoring of teaching need development to enable the co-ordinators to share good practice and raise standards. Resources are good overall, but the school library's range of books on art and design is sparse. The school is conscious of this and has plans to purchase more books, particularly studies of famous artists.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

134. Standards at Key Stage 1 are similar to those in other schools, but lower at Key Stage 2. Achievement over time and improvement since the last inspection, when the consistency of the implementation of the curriculum was an issue, have been limited because the subject has received too little attention until recently. The pupils at Key Stage 1 continue to achieve soundly, because the programme being taught develops their key skills and knowledge. Those with special educational needs in these classes also achieve satisfactorily because they are supported to do their best. However, the pupils at Key Stage 2 are not yet doing well enough because the curriculum is not being taught thoroughly in all classes and, consequently, they do not develop their knowledge and understanding sufficiently.
135. By the end of Year 2 the pupils have had a sound experience of the range of materials required and their making skills are average for their age. They use wood and cardboard to make their models of vehicles and fabric to make puppets. The oldest pupils have sound skills in cutting and attaching wood and card, and use tools confidently. Their needlework skills are competent and their stitching is neat and careful. They have a satisfactory knowledge of mechanisms, such as axles, that they apply competently in making models of vehicles. Pupils make sound plans for their own models and label the parts. They make informed decisions, based on their knowledge of properties, about the materials they are to use.
136. At the end of Key Stage 2 the pupils' skills are less well developed because their experience in the past has been inconsistent. They use their scientific knowledge appropriately, for example in putting lighting or alarm systems into model houses, but have rarely used construction kits. The pupils have suitable opportunities to design their own models and to evaluate the results. However, their ability to make their own designs is sometimes restricted by the use of units focused on designing Tudor streets or Greek temples. The pupils have covered much of the range of the curriculum, by testing structures, making soft toys and working with food. Those in Year 5 make competent wooden models with moving parts, using cams. However, the pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 have only a limited understanding of the characteristics and uses of mechanisms because these are not taught thoroughly enough in some other year groups.
137. The pupils at Key Stage 1 are making sound progress and achieve satisfactorily because the programme of work is appropriate. Those at Key Stage 2 are not yet achieving their potential because the programme is unbalanced and too little attention is paid to the teaching of mechanisms. Those with less ability in the subject are given additional support in order to enable them to make similar progress to their peers. However, the more able are not developing their skills to a higher level because the work is often set at the same level for all.
138. The teaching is satisfactory overall throughout the school and those aspects that are covered are taught thoroughly. In most lessons the pupils are given appropriate tasks that develop their skills and build on those already acquired. Class control is good and the

activities move at a sound pace. In a successful lesson in Year 2, the teacher used discussion and the sharing of ideas effectively to explore the possible types of puppet the pupils could make. Constant and supportive questioning and encouragement promoted a good pace of work and pupils were guided to develop their ideas well. They had valuable opportunities to apply the range of skills they had been taught previously and to use their imagination.

139. Teachers plan their lessons carefully and ensure that suitable resources are available. Explanations are usually clear and pupils are managed well. However, activities sometimes move rather slowly and in some lessons the pupils have too little opportunity to make choices about materials or methods. Very little use is made of information and communication technology to aid design, or of the library to research. There are some appropriate opportunities throughout the school to use and extend numeracy skills through measurement and to develop literacy skills through careful planning and evaluation.
140. There have been some improvements since the previous inspection, but the school has not accorded the subject sufficient attention. The co-ordinators provide enthusiastic support for their colleagues and monitor the planning to ensure that the subject is being taught regularly. They have introduced an appropriate scheme of work and ensured that there is a good supply of tools and materials. However, they have not been able to ensure that every teacher follows the scheme consistently. Not all teachers at Key Stage 2 have a sufficient understanding of the demands of the subject or of how the pupils' knowledge and skills should be developed. Therefore, the plans the co-ordinators have formulated for the development of design and technology are not adequate to remedy the shortcomings. Procedures for assessment are informal and have little impact on the planning of work in the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

141. Standards of attainment are similar to those found in many schools, although the use of maps and plans is a particular strength of the school, and pupils' attainment in this area is higher than the standards usually found. Overall, however, attainment is lower than it was at the time of the previous inspection. No lessons were seen at Key Stage 1, but evidence was gathered from scrutinising pupils' work and talking to them. By the end of Year 2, most pupils name the four countries that make up the United Kingdom. They compare different localities in the United Kingdom competently when looking, for example, at buildings found at the seaside and at home. They describe holiday journeys with enthusiasm.
142. The pupils in Year 3 use an appropriate range of maps and plans, and make explanations of birds-eye views. They have investigated the effects of changing weather patterns. Work in Year 4 builds soundly on these mapping skills and pupils draw plans at a variety of scales. By Year 5, the pupils are beginning to recognise the effect humans have on their environment; they identify problems related to themselves and use their geographical understanding soundly to design a quarry reclamation scheme. Pupils in Year 6 compare and contrast maps and plans at various scales with photographs, identifying similar information presented in different ways. They have a satisfactory understanding of six-figure grid references. The development of these skills and the use of data handling methods make a sound contribution to the pupils' numeracy skills.
143. Overall, the quality of teaching in lessons seen was satisfactory, but there is some unsatisfactory teaching. This is a less positive picture than at the time of the previous inspection. Where the teaching is satisfactory, teachers draw effectively on pupils' prior learning, as in Year 6 when the teacher referred to previous map work to help pupils understand annotated plans. Teachers explain tasks clearly and use questioning to

extend pupils' understanding. They provide a range of interesting resources to make studies of faraway places such as India seem real to pupils.

144. Teaching is less effective when time is not used well. Even when the teaching is otherwise satisfactory, the teachers' introductions are often overlong and lessons do not develop the pupils' independence sufficiently. As a result, their attention sometimes slips. In both the lessons seen and in pupils' work there was an over-reliance on worksheets, with work seldom matched to the different abilities of pupils. As a result, lessons do not often offer sufficient challenge to more-able pupils or develop literacy skills as well as they could. However, support is used effectively to enable less able pupils and those with special educational needs to participate fully in the curriculum. During the lessons observed, the pupils' behaviour was satisfactory, although they were often easily distracted.
145. Subject leadership in geography is sound. There is a detailed and systematic scheme of work and the co-ordinators have a clear overview of the organisation of geography in the school. Since the last inspection the school has adopted the national model scheme of work. However, in some areas the school felt that existing schemes were more suited to children's needs and retained these plans. The co-ordinators have monitored teachers' planning, but they have not been able to monitor the quality of teaching in the school or to develop a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses. Resources for geography are good.

HISTORY

146. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were above average at the end of both key stages. Pupils of all abilities made good progress because teaching was mostly good or better. They developed skills well and there were good examples of individual research work.
147. Current standards present a similar picture, although there is not as much evidence of good individual research work. Standards at the end of both key stages are above those found in other schools and pupils of all abilities achieve well because teaching is interesting and informative. Pupils love the subject and it makes a strong positive contribution to their personal development.
148. History is a very high-profile subject. A wealth of educational visits and other activities bring the subject alive and enhance learning very effectively. Attractive displays combine written and creative work well. They provide good evidence of how the subject successfully develops literacy skills and links strongly with other areas of the curriculum. The time allocation is used effectively to provide a good balance of coverage. The scheme is well structured and ensures that the pupils develop skills in a systematic way.
149. The younger pupils are well informed about life in the 1950s. In discussion, they describe the period as the time 'when the Queen got her job'. They know that Elvis Presley and rock and roll were important features and some find information from sources such as videos, books, photographs and newspapers. They use a small range of good quality computer programs, but information technology does not yet make a strong contribution towards learning. Year 2 pupils are knowledgeable about Victorian schools. They know that the teachers were very strict and used the cane. Individual pupils give very realistic interpretations as they act out the role of the teacher and pupils in their 'Victorian classroom' area. Other pupils discuss Victorian washday in impressive detail. They talk about the 'posse r' and 'dolly' in their well-informed explanations. They demonstrate, on a simple level, a clear sense of the differences between the past and the present.

150. When pupils return to the topic of Victorians in Key Stage 2, they demonstrate increased maturity and depth of knowledge. They identify the differences between the past and the present in much greater detail than younger pupils and have acquired a wealth of information. Year 4 pupils talk competently about primary and secondary sources when finding evidence. They demonstrate impressive factual information about Tudor Britain and have a good insight into contrasting lifestyles. Pupils in Year 6 display good understanding of life in the Second World War. Older pupils use language well and give a real feel for the period in their letters home after evacuation. In all year groups, high-quality displays, with appropriate artefacts from the period, stimulate and create further interest. Pupils research information on topics such as 'The Blackout' through interviews with older members of the local community and use the Internet effectively to gain further knowledge.
151. Teaching throughout the school is of good quality. At Key Stage 1 an equal number of very good, good and satisfactory lessons were observed. At Key Stage 2 the teaching was at least satisfactory and most was good. It is not surprising that pupils enjoy history and standards are high. In many year groups, teachers' own enthusiasm for the subject is infectious and pupils are motivated to find out more. In lessons, introductions are informative and teachers provide an exciting range of activities to extend knowledge and challenge the more able. For example, in a good Year 4 lesson the teacher related her introduction on the topic of learning from a Tudor inventory very effectively to pupils' own understanding. She started the lesson by asking pupils to guess who a person might be from a written list of their belongings. This simple activity, related appropriately to pupils' experience, eased the way for them to tackle a more difficult Tudor inventory. The whole classroom was a hive of activity as the teacher and her helpers encouraged pupils to gain further knowledge through good-quality discussion. Pupils of all abilities made good progress, because the whole lesson was structured and organised well to aid learning.
152. The curriculum co-ordinators provide a good level of informal support, but have not been given the opportunity to monitor the quality of classroom provision. Consequently, they do not have a clear enough overview of provision. The time allocation for history is adequate, but teachers choose how and when they teach their termly topics. In addition, the quality of planning does not do justice to the high standards of teaching. It gives little information about what pupils of different abilities will achieve by the end of a lesson or about the breadth and depth of coverage. Examples of pupils' previous work do not reflect the standards achieved in the class lessons observed or displays. The school is aware that some teachers rely totally on worksheet-based activities and that there is considerable variation in the quality and quantity of work between year groups and classes.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

153. There has been considerable improvement in the provision for information and communication technology in the school since the last inspection. The building of a new suite for information and communication technology, including an interactive whiteboard, has provided all classes with the opportunity to experience whole-class lessons to develop skills in information and communication technology. Stand-alone computers are available in classrooms for use in other subjects. All staff have completed training provided by the New Opportunities Fund and a new scheme of work has been introduced to ensure skills progression, particularly at Key Stage 2.
154. Standards of attainment at the end of both key stages are similar to those found in most schools, although there are some aspects that are stronger than others. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. Pupils throughout the school log on and off, open and close programs and save work in folders. Pupils in Year 2 search soundly for information on a CD-ROM and are aware of the need for correct spelling to find information when searching. They talk confidently about the limitations of information and

communication technology. Pupils in Year 4 combine pictures and text competently in a word-processed document and manipulate text in a variety of ways, changing the style, colour and font size to suit their purpose. Pupils in Year 5 interrogate a database soundly to abstract information, using the search facility to identify a criminal from a witness's description. By the end of Year 6, the pupils design, create and adapt spreadsheets to record information.

155. There are no opportunities for pupils to experience control or sensing work at present, as the required software is not yet available. However, the co-ordinators are aware of the difficulties in getting access to this area of the curriculum and are seeking advice from the local authority about which software to purchase. The pupils use the resources for research in some subjects, such as history, geography and science, but they do not use the full potential of the technology across the curriculum.
156. Overall, the quality of teaching is always at least satisfactory, with some good teaching in Years 5 and 6. Where the teaching is good, teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. They use effective questioning and pupils' mistakes to consolidate knowledge and to draw out understanding. The teachers use an interactive whiteboard effectively, breaking down the lesson into small, manageable steps for pupils, for example when demonstrating a spreadsheet in Year 6. The teachers encourage the pupils to use appropriate vocabulary, as when Year 5 pupils discuss 'records' and 'fields' when learning about databases, or Year 2 pupils refer to the home page, back button and icons when searching a CD-ROM. Work is linked well with other curricular areas; for example, Year 5 pupils work as detectives in literacy and carry out searches as detectives as part of their work on databases. The teachers use support staff effectively to enable children with special educational needs to take full part in the lesson.
157. Even when the teaching is satisfactory, it is less effective on occasions when the work set is not matched well to pupils' abilities. Challenging work is rarely set for more able pupils and there are few opportunities for them to work independently, for example on research tasks. The more able pupils are sometimes taken laboriously through tasks that they can complete independently.
158. Pupils' attitude to lessons is good and sometimes very good, and this makes a positive contribution to their learning. They enjoy using the information and communication technology suite and treat the equipment with respect. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils were visibly excited when introduced to new hardware. Pupils concentrate well when watching demonstrations using the interactive whiteboard and participate sensibly and enthusiastically when asked to demonstrate to their classmates. Behaviour is less good only when children are seated at their computers with nothing to do while waiting for teachers to check their work.
159. The leadership in information and communication technology is good. The co-ordinators are enthusiastic about their subject and have made a significant contribution to improvements in teaching and learning and to raising standards in the subject. They have supported colleagues effectively and ensured that all staff are developing confidence in using the suite. They have monitored teachers' planning and, with the support of senior management, have monitored the quality of teaching in the school. They have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching and of pupils' levels of attainment. Resources for information and communication technology are good.

MUSIC

160. When the school was inspected previously, standards were above average at the end of both key stages. Pupils of all abilities made good progress throughout the school. There was considerable expertise among the staff, good specialist teaching and high-quality extra-curricular and peripatetic provision.
161. Despite a reduction in the amount of teaching time devoted to teaching music, the school has managed to maintain its high-quality extra-curricular and peripatetic provision and still makes good use of its staff expertise. Although current overall standards are not as high, pupils throughout the school achieve standards similar to those found in other schools, and pupils of all abilities make at least satisfactory progress. Music is still an important part of school life. Older infant pupils learn to play the recorder and a good proportion of junior pupils play keyboards, brass, strings and guitar. Many of these pupils achieve well above average standards. The school orchestra develops pupils' group music-making skills very effectively. Not only is the school choir of high quality, but choir practice is also an important social occasion and a large number of junior pupils take part. They can join without audition, so that all who are interested can participate. Staff give willingly of their time to make the occasion a fun learning session.
162. All pupils have many opportunities to participate in high-quality productions and school concerts. Some take part in more high-profile performances in the wider community. Pupils also have experience of a wealth of visits from guest musicians, such as the 'Manchester School of Samba' and 'Key Strings'.
163. By the age of seven, pupils develop clear musical preferences. In discussion, one stated very assertively that he liked to listen to the violin, while others liked all music. Pupils know an adequate range of songs and display secure literacy skills as they remember difficult words whilst singing *Think of a World*. Many activities are linked well with other subjects. Year 2 pupils recall with enjoyment making up music and songs in their lesson on Victorian street sellers.
164. Pupils throughout the school sing with great enthusiasm. Older pupils, both boys and girls, remain interested in singing until they leave school because male teachers provide good role models and the repertoire captures their interest. By the time pupils reach Year 6 they sing with good tonal quality and diction. Most have very positive attitudes towards the subject and enjoy a wide range of music from both Western and Eastern cultures. In discussion, pupils expressed their enjoyment of Hindu and Jewish songs. They liked the blues and jazz music that formed part of their American topic. They demonstrated a secure basic understanding of music terminology, such as 'pitch' and 'tempo'.
165. Pupils throughout the school listen well to the planned programme of music played as they enter the hall for assemblies. However, they do not listen as carefully at other times. In the dining hall, music intended for listening is totally ineffective, because the volume of noise is too high for it to be anything other than background music.
166. The school uses two schemes of work that provide effective support for non-specialist class teachers and ensure an adequate balance of coverage across the whole music curriculum. Most teachers take their own class lessons or use the expertise of others to ensure that all pupils have a worthwhile experience. In the small number of lessons observed, the quality of teaching was at least satisfactory and occasionally good. In a successful Year 5 lesson the teacher transmitted his own enthusiasm well and pupils made good progress with learning a difficult calypso song, *Matilda*, because it was lively and rhythmic. As the lesson progressed more able pupils provided good chord accompaniment to the song on keyboards and xylophones, and others tapped the rhythm

on a range of untuned percussion instruments. Pupils of all abilities made equally good progress.

167. In other lessons, however, teachers do not provide enough musical challenge for the more able. Some lack confidence and expertise. Lesson planning does not always pay sufficient attention to the standards pupils can and should achieve. In addition, because teachers rely heavily on the scheme, activities sometimes lack structure or take too long. Pupils frequently listen to long extracts of music without enough sense of purpose. Lengthy sessions are sometimes timetabled for music, which is a subject where there is least expertise. Consequently, teachers struggle to provide pupils with a sustained level of work that matches their ability. Staff make good use of technology in lessons. Tape recorders, CD players and keyboards are regular features. The school is aware that the use of computer programs to support pupils' learning is not yet as strong.
168. The school is fortunate to have a separate music room and a good range of easily accessible musical instruments. The two co-ordinators are good musicians who provide expert informal advice and support. They have not been allocated any time to monitor the quality of teaching and learning and do not yet have a formal assessment structure. Consequently, there is not a clear enough overview of the standards pupils achieve.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

169. Overall, provision for physical education in the school is good. As well as the expertise of its staff, the school uses visiting coaching staff, external coaching and competitions, and a residential visit to ensure that pupils are given the opportunity to participate in a wide range of curricular and extra-curricular activities. The school has recently been awarded the Activemark sports award.
170. Standards of attainment are above those found in many schools at the end of both key stages. Year 1 pupils have good control of body shape and are able to maintain shape when moving in gymnastics and amend movements well in response to changes in music in dance. By Year 2, pupils combine a series of turning, twisting and spinning movements they have been practising and apply these skills confidently to their use of the apparatus in gymnastics. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are developing a good understanding of attacking and defending in invasion games and a range of ball handling, ball control and passing skills in netball, football and hockey respectively. They apply these skills well, even in difficult weather conditions. Pupils develop their ability to control movements throughout the school and, by the end of Year 6, are able to link a series of controlled movements effectively in an Aztec folk dance.
171. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. It was good in all of the lessons observed at Key Stage 1. Teaching is at least satisfactory at Key Stage 2, and good in Years 4 and 5. Where the teaching is good, the teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. They use a variety of approaches, including clear explanations and their own demonstrations and those of pupils. They break skills down into small, achievable steps and demonstrate them clearly and effectively, for example when the teacher demonstrated body shape when passing the ball in a Year 5 session that improved the pupils' hockey skills. They use individual pupils' performances well to demonstrate skills for other children. The pace of lessons is brisk, with teachers moving children on to new skills that build on those previously demonstrated, for example when developing sequences of controlled movements in Year 2 or when building up passing and dribbling skills in football in Year 5. The teachers manage their pupils well. Routines at the beginning and end of lessons are well established and consolidate the pupils' good behaviour. Teaching is less effective when pupils are not encouraged to focus on demonstrations and do not, therefore, improve their own performance as a result.

172. Pupils enjoy all aspects of physical education and their attitude to lessons is consistently good throughout the school, particularly at Key Stage 1. Their behaviour was at least satisfactory in all of the lessons seen and was usually good, and this enables the lessons to move at a brisk pace. Older pupils spoke enthusiastically about the competitions in which they have participated. In recent years pupils have had the opportunity to play demonstration matches at St. Helen's Rugby Football Club and at Liverpool Football Club, while a number of pupils have represented the school successfully in various tournaments, including netball, football, rugby and athletics. All pupils have benefited from work carried out by visitors to the school, including the development officer for the local rugby-league team, local cricket-club coaches and the Dance in Education group. The school makes considerable efforts to include all pupils in physical education, supporting those with special educational needs effectively, introducing a games programme and seeking alternative funding to ensure that all pupils can participate in the residential visit.
173. Pupils' awareness of health and safety is good. They are conscientious when performing their warming-up and cooling-down exercises and are aware of their importance. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 demonstrate that they are both safe and efficient when moving large apparatus. They understand the potential risks of physical education lessons in the hall and identify areas that would be unsafe. They avoid these areas carefully and sensibly, even during the most animated activities.
174. Leadership of physical education is good. The two co-ordinators are enthusiastic and have clear ideas about the development of the subject. A good policy and scheme of work are in place, incorporating clear and detailed skills assessment, while their risk assessment is to be used as a model by the local authority. The co-ordinators monitor teachers' planning and have a good understanding of the strengths, weaknesses and standards in the subject. They maintain a good and increasing stock of resources. This will be augmented by a recent successful bid from the Arts Council for £5,000 to introduce basketball into the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

175. Pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 achieve satisfactory standards of knowledge and understanding, which meet the attainment targets of the St Helens Agreed Syllabus. This is a similar finding to that of the previous inspection, but there are aspects that have improved since then. The last report noted that 'there was little written work'. There is now a good range of written work in all classes, although in Years 3 to 6 it is contained on worksheets. The report also pointed to variations in time allocated to religious education by different teachers. All classes now have in the region of an hour a week. The revised St Helens syllabus offers a good curriculum, which the school has adapted well together with national guidelines. Coverage of its 'knowledge and understanding' component is thorough and comprehensive.
176. Year 2 pupils have a good understanding of the teachings of Jesus as they listen to and recount the parables of 'The Prodigal Son' and 'The Good Samaritan'. As well as telling the stories in turns, they appreciate the message behind them. Their written work includes a good range of Bible knowledge. From the Old Testament they describe the stories of Moses, David and Goliath and produce well-written and illustrated booklets sequencing the story of Noah's Ark. Pupils describe, in pictures and words, the Christmas and Easter stories and write good accounts of their visit to the local church. In their study of Judaism they describe the festival of Hanukkah and draw its symbolic candles. Pupils' original writing on these themes contributes to the development of their literacy skills, but too much work is based on completing sentences on worksheets.
177. In Years 3 to 6, the pupils further their study of Christianity, developing knowledge of the major festivals with the addition of Hinduism and Islam. The range of information they gain

from their worksheets is very wide, covering sacred writings, personalities, stories and events. There is a good development of knowledge throughout the classes and a good comparison of beliefs, for example in Creation stories and festivals. In a good lesson in Year 5 on the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca – the ‘Hajj’ - the teacher made very good use of photographs. These included a satellite picture of the earth. The teacher used geographical information well in the lesson. She then read an account of the Hajj by a pilgrim from Manchester, which gave the pupils a very personal insight into its religious significance. The pupils listened very carefully and the lesson made a good contribution to their spiritual understanding.

178. Teaching is good in Year 2 and sound, and sometimes good, in Years 3 to 6, where one teacher teaches all the classes. This ensures good continuity of learning and understanding of the whole curriculum. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject, plan their lessons in good detail and have high expectations of pupils’ work and attitude. They set a good example for pupils by respecting the faiths and values of others, as when the teacher washed her hands before holding the Qur’an, and added the customary blessing on using the names of the Muslim prophets. Worksheets are well prepared and used. They are often informative and interesting. However, all pupils are expected to complete the same worksheets, which do not often sufficiently challenge the more able pupils. The limitation of pupils’ written work to the completion of worksheets does not provide enough opportunity for them to write at length. In addition, it does not provide the opportunity for pupils to respond individually to the ideas and beliefs of different religions. They do not sufficiently write about their own ideas and opinions. There is at present no formal system of assessment of pupils’ attainment and progress.