

INSPECTION REPORT

**BLACKBROOK ST MARY'S CATHOLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Blackbrook, St Helens

LEA area: St Helens

Unique reference number: 104802

Headteacher: Mrs K. Ashton

Reporting inspector: Susan Walker
21678

Dates of inspection: 11th-14th November 2002

Inspection number: 246417

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	infant and junior
School category:	voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	mixed
School address:	Chain Lane Blackbrook St Helens
Postcode:	WA11 9QY
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P. Alcock
Date of previous inspection:	23.09.1999 as an infant school 02.02.1998 as a junior school

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21678	Susan Walker	Registered inspector	Art and design, Information and communication technology.	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What the school should do to improve further.
31718	Denise Shields	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work with parents?
18498	Denise Morris	Team inspector	Educational inclusion, Special educational needs, English.	
32226	Teresa Quick	Team inspector	Design and technology, Music	
22704	Garry Williams	Team inspector	Science, Geography.	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
25577	Bill Jefferson	Team inspector	Mathematics, Physical education.	
30935	Kath McArthur	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, History.	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Blackbrook St Mary's Catholic Primary School has had a unique management structure. It became a primary school in 1999. It was, however, run as two separate departments each with its own headteacher, but with a joint governing body until September 2002. The school was inspected at a time of transition. The previous infant headteacher is now running the primary school, which has 426 pupils on roll, and is bigger than most other schools. Attainment on entry is very varied, but is overall average. Virtually every pupil comes from a British white ethnic background and remains in the school from the reception class to Year 6. Pupils travel to the school from some distance and there are pupils from a wide variety of socio-economic backgrounds. A broadly average number of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The school has a local education authority Language Unit for ten infants. There are seven other pupils with statements of special educational need (above the national average) and 44 pupils altogether on the register of pupils with special educational need, covering a wide range of reasons. The infant school achieved the Early Years kitemark in 2001.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Blackbrook St Mary's Catholic School has satisfactory leadership and management. In the infant department staff adopt a consistent approach to pupils' learning based on infant department policies. Pupils are well taught and have achieved consistently high standards in the national tests. Standards in the junior department are more variable. Teaching is satisfactory, overall, but there is too little consistent practice. The new headteacher has made a good start, but has run the primary school for too short a time to address all matters that need attention in the junior department. Value for money is satisfactory.

What the school does well

- The standards in reading are very good.
- The achievement of pupils in the Language Unit is very good due to very good teaching.
- The teaching for children under five and pupils in the infants is good. In Year 6 teaching is good and sometimes very good.
- The community, particularly the parish, makes a very good contribution to pupils' learning.
- The parents are very supportive of the school and there are very good links with parents in the infants.
- The provision for pupils' extra-curricular activities is very good.
- The provision for pupils' social and moral development is good and this results in good attitudes and behaviour. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good.

What could be improved

- Aspects of the curriculum, including the use of time, and closer links between what pupils in the infants and juniors learn.
- The quality of teaching and learning and the use of assessment in the juniors leading to better progress for pupils in Year 3-5, especially for the more able pupils.
- Progress in art and design in the juniors.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Overall satisfactory improvement in improving areas for development in the previous inspection reports. There has been good progress in addressing information and communication technology. The infant department has made good progress in developing assessment procedures and using this knowledge to improve their teaching. The junior department has improved standards in design and technology and music. However, it has not sufficiently improved the overall quality of teaching in all subjects. Crucially the needs of the more able pupils are not met because teachers in Years 3-5 do not use what they know about pupils' previous learning well enough.

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	B	E	B	B
Mathematics	C	D	C	C
Science	C	E	C	C

Key	
In the top 5% nationally	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

In the national tests for pupils aged eleven in 2002, standards were above average in English when compared to all schools and those with a similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals. In mathematics and science standards were average. Results vary from year-to-year and in 2002 when compared to the standards they achieved aged seven, pupils made good progress in English, average progress in mathematics but below average progress in science. The school failed to meet its targets in 2002. However, in the national tests for pupils aged seven standards were well above average in reading when compared to all and similar schools, above average in writing (well above when compared to similar schools) and average in mathematics. The infants have a consistent record of high achievement in reading and writing and good achievement in mathematics and science. In 2002, infant pupils were in the top five per cent of pupils nationally in science.

Inspection findings confirm this achievement is not built upon in Years 3-5. This means that more able pupils do not make sufficient progress until they reach Year 6, when teaching is well matched to their needs. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys or girls. Pupils in the Language Unit achieve very well due to consistently very good teaching. Pupils with special educational needs elsewhere make satisfactory progress, but would make better progress if their individual targets were more specific. By the end of the reception year the majority of children achieve the level they are expected to do, but many achieve the early learning goal in mathematics before the end of the reception year. Standards are in line with what is expected for pupils aged seven and eleven in design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, music and physical education. Progress is satisfactory. There are strengths in both swimming and singing in the juniors. Standards in art and design are in line with what is expected at age seven, but not at age eleven where progress is unsatisfactory.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are very happy and enthusiastic to come to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The majority of pupils behave well around the school and in class. A few pupils do not behave well when teaching is not good enough.
Personal development and relationships	There are good relationships between adults and children. There are good planned opportunities for pupils to show initiative and independence in the infants, and in Year 6, but this is not well-established in Years 3-5.
Attendance	Good. Pupils come to school regularly and punctually. However, some lessons in the juniors do not start on time and this wastes valuable teaching opportunities.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	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 and learning is satisfactory overall, based on lessons observed, examination of pupils' previous work and discussions with pupils. It is very good in the Language Unit, good for children in the reception classes, and in the infants. It is good and sometimes very good in Year 6. Although teaching is overall satisfactory, all unsatisfactory or poor lessons seen during the inspection occurred in Years 3-5. The skills of literacy and numeracy are generally effectively taught, but in Years 3-5 too many worksheets are used to promote pupils' writing skills. When very good or excellent teaching and learning occurs, it is based on very good relationships, challenging questions and well-planned activities. This leads to very good discussions and pupils trying very hard to please their teachers. Where teaching is good, lessons are well planned and managed, all adults support pupils' learning and are quick to sort out any problems. Where teaching is satisfactory although lessons are usually satisfactorily managed the needs of all pupils, particularly the more able, are not always met. When lessons are unsatisfactory or poor, lessons often do not start on time and teachers are too often content with unchallenging activities such as 'colouring in'. Pupils with special educational needs in the infants and juniors are satisfactorily taught the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Marking is not sufficiently consistent to move all pupils' learning forward. Homework is used well to support pupils' learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum for children in the reception classes is good. Provision for extra-curricular activities is very good. There are too few links between what pupils learn in the infants and the juniors. Time needs to be used more effectively to help pupils to learn.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Pupils receive good care and support from teaching assistants, but some individual education plans do not have sharp enough targets, except in the Language Unit. The infant staff effectively include the pupils from the Language Unit in many aspects of the day-to-day life of the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for pupils' social, moral and cultural development is good and this helps pupils to learn. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Infant pupils have more planned opportunities to reflect and show empathy in day-to-day lessons.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. The caring Catholic ethos within the school ensures that pupils feel safe and secure and able to ask for help, should they need it. The designated member of staff deals with any child protection issues extremely sensitively, but up-to-date training for junior staff in procedures and a single policy for the whole school are not yet in place. Assessment procedures are good in English, mathematics and science. The infant staff try hard to link what they know about pupils' learning to planning future lessons, as do teachers in Year 6, but not all teachers in Years 3-5 do so.

The school works very well in partnership with parents. They are very supportive of what the school does for their children. The school needs to report standards in design and technology and art and design

separately to parents. The community, particularly the parish, makes a very good contribution to pupils' learning. There are profitable links with other schools and colleges, especially the nearby secondary school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The new headteacher brings effective skills in leading by example and managing change to the whole school. She has built a high-performing team with a clear vision in the infants. It is too soon for this to have happened in the juniors. The senior management team are beginning to collaborate to plan improvement. Subject co-ordinators are beginning to develop initiatives for the whole school. Monitoring needs improvement in order to raise the standard of teaching in Years 3-5. Overall satisfactory.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is well led by an experienced chairman. Governors support the school appropriately and have a sound knowledge of what needs to be improved.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The first primary school strategic plan is in place. The new headteacher has a very good knowledge of the strengths and minor areas for improvement in the infants. She is beginning to acquire the same knowledge in the juniors and has already made some good practical improvements.
The strategic use of resources	The school is beginning to apply the principles of best value in its financial decision making now that it is a primary school. Good use is made of specific grants to implement new initiatives.

There are a good number of teachers and classroom assistants to support pupils' learning. The accommodation is spacious. The exterior of both buildings and the interior of the junior school need some attention. Resources are satisfactory, overall.

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 approachability of the school. • Pupils work hard and try their best. • The school is helping pupils to become mature and responsible. • The school is well led and managed. • Provision for extra-curricular activities are good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An extremely small number of parents had any concerns about their children's education. However, a very small number felt that they had not received sufficient information about how their child was progressing.

The inspection team largely agrees with the parents' positive views of the infant department and the provision for Year 6 pupils. Reports to parents need to be more consistent and report on all subjects.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children enter the reception classes at the beginning of the autumn term of the school year in which they become five. During the inspection, there were 59 children of reception age. Ten of these children were taught in a small class with ten children of Year 1 age, and the others were taught in two classes with children of their own age. Most children have attended different nurseries and playgroups before starting school. Initial assessments made when they start school show that there is a wide spread of ability, but overall most are at the level expected nationally for their age. Their progress is checked carefully during their time in the reception classes. The small number of children who have already been identified as having special educational needs are given good support in all areas of learning and they make satisfactory progress. By the end of the reception year all children achieve the level expected nationally in personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and physical and creative development. Nearly all children do so in the area of communication, language and literacy. The great majority of children achieve the early learning goal in mathematics before the end of the reception year.
2. In the 2002 national tests (SATs) for pupils aged seven, standards were well above average in reading when compared to all schools and those in similar socio-economic circumstances (number of free school meals). Standards in writing were average against all schools, but well above average against similar schools. In mathematics standards were average. When teachers checked how well pupils were doing in science standards were in the highest five per cent nationally. Standards in the infant school have been consistently above average or well above average, over the last few years, with the exception of mathematics in 2002. The school consistently has a good number of pupils who are doing better than might be expected for their age, for instance four out of ten pupils gained a Level 3 in reading in the last two years. Boys and girls achieve equally well.
3. In the 2002 national tests for pupils aged eleven, standards were above average in English when compared to all and similar schools. In mathematics and science they were average when compared to all schools and similar schools. The achievement of girls and boys is similar. Standards vary from year-to-year from well below average to well above average. This variation is greater than is usually found in a two-form entry school where there are an average number of pupils with special educational needs and where pupils stay in the school for the duration of their education. The school does not perform as consistently as other schools locally and nationally in ensuring that more able pupils are challenged, so that they attain as well as they should do, especially in science. The school has a history of not meeting the targets set by the governors in English and mathematics. In 2002 it did not meet its targets, particularly in mathematics. This is due to the fact that the junior teachers do not use test information well enough to plan future lessons, except in Year 6.
4. Teachers in the junior department fail to acknowledge the good standards pupils achieve in the infants and so progress slows until pupils reach Year 6, when it accelerates again due to effective teaching based on what pupils need to learn. Pupils in Year 6 made good progress in English when judged against the results of the national tests which they took in 1998 when they were seven. However, in mathematics progress was only average and in science it was below average. This is not good enough and reflects the fact that teachers in the junior department have not dealt well enough with two crucial key issues from its previous inspection: improving teaching and assessment and provision for the more able pupils.
5. Inspection findings show that standards are above average in all aspects of English, with a particulate strength in reading. Infant pupils listen well to others' contributions and talk animatedly

about tasks. In the juniors, the oldest pupils contribute well in lessons, but in the lower juniors they do not have sufficient opportunity to do so. Year 2 pupils read a good range of books and show high levels of enthusiasm for the subject. By Year 6 pupils are confident with both fiction and non-fiction. Infant pupils are developing a neat writing style and quickly develop awareness of simple punctuation. By Year 6 pupils write in a very good range of styles using neat 'joined up' writing.

6. In mathematics, most pupils in Year 2 have a developing understanding of place value, know the names of common shapes and know how to measure. By Year 6 three quarters of pupils work well with fractions, draw block graphs and pie charts and are beginning to work with geometric problems.
7. In science, Year 2 pupils are beginning to predict sensibly what might happen during investigations and to record their results correctly. By Year 6 pupils compare their findings with their predictions and sort out not only the discrepancies, but also why they occurred.
8. Inspection findings show that standards are in line with what is expected for pupils aged seven and eleven in information and communication technology (ICT), design and technology, music, geography, history and physical education (PE). They make satisfactory progress in these subjects. There are strengths in both swimming and singing in the juniors. In art and design standards are in line with what is expected at age seven, but not as good as expected at age eleven. Progress is satisfactory in this subject in the infants but unsatisfactory in the juniors.
9. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils with special educational needs in the main school, and this leads to satisfactory achievement and progress. All of these pupils benefit from the good support of teaching assistants who work closely with them, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. For example, in a Year 3 literacy lesson, additional and good support enabled pupils with special needs to be fully included in the lesson and to begin to understand the meaning and use of prefixes to words.
10. Targets set as part of each pupil's individual education plan, however, are often not specific enough to be measured, and do not inform staff well enough about the particular targets that each pupil requires. Because of this, it is difficult to measure progress over time, or monitor what pupils are learning. For example, the lack of a 'smart' target in a Year 5 literacy lesson was noted as having a negative impact on pupils' understanding of the conventions of play scripts, because there was not enough information about what pupils with special needs could read and understand. Similarly, in a Year 3 lesson, the lack of specific individual targets was noted as a weakness that had a negative impact on pupils' ability to read a shared text. The complexity of the text was too difficult for the special needs group, and reduced their learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils have a good attitude to learning and are very happy and enthusiastic to come to school. They are interested and attentive in most of their lessons and in activities such as assemblies. They respond well in effectively managed lessons where the expectations of the teacher are high. Both infant and junior pupils respond well to challenging tasks and show pride in their work.
12. Children's attitudes and behaviour in the reception classes are good. They listen carefully to their teachers and maintain their concentration well. Children try hard to be independent, for instance, when changing their clothes for physical education.
13. Pupils' behaviour throughout the school and in the playground is good and very good in the Language Unit and Year 6. Pupils clearly know what is expected of them. When moving around the school, or when coming into the hall for assembly, they are sensible and orderly. Pupils are polite and friendly, generally respectful of each other and welcoming to visitors. Pupils play

happily together and share play space well. There is negligible bullying at school. Aggressive behaviour is rare. When minor incidents do occur, pupils are confident that staff and other pupils will deal with them effectively and so they are happy and secure within a harmonious school community. Pupils are usually keen to improve and behave well in most lessons. A few lose interest and do not behave well when staff do not provide interesting work or do not keep pupils' attention. Where low levels of behaviour occurred in lessons it was associated with low expectations by the teacher. There have been no recent exclusions.

14. Relationships within the school are good. Pupils get on well with staff and with each other. They have a good understanding of how individual actions affect other people and generally show care and concern for others as a result. Pupils co-operate well during lessons when given the opportunity to do so. Older pupils work collaboratively during several lessons, but in particular in ICT. There are few opportunities for pupils to accept responsibility within the school. In the juniors some pupils show their trustworthiness by being responsible for the buckets of bats, balls and ropes for use during the dinnertime. Pupils now have good opportunities to be members of the school council. However, opportunities that enable pupils to carry out independent research and sustained individual enquiry are limited in the juniors. There are good planned opportunities for pupils to make choices in the infants.
15. Many pupils with special educational needs attend after-school clubs and join in enthusiastically. Pupils with special educational needs take a full and active part in all the activities on offer. They generally behave well in and around the school and relate well to their peers and to adults.
16. Attendance is good, above average when compared to other schools nationally. There is no unauthorised absence. This is because parents inform the school the reason why their children are absent and the teachers follow up effectively any unexplained absences. Pupils arrive at school on time in the morning. In the junior department, although pupils are punctual, lessons frequently do not start on time. They often start as much as ten minutes late, this means that vital teaching time is lost.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. In lessons seen during the inspection approximately two thirds of lesson were good or better, with about a third of lessons being very good and occasionally excellent. Teaching is consistently good in the infants and good and often very good in Year 6, where pupils make the best progress in the juniors. While teaching is overall satisfactory, all the unsatisfactory or poor lessons occur in Years 3-5, where teachers do not match the work to pupils' abilities well enough. This has a particular impact on the progress of the more able pupils. Teaching in the juniors is satisfactory, overall.
18. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught in the infants and in Year 6. Here teachers use their knowledge and understanding of the national strategies to plan interesting lessons for pupils. In the lower junior department, pupils achieve appropriate standards in writing, but there is an over-abundance of worksheets used in lessons. For example, in history and geography, much of the work is based on worksheets with language often too difficult for pupils to understand.
19. Teaching is good for children in the reception classes in all areas of the curriculum, except in creative development where it is satisfactory. Teachers provide clear plans for each session, which give children good opportunities to investigate new ideas as well as consolidate their learning. There are good relationships between all adults and children and this encourages them to try hard. Teaching assistants are used well to support the learning of groups of children.
20. Where teaching is very good or excellent, relationships are very good and humour is used effectively to enrich and encourage pupils' learning. There are very good discussions because pupils are very comfortable with their teachers. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace, because teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of what they are to teach and how pupils learn. They teach pupils how to work quickly and efficiently and so pupils' rate of progress improves. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils might achieve and they ask challenging questions to enable them to do so. Equally pupils persevere and try their hardest in this type of lesson because they want to please their teachers.
21. Where teaching is good, teachers know their pupils well and plan to meet most of their needs.

Pupils' behaviour is well managed so that time for learning is not lost. Teachers identify any difficulties which pupils may be having and address them in the lesson, as in a Year 1 art and design lesson when pupils were learning about colour mixing. There is a good rate of progress because all the adults involved give patient support and guidance, as in many ICT lessons. However, in the infants, teachers are also successful in promoting developing skills of independence.

22. In satisfactory lessons, while relationships and management skills are satisfactory, and a variety of tasks are given to pupils, they are more likely to meet the needs of the least able rather than challenge the most able pupils. Planning is not always good enough to move pupils' learning forward or classroom routines are not well-established, as in a Year 5 history lesson when pupils had no clear way of reporting back to the class.
23. Where lessons are unsatisfactory or poor, too often time is not used well enough. For instance, lessons start late which reduces the time available to improve learning, as in a Year 4 mathematics lesson. Planning is often not good enough and the teacher does not have a secure enough grasp of what pupils already know so expectations are too low. As in a Year 3 history lesson about the Romans when pupils were given a task of colouring in an eagle, which did not improve their knowledge and understanding in either art or history.
24. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs in the main school is satisfactory. Short withdrawal sessions, enabling pupils to work on literacy or numeracy skills, are successful in helping pupils to consolidate and practise their skills.
25. Marking is too variable. There are pockets of good practice as in infant English books and in Year 6 mathematics books. However, there is evidence of limited marking in Year 3 in both English and mathematics and low expectations of presentation. Marking does not consistently tell pupils what they need to do to improve in all classes and all subjects.
26. Homework is used well to support pupils' learning. It is usually related to what pupils are doing in class and is checked by their teachers. For instance, pupils in the infants take home reading books plus spellings, comprehension and maths work. They are expected to bring in items for lessons and find out information.

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

27. The quality and range of learning opportunities is satisfactory overall. The statutory curriculum is in place. The quality and range of learning opportunities for the reception classes is good and prepares children well for entry into Year 1. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been successfully implemented, with provision for reading being particularly good. The recent development in writing has raised the profile, although writing opportunities in subjects other than English, mathematics and science are still too limited, because of the number of worksheets which teachers use.
28. A critical area of concern is the lack of schemes of work common to both infant and junior departments to ensure that pupils make smooth progress in their learning. This would ensure that elements are not repeated, for instance making clay thumb pots in design and technology in Year 2 and in art and design in Year 3. This could provide teachers with good guidance in appropriate planning and could incorporate curriculum maps to ensure that important skills are planned. The new headteacher has only been responsible for the amalgamated school for a matter of weeks and she had already identified this as a matter requiring immediate action, she is already identifying strategies to overcome these deficiencies.

29. The overall number of hours pupils which spend in school is appropriate and sufficient to deliver the curriculum effectively for all pupils. However, the time allocation for art and design and design and technology is not always used effectively to promote progress and raise standards. The time allocated to watching television also causes some concern and does not appear to offer good learning opportunities, for instance in English. However, when used appropriately and effectively, as was observed in a Year 6 class, it had a positive impact in providing focused information, which pupils used effectively in their class discussion and subsequent writing.
30. There has been insufficient rigour in monitoring what teachers plan to teach on their timetables in the junior department, so that pupils have the best opportunity to learn. Teachers appear to write a timetable for the year and it is unclear whether, for instance, history or geography is taught in a particular half term. On some timetables there are multiple options, such as swimming / health for life and 'Look and read' / PE. On one Year 4 timetable there is a slot, which indicates that the teacher will teach science if required.
31. There is overall good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. Sex education and drugs' awareness are taught through the health education programme. These are supported with input from the police, the school nurse and the annual visit of the 'Life Bus'. The joint contribution of school and external support ensure that personal, social and health education are well catered for and citizenship is promoted through circle-time and the work of the School Council. Year 6 pupils attend a residential visit at the end of the spring term and pupils speak enthusiastically about it, which not only promotes independence and inter-dependence, but enhances and extends the physical education programme with such activities as canoeing, abseiling and fencing.
32. This is an inclusive school and the integration of pupils with special educational needs, and those within the Language Unit is good. All pupils have full equality of access to all the opportunities on offer at the school. The inclusive approach ensures that pupils feel valued and that they benefit from the close working relationships with their peers. Pupils in the Language Unit integrate for many activities and were observed enjoying a ball game during a physical education lesson with mainstream peers as chosen partners. The good support provided by learning assistants, enables those with special educational needs to take part fully in lessons. Boys and girls play football and netball, and have equal access to play equipment. Just occasionally there is reference to pupils by gender, but overall, inclusion is fully secure. However, the school has not yet identified a register of pupils who are gifted or talented. Guidance is offered to staff as part of policy documentation, but no specific strategies are available. This is a weakness in the provision.
33. Overall, provision for extra-curricular activities is very good. The school offers a wide variety of sporting and cultural activities, which complement and supplement school based activities. Sporting activities include netball, fencing, rugby fitness, football, judo and healthy body clubs. Other activities include choir, ICT, keyboard, ballet, tap and disco dancing and French clubs.
34. There are very good links with the community, particularly with the parish. Throughout the school pupils are involved in activities, such as the distribution of food hampers at harvest and Christmas to members of the nearby community and parish. A special performance of the school play is put on for local senior citizens. A family mass is held at the local parish church for pupils' first communion; this is always a parish celebration because the pupils attend a party afterwards. In addition, end of term assemblies are always well supported by parents, grandparents and parish members.
35. The school's relationship with partner institutions is good. There are effective links and liaison with local nursery schools and play groups from which children transfer to the reception class. This means that valuable information is passed on prior to the children starting school. Liaison with the nearby Catholic secondary school is very good. Transfer arrangements for pupils in Year 6 are well-established. The school also accepts students on Trident placements and is currently working in partnership with Hope University to support trainee teachers.

36. Pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. It is supported through the school's firm foundation in the Catholic faith. Overall, there is satisfactory promotion of spiritual development within the school mainly through the 'Here I am' curriculum scheme in religious education, but it is sometimes better in the infants. Elsewhere there is provision through assemblies and class prayers. There is opportunity to reflect in the year assemblies especially when prayer intentions are discussed. However, there is little opportunity for reflection in the class prayers. Teachers in the infants find some opportunities in lessons for reflection, as in an art lesson in Year 1 when pupils studied the background of a Van Gogh painting to capture the mood, but few opportunities were seen in the juniors. In one very good history lesson in the infants pupils were given a good opportunity for reflection in a lesson on Poppy Day when they were asked to think about war and reflect on its meaning. The pupils sat and thought quietly. Opportunities within the curriculum to enhance pupils' spiritual development are sometimes missed, because they are not planned for.
37. The provision for pupils' moral development is good. Pupils are taught right from wrong from the earliest opportunity. Most pupils can explain why something is wrong. They show consideration and respect towards each other. Teachers consistently reinforce these aspects; in the Language Unit pupils were encouraged to say sorry when they hurt someone by accident. Teachers expect pupils to apologise; a pupil was heard to make an impromptu apology for bad behaviour the previous day. Pupils understand that it is important to make amends. Teachers and support staff are good role models and reinforce the moral values and beliefs of the school. There are weekly awards in year group assembly where pupils from each class are selected, and the school celebrates the good things that have been achieved by these pupils. They wear an achievement award badge for a week. The newly formed school council gives a relevant forum for pupils to contribute in the school decision making process. Pupils are concerned about the danger of the thorn bushes around the playground. They are also concerned about the need for more litter bins around the playgrounds, members of the school council industriously researched for the bins that would be the best value for money to suit the needs of the school. During assemblies and in some lessons there are informal discussions and planned opportunities to consider moral issues. In practical terms, the school encourages pupils to see the value of contributing to those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils, therefore collect for various charities. They collect for CAFOD, (the Catholic Association for Overseas Development Fund) giving them a wider perspective on moral issues both nationally and internationally.
38. The provision for pupils' social development is also good. The school's high expectations of behaviour provide a clear model of courtesy and respect. Relationships are good. Most pupils work together well sharing and helping each other. They can work in pairs, small groups, and are able to negotiate with each other in many practical sessions. In an ICT lesson, Year 2 pupils are keen to help each other spell correctly. Pupils' social skills are further developed by their involvement in concerts and productions. There are close links between the school and the parish and the local community. The infant choir visit the local community to sing carols and raise money for charity, they also sing at the store of one of the school's business partners. Pupils continue to be reminded about their social responsibilities and are encouraged to support different charities. The pupils have collected clothes and provisions for an orphanage in Romania and sugar and flour for overseas aid as well as money for another charity each year. Infant pupils are being helped to become involved in shaping their own local environment for the future by their part in the development of Parr Hall Millennium Green, planting trees and bulbs, designing the gate and a mosaic. An opportunity for the further development of the pupils' social skills comes with the residential visit for Year 6.
39. The quality of provision for the cultural development of pupils is good, overall. There are suitable educational visits linked to curriculum areas and pupils are involved in live drama in school and at the theatre. The choir takes part in the MEN concert 'Music Young Voices in Concert'. Musicians, including the Key Strings and the Haydock Band perform in school and discuss their instruments with the children. There are Book weeks when pupils have the opportunity to work

with authors and illustrators. Visits to the Lowry centre and the Walker Art Gallery further develop the younger pupils' appreciation of art. Within the school curriculum there are good opportunities for cultural development. In religious education pupils learn about festivals in other faiths. Books in the school library effectively support the work on other cultures. In a very good movement lesson pupils listened to the music by Tchaikovsky and all pupils joined in enthusiastically working co-operatively in mixed gender groups. Another dance lesson was one of a series of lessons related to the Sambalpuri Chain Dance of Bengal. There is a good display on Judaism in the school hall. Pupils benefit from a good range of activities outside lessons through visits and school clubs. Pupils explore the local environment going to Sankey Valley 'pond dipping' where the school has close links with the Rangers. With the strong tradition of Rugby League in the area pupils have visited their local rugby club for a special day using computers and touring the ground. Players and their mascot have visited the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. Pupils of all ages receive a good level of pastoral support and guidance from their teachers. The caring Catholic ethos within the school ensures that they feel safe and secure and able to ask for help, should they need it. Discussion with boys and girls of all ages confirms this view. Parents' confidence in the pastoral support and guidance provided for their children is well founded.
41. Nevertheless, the school lacks a consistent approach to both monitoring and promoting the welfare and care of pupils of all ages. The policy and practice, that exist often vary greatly between the infant and junior departments. In the juniors policies are sometimes not always translated into practice. Equally, junior teachers often adopt a different approach to implementing the systems that do exist.
42. The medical and welfare needs of all pupils are well catered for throughout the school. There is a suitable number of staff, in both departments, qualified in first aid and who are able to deal quickly with any incident or illness when they occur. Supervision arrangements are good; there are always sufficient adults on duty at break and lunchtime, but midday supervisors have not received training to carry out their role. Although relationships with the children are good, this lack of training sometimes results in an inconsistent approach to dealing with incidents, such as inappropriate behaviour. Information received from reception class parents is entered into the school's system, and transferred to the junior department when pupils reach Year 3, but this data is not regularly updated. The school relies on parents to tell them of any changes made to their telephone number. This leaves the school vulnerable, because they do not have an up-to-date contact in the event of any emergency that may occur.
43. Health and safety arrangements are satisfactory. Regular safety tours are carried out in both the infant and junior departments; outcomes are recorded and monitored by the governing body. The local education authority has carried out a full risk assessment of the school. There is a brief health and safety policy for the infants, and a policy dated 1995 for the junior department. Teachers have not received any health and safety training. As a result, this leads to a lack of awareness of safety issues, for example portable PE equipment was stored partially blocking a doorway and posing a trip hazard for both staff and pupils. Although regular tours of both premises are carried out issues are often missed, for instance there are no locks on some of the toilet cubicle doors. The doors to the toilet cubicles designated for the Year 5 and 6 pupils are too low and do not afford them sufficient privacy.
44. The designated member of staff has a very detailed knowledge of local procedures for child protection; she deals with any concerns or issues extremely sensitively. Teachers in the infant department have received recent training regarding changes to practice and procedures, but this has not happened recently in the juniors. Support staff do not have a sufficient awareness of up-to-date child protection procedures, neither do the midday supervisory staff. There is no child protection policy for the whole school. Governors are now aware of these matters.
45. In the infant department, class and department routines are well-established and because of this pupils know what is expected of them; and the vast majority try hard to live up to the behaviour expectations. All pupils are valued and encouraged to try their best. Appropriate behaviour, effort and achievement are given an appropriate profile and are regularly rewarded, such as during the celebration assembly or through the 'achiever of the week.' Any incidents of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with consistently by teachers and closely monitored by the headteacher. These good arrangements are also a direct result of the infant department's good emphasis on pupils' moral and social development. The good relationships that exist between all adults and pupils, and the good PHSCE programme, all contribute to ensuring that the 'infants' is a friendly and harmonious community. Pupils confirm that these arrangements are effective, and that incidents, for example of bullying or poor behaviour, do not happen very often, but if they do they are very quickly and effectively dealt with.

46. In the junior department, class and department routines are less well-established. There is a behaviour and discipline policy, but this has not been reviewed for several years. Even so this policy is not always translated in practice. For example, a range of suitable rewards is listed, but in practice they rarely exist. Although each week there is an award for the 'achiever of the week', which the pupils value, there is no regular whole department celebration of good work, effort or good deeds. The older pupils, in some classes have a merit system, but must wait a whole term before any tangible reward is given. There is no consistent approach to punishment and a positive discipline approach is rarely used. Sanctions are not always made clear to pupils. Older pupils describe how they have been given lines to write out, often repeatedly, but they do not fully understand why. Inappropriate behaviour is not monitored in a consistent manner. There are, however, good examples where teachers use home/school books to good effect to monitor and promote appropriate behaviour and to communicate with parents. The new headteacher now effectively monitors incidents of inappropriate behaviour that are brought to her attention. She is attempting to gain an oversight of practice in the junior department, but her job is hampered because of the inconsistencies that exist. The emphasis on pupils' moral and social development is variable, but mostly good relationships exist. This ensures that in the main the 'juniors' is a harmonious department, where the vast majority of play and socialise well together. The good 'health for life' programme effectively raised pupils' awareness of issues such as friendship, bullying and tolerance of others. Older pupils confirm that incidents of bullying are rare and if they happen they are dealt with quickly and effectively.
47. Attendance is monitored effectively by class teachers. The new headteacher has a good oversight of this area and is very aware of those pupils who do not attend regularly. Good liaison takes place with the education welfare officer (EWO) who is involved with the cases of the poorest attendance.
48. Overall, satisfactory arrangements are in place to monitor and support pupils' personal development throughout the school. Infant pupils are given a good range of opportunities that enable them to grow in confidence and self-esteem. They work together effectively in small groups, they read out their work in front of their classmates during the endings to lessons and undertake small tasks and responsibilities given to them by their teachers. They are also effectively encouraged to show initiative and develop independence. For instance, during a science lesson pupils shared the task of holding a torch and shining its light through various materials very well. With only limited adult intervention one pupil volunteered to hold the perspex so that his classmate could see how the light travelled through and shone on the wall. Teachers make good use of written records to check the progress pupils make during the year, and have ample opportunities to share information with their colleagues at the end of the school year.
49. In the junior department, although the oldest pupils are given specific responsibilities, there is no system that ensures all pupils are given duties that grow in complexity as they move through the school. Some teachers ensure that pupils carry out simple tasks for them, such as acting as table monitors, others do not. Every teacher does not provide suitable opportunities for pupils to share their work with their classmates. The oldest pupils are encouraged to show independence, for example, by carrying out research for their history project on the Internet or by using a CD-ROM. The oldest pupils take part in a residential visit and this makes a good contribution to building confidence and self-esteem. All teachers keep observational diaries to enable them to monitor pupils in their class throughout the year. This enables them to have information ready to hand when they meet with their colleagues at the end of the school year to share information about the pupils.
50. Overall, systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory. Assessments, which are made when children enter the reception class, (baseline assessment) enable the school to monitor progress of individual pupils as they move through the school. Tests are currently being changed from a regional to a national system of assessment. In addition to statutory testing at

seven and eleven, pupils are tested at the age of eight, nine and ten in mathematics and English. Tests which check reading skills and knowledge of the letter sounds, and knowledge of important words in the literacy strategy, are regularly given to infant pupils. Science assessment is identified by the co-ordinator as an area for development. New procedures are soon to be put in place to track pupils' progress more effectively. In other subjects there is very limited assessment of pupils' progress. Tick sheets are completed to record work covered. Teachers do not assess and record how well individual pupils are progressing towards meeting national curriculum levels of achievement in their particular year groups. There is a clear marking policy for infant teachers and its requirements are followed closely. In junior department classes there is an old policy and marking is undertaken, but in a number of classes it is completed in a perfunctory manner. Sometimes it is not accurate. In Year 6 classes, marking is to a consistently good standard that includes congratulatory comments and also suggestions as to how individuals might improve. This is very good practice.

51. The use that the school makes of the results of these assessment procedures is unsatisfactory. Infant teachers use assessment effectively to place pupils into groups in mathematics lessons. They also use on-going assessment well to move pupils from one group to another as their rate of progress changes during the year. The local authority provides good support by screening the results of national tests to provide both areas of strength and weakness related to different attainment targets within the tests. This provides particularly good support at the beginning of the year for lower junior teachers, who are given a clear picture of the widely different abilities of pupils coming to them from the infant department.
52. However, inspection evidence and examination of pupils' workbooks, identifies a clear fall in the rate of progress in lower junior classes. For example, in mathematics, pupils are mostly given the same level of work; this is insufficient to challenge all but the least able and fails to build on the fact that the infant pupils have been taught by ability since Year 1. Except in Year 6, results of annual assessment of junior pupils in English and mathematics are insufficiently used to inform the planning of future lessons. Individual results, apart from writing, are not compared to National Curriculum levels of achievement so that teachers do not know how well pupils are doing. Pupils are not involved in setting individual targets that will support their academic development. Maintained portfolios of independent written work in English represent satisfactory use of assessment because they incorporate National Curriculum objectives.
53. Teachers know their pupils very well and many use questioning and discussion effectively to assess learning during the final part of lessons. Overall, however, the effective use of assessment, to help teachers plan and teach lessons appropriate to pupils of varying abilities, is an urgent area for development in some junior classes. In Year 6 classes, on-going assessment is used well to inform lesson content and teachers are making good progress in setting targets for individual pupils. Written and laminated they provide constant reminders on pupils' desks.
54. The infant department has enthusiastically adopted new technology to track pupils' attainments on a computer program and this aspect is well led by a capable co-ordinator. The junior department has not yet adopted this strategy.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

55. Parents have very positive views about the school. A very good partnership has been established with parents of children in the infants, that enables them to make a very effective contribution to their children's learning. The school's relationship and involvement with parents of junior children is starting to develop well.
56. A tremendous number of the inspection questionnaires were returned. Only an extremely small number of parents expressed any dissatisfaction and virtually all gave a very positive view. Those

parents who attended the meeting prior to the inspection expressed equally very positive views. The inspection findings agree with these comments. An extremely small number of parents expressed some concern about the information they receive about their children's progress. The inspectors agree with their comments.

57. In the infant department there is a tradition of parents helping with activities in the classrooms and grandparents also frequently help out. The teachers value these 'extra pairs of hands'. This support makes a very significant contribution to the progress they make during the lessons. The family learning courses, which have run for several years, also enable those parents who attend to support their children's work at home. Many parents hear their children read at home and this contributes to the high standards in reading throughout the school.
58. At present few parents help with activities in the juniors. The new headteacher is very conscious of this and is encouraging parents to help with activities, where they are able. A small number of parents work in the library. Records show that most parents of junior children also hear them read at home thus contributing to the high standards achieved in this subject. Many also take the older pupils to the library to enable them to carry out research for projects.
59. There have been several courses for all parents run by teachers such as ICT skills and also a support group for parents who have children with special educational needs. This latter group is developing very well, and talks are regularly given that provide parents with useful information such as the new Code of Practice and the part they play in this. In both departments there is always very good support for the family assemblies or school play and Christmas concert. The parent, teacher and friends association although long established and successful in the infants, has recently developed to include junior parents as well. The events organised benefit the school financially because they help to subsidise school trips. Money has also been used to buy outside benches for the pupils to use.
60. More than 75 per cent of the home-school agreements for both departments have been signed, signifying parents' support for the school. The headteacher has previously and informally sought the views of parents with children in the infants. Discussion takes place in both playgrounds with parents when they are collecting their children, and the headteacher also talks to parents informally at parents' evenings. The school does not, however, have a regular system in place to seek the views of all parents, which will ensure it is meeting all their needs.
61. The information provided for parents is satisfactory. It is better in the infant department. Parents of pupils who are to join the school in the reception class are provided with much useful and practical information both through visits to the school and in an information pack. The parent's 'toolkit' is particularly good, because it involves parents in preparing their children to start school. Information evenings are also held in the infants, at the start of the school year, when homework and the curriculum for the year are discussed. Although this is a valuable event, it is not fully effective because some parents indicated they could not remember what their children would learn throughout the whole year. No class newsletters are sent by either department. Some teachers in the junior department provide information about homework and what the topics will be for the term. Practice is, however, not consistent and sometimes information is to be passed on verbally from pupils to their parents.
62. Day-to-day information across the school is good. Regular newsletters that provide useful facts as well as celebrating school and family news supplement this. The school brochure for this academic year is not up-to-date because it is not due to be amended and presented to governors until January 2003. Information about the curriculum lacks detail in some areas and occasionally 'jargon' is used which may not be familiar to parents. The governors' annual report to parents contains all the required information, but the differing styles of presentation throughout the document make it difficult to follow and understand. Annual reports giving detail of children's progress are unsatisfactory. Some reports in the infant department do not cover all the National Curriculum subjects separately. The quality of the comments is variable and targets for

improvement are frequently not specific enough. In the best examples teachers provide detailed commentary, which indicates pupils' strengths and weaknesses and progress made in all subjects. These examples enable parents to gain a good picture of the progress their children have made over the year.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

63. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. It amalgamated to become a primary school in 1999, but maintained a staffing structure of two headteachers and two deputy headteachers and two differing management styles. The same governing body managed both schools. They have employed good strategies such as setting both headteachers the same management targets. The school was inspected at a time of transition.
64. The new headteacher is bringing her effective skills in leading by example and managing change to running the primary school. She has built a high-performing team with a clear vision in the infant school. She has taken good steps to train up key members of the infant staff in management techniques. The deputy headteacher in the infant school provides a good model for her colleagues in her own practice and enthusiasm.
65. The new primary headteacher has based herself in the junior department to get to know the staff and pupils. She has brought her proven leadership skills to strengthen the junior department. She has begun to motivate the junior staff to change established practices and has achieved many practical improvements in a short time, for instance tackling patches of damp and considerably improving classroom displays of pupils' work. However, it is evident from the quality of documents presented to the inspection team, and the length of time it took to find some documents, that many junior policies were written for the previous inspection and do not form the basis of consistent practice among all staff in the juniors.
66. The senior management team are only just beginning to get to know each other and to work together to manage a primary school. This has only happened from the beginning of this term and so consequently job descriptions have not been amended to reflect new expectations. One of their first priorities is to organise themselves into teams to carry out performance management routines. Their impact on standards in school is still too variable in the junior department. The Year 6 teacher on the senior management team provides a good role model of how to teach effectively.
67. The quality of subject leadership is variable because the infant and junior departments had differing expectations of what co-ordinators should do. This is reflected in the calibre of each co-ordinator's action plan. There have been different practices in how co-ordinators have managed their budgets. At present, where co-ordinators have worked together effectively some subjects, such as ICT, have a whole school primary policy to guide the whole school. The school plans to address this. However, there are differing schemes of work and this does not allow a smooth progression in pupils' learning. The school recognises that it now needs to rationalise subject responsibilities to ensure that the most appropriate person leads the subject forward.
68. The satisfactory school development plan now covers the whole primary school for the first time. It is a strategic document. It clearly identifies the term when subjects will be monitored. Staff roles are well defined including those responsible for extra-curricular areas. Staff meetings and staff training are appropriately linked to the plan and it shows suitable links to personnel, resources, and timescales.
69. The quality of teaching and learning has not been monitored with sufficient rigour in the junior department; this is reflected in the teaching seen and the quality of work in pupils' books. Weaknesses in Years 3-5, which were a key issue in the previous junior report, still remain.

70. The primary school has a sensible set of aims. It meets its aims to form a strong relationship between the school, parish and parents and pupils showing respect for others. However, it does not meet the critical aim of allowing more able pupils to develop their full potential in Years 3-5.
71. Leadership and management of special educational needs are satisfactory. Documentation and procedures in line with the new code of practice, are developing and annual reviews meet requirements. Leadership is shared between two co-ordinators, one for each department. They work well together and there is close liaison and support. A parent group has been set up which provides information and support for parents. This represents good practice. Effective links with external services have been established. As yet, there has been little opportunity to monitor practice or to undertake an audit of skills. Plans are rightly in place to do this so that more effective management of staff and resources can develop. The link governor meets regularly with both special educational needs co-ordinators.
72. The governors play a satisfactory role in the life of the school. They have had a difficult task in trying to ensure that the two departments worked as one school. Governors take part in training from the local education authority, which keeps them up-to-date. The governors for literacy and numeracy meet with co-ordinators regularly and the literacy governor has observed lessons. The governing body acknowledges that there is some improvement needed in special educational needs; identifying best value; the policy on race equality and general compliance with the Code of Practice; full analysis of attainment and taking pupils' views into account. However, they also need to improve the training and policies for child protection, improve reporting to parents and ensure that there is an up-to-date prospectus.
73. Financial planning is satisfactory overall. The school has experienced a difficult situation since the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools in 1999, having to sustain the salaries of two headteachers and balance the budgets of infant and juniors. This limited the spending power on resources, which were needed to enhance the effective delivery of various curriculum areas. The difficulties experienced now, however, are resolved with the appointment of one headteacher to manage the primary school. This should allow the finance committee, led by a particularly able chairman, to quickly identify and fulfil the required needs of the school. This should subsequently provide all areas with improved resource provision to impact on raising standards. The governing body adopts an appropriate system of regular budgetary review and each member of this committee receives regular financial statements. The established committees work well together and all meet prior to the full governing body meeting. The principle of the committee structure is sound. The impact of major spending is considered by the finance committee on a regular basis to assess value for money, although currently no formal 'criteria for success' has been established. Effective use is made of grants to support new initiatives, not only to improve the quality of learning, but also the quality of life. For example, significant grants are currently being obtained to improve resources in the grounds.
74. The financial statement indicates a carry forward figure well within the recommended percentage figure. The governing body is aware of best value principles and receives good support from the local education authority on this aspect. Formal tenders are invited for items of major expenditure and professional advice obtaining prior to final decisions being made. The governing body has also agreed a threshold expenditure figure for the headteacher, which is sensible and realistic. Administrative procedures are carried out well with the administrative staff on both sites. Each secretary leads on different responsibilities, such as school meals, financial routines or school funds both being capable of assuming responsibility for the other's role. This system is interactive, supportive and effective and contributes positively to the smooth running of both departments and the whole school. The only item, which now needs to be amalgamated, is that of the school fund and this is to be addressed shortly. The recommendations of the previous audit reports for each school have been satisfactorily addressed. Both the administrative staff adopt a helpful approach to pupils, parents and visitors. The school has computerised systems for monitoring school and financial records. Procedures are unobtrusive and support the day-to-day running of the school

well.

75. There are sufficient staff at the school to meet the needs of all pupils and to deliver a broad and balanced range of learning activities. The match between roles and responsibilities is satisfactory. The majority of teachers have good primary expertise, but there are weaknesses in subject knowledge in some subjects, particularly in art and design and design and technology. This has a negative impact on standards in those subjects, especially in the junior department. The good number and expertise of teaching assistants is a strength, and they help to raise standards significantly with their high quality guidance within lessons and around the school.
76. The school's strategy for appraisal and performance management is satisfactory and is linked appropriately to the school development plan and training needs. All staff are included in the annual performance discussions. Induction procedures are good with strengths in the team approach in which all staff help to support new members. Staff development is good and is effectively managed, so that all staff are offered appropriate training. Teachers and support staff bid for a good range of courses. Staff value these good training opportunities. Currently, the school is supporting one support assistant in her training to become a teacher. Support staff are invited to whole-school training days and to staff meetings, and they feel well supported in their roles.
77. There is a generous amount of accommodation available for the school to use within the two buildings on its site. Specialist rooms are available for music and ICT together with a room which parents can use. However, in music the layout of the music room restricts practical activities. Classrooms are generally spacious and well furnished. The learning environment, more noticeably in the infants, is enhanced by good quality displays that celebrate pupils' work. There is a five year environmental project to improve the whole school play facilities, provide good links to science with a meadow habitat and a 'field of hope' and provide shelter and benches for pupils to sit on at playtime.
78. Some internal areas in the juniors are shabby and neglected; for instance some classrooms have broken blinds at the windows. Both departments are kept clean by the conscientious cleaning staff, minor repairs are carried out quickly by the caretaker. Outside there are suitable hard and grassed play areas. The provision of outdoor play for the reception classes is unsuitable, but the teachers try very hard to make the best use of this designated area. The exterior of both buildings is showing signs of neglect. There are several rotten window frames and the school has not been painted for some years. The roof leaks in the infant school. The junior school in particular lacks the provision of an outside light especially near the area where cars are parked.
79. Throughout the school, the overall quality and range of resources is satisfactory, and suitably supports the curriculum. Resources are good in mathematics, science, design technology, physical education and for children in the reception classes. In art and design, they are very good in the junior department. However, resources for music are unsatisfactory in the juniors and there are insufficient construction kits to support learning in design and technology. There are very good resources in the Language Unit. Each building has an accessible store of resources.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to continue to improve the current standards and the quality of education that the school provides, the headteacher, and governors should:

- (1) Improve aspects of the curriculum, including the use of time, and establishing closer links between what pupils learn in the infants and juniors by:
 - Completing joint policies and establishing joint schemes of work;*
Paragraphs 28, 67, 125, 131, 136,141, 147, 157, 163
 - Writing a list of key skills which need to be taught and checking that this happens;
Paragraph 28
 - Ensuring that the timetables are clear about what is to be taught in order to ensure equality of access for all pupils; Paragraph 30
 - Monitoring punctuality of the start of lessons; Paragraph 23
 - Reducing the amount of time spent watching television. Paragraph 23

- (2) Improving the quality of teaching and learning for pupils in Years 3-5, especially the more able pupils by:
Paragraphs 103, 105, 124, 140, 145, 151, 156
 - Using what teachers already know about what pupils understand and can do to plan more challenging lessons;
Paragraphs 4, 17, 23, 50-52, 54, 114, 116, 118
 - Raising teachers' expectations; Paragraphs 22, 27
 - Monitoring teaching and learning rigorously. Paragraphs 69, 107, 119

- (3) Improve progress in art and design in the juniors by: Paragraphs 8, 126, 128
 - Planning to teach the skills of art and design rather than using art as part of a topic;
Paragraph 129
 - Making better use of the very good resources; Paragraph 130
 - Incorporating ICT into the scheme of work. Paragraph 131

Governors should:

- Put into place up-to-date training in child protection for junior staff and ensure that there is a whole school policy. Paragraphs 44, 72
- Improve the quality and consistency of pupils' reports to parents and ensure that art and design and design and technology are reported separately. Paragraphs 62, 72.

**Already in the school development plan*

INSPECTION OF THE LANGUAGE UNIT

80. Provision in the Language Unit is very good and is a strength of the school. The unit is a local education authority resource, which caters for up to ten infant aged pupils who have difficulties with their spoken language and their understanding of language. There are currently seven pupils in the unit, which is staffed by a teacher and a nursery nurse. The speech therapist works in the unit for two days each week. This multi-disciplinary approach is very successful in helping pupils to improve their language skills and make very good progress in the other curriculum areas. The success of the unit results in pupils undergoing a reintegration programme when they reach Year 2, so that they can rejoin their own local primary school. All the pupils in the unit have a statement of educational need, which enables them to receive the support and guidance that they need. Regular reviews monitor progress and enable parents to be fully involved in their child's education.
81. Pupils in the unit achieve very well in lessons. This is because of the high quality teaching and support that they receive, and the high staff ratio. Learning is successfully tailored to their needs so that a multi-sensory approach is used at all times. This allows pupils to benefit from good tactile, visual and auditory resources that promote very good understanding. Effective modelling of language and high quality speech and language therapy, help to improve pupils' spoken language. For example, very good use of a range of light sources in a science lesson, enabled pupils in Year 2 to talk clearly about the importance of light, and the differences between the different sources. In a literacy lesson, the very good use of real resources enabled pupils to develop clear understanding of the 'Little Red Riding Hood' story. They became so involved that they were able to join in with spoken aspects of the story very clearly, saying phrases like "What big eyes you have" at the correct time. In numeracy, the Year 2 pupils integrate into the main school and they achieve broadly average standards as they show appropriate understanding of doubling numbers, and they measure objects accurately against a measuring stick.
82. Pupils in the reception and Year 1 age group work in the unit for their mathematics lessons. They benefited from the high staff ratio as they counted Red Riding Hood's footsteps around the classroom. They counted up to ten footsteps carefully following the route themselves. This caught their imagination and they showed very high levels of interest as they made very good progress, counting aloud and beginning to recognise some numerals.
83. Because staff know the pupils so well, relationships are strong. Pupils enjoy school and thrive in the very positive ethos within the unit. They are confident in their tasks and take part fully in all aspects of the school day. Their independence is fostered appropriately as they help to tidy the classroom and take simple responsibilities for their own belongings.
84. The unit is very well managed, and meets the needs of the pupils very effectively. Individual assessment of pupils' achievement in all learning areas, identifies clear improvements over time. Individual education plans are of good quality, and specific language and learning targets are shared with parents. The good curriculum is based on the main school's topics, which provides some very good inclusion opportunities. For example, pupils from the unit join in with the appropriate year group for mathematics, physical education, music, assemblies, play times, lunch times, visits and concerts. In one physical education lesson, pupils were observed joining in very well and were fully included in all aspects of the lesson. Pupils from the main school often chose unit pupils as partners and vice versa, and good interaction between the two groups was observed. Very good links with the local education authority and other services, such as speech therapy, have a positive impact on the quality of provision. The very good accommodation, which is well presented as an interactive learning environment, and the very good use of resources are major strengths. The unit staff are rightly aware of the need to develop improved outdoor play facilities, particularly for the youngest pupils. They are working closely with the main school to develop this facility.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	76
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	53

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	19	31	19	4	1	0
Percentage	2	25	41	25	5	2	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	YR. – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	426
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	60

Special educational needs

	YR. – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	44

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	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.8
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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	33	32	65

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	32	32	31
	Girls	32	32	31
	Total	64	64	62
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	98 (100)	98 (98)	95 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	32	33	33
	Girls	32	32	32
	Total	64	65	65
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	98 (100)	100 (100)	100 (97)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	28	31	59

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	22	26
	Girls	27	21	28
	Total	50	43	54
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	85 (58)	73 (63)	92 (80)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	23	26
	Girls	27	23	28
	Total	48	46	54
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	84 (70)	78 (73)	92 (80)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	425	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	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)	18
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.6:1
Average class size	28.4:1

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	18
Total aggregate hours worked per week	382

Financial information

Financial year	01/02
	£
Total income	947008
Total expenditure	968258
Expenditure per pupil	2322
Balance brought forward from previous year	£56701
Balance carried forward to the next year	£39451

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
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.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 46%

Number of questionnaires sent out	426
Number of questionnaires returned	196

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	74	23	2	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	70	27	0.5	0	2.5
Behaviour in the school is good.	66	32	0.5	0	1.5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	61	33	3	0	3
The teaching is good.	74	25	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	59	34	6	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	20	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	83	17	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	71.5	26	2	0	0.5
The school is well led and managed.	79	20.5	0	0	0.5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	78	21.5	0	0	0.5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	78	21	1	0	0

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

Provision for children in the reception classes

85. The school makes good provision for children in the reception classes in a warm, secure and welcoming environment and children receive a good start to their time in school. Good quality teaching, and support from all staff, a well-balanced and broad curriculum and a wide variety of interesting learning activities all have a positive impact on children's learning, and they enjoy coming to school. Parents are valued, and welcomed into the school. There are good procedures to help parents and children when they start school, including several pre-school visits. The informative and useful 'Starting school tool kit', produced for parents, is of good quality and includes crayons, pencils, scissors, and glue. Parent and child complete the activity booklet together and this is then displayed in school so the children can see it as an important link with the security of home.

Personal, social and emotional development

86. Children are given many good opportunities to develop their personal and social skills in all areas of learning. Teachers establish good routines to help the children to feel secure, and learn to be independent. When they get ready for PE lessons, the great majority can dress, undress and look after their belongings with the minimum of assistance. Children are taught to take turns, put away their own painting aprons, and tidy up equipment at the end of a session carefully. They look at the 'choosing board', and confidently select from the different activities available to their group. All members of staff provide good role models, because they work well together as a team. Children learn how to make good, friendly relationships, and showed real concern when a child fell off his scooter in the outdoor area. They learn about giving gifts and friendship when they read the story of 'The Christmas bear'. Children's achievements are praised and rewarded, and so they behave well. Good teaching and a variety of co-operative, shared experiences ensure that by the end of their time in the reception classes, all children achieve the level of personal and social development expected nationally.

Communication, language and literacy

87. When they enter the reception classes, many children have immature speech patterns, for example they may say "comed" instead of 'came', or "horsey" for 'horse', and many do not know familiar nursery rhymes. Good opportunities to speak and listen enable them to progress quickly. They listen attentively to stories because the teacher reads in an expressive, lively manner. They listen to and follow instructions carefully in movement and dance lessons.
88. Over the course of the year, teachers plan lessons carefully to build up gradually to a full literacy hour by the end of the reception year. Good examples of print help children to recognise words, and to know that they have meaning. Most children know the sound of each letter. Nearly all children recognise the characters in their reading books. About half the class can already read a number of words that they see frequently, and some more able children can read whole phrases such as 'Look at me'. The teacher uses a puppet well to help them learn to distinguish different letter sounds, and to blend letters together into words. They all enjoy choosing a book and have definite favourites that they talk about confidently. Each classroom has a quiet book area with a good selection of books.
89. Nearly all the children recognise their own names when they enter school, and soon learn to write it clearly. More able children can already 'sound out' the letters in their name and write their christian and surnames. A good supply of materials in the writing area encourages children to

make marks and write, and develop control of a pencil. Their own writing is valued and used well in classroom displays. Frequent practice helps children to become more confident writers. Teachers develop these skills well and children soon start to write independently, describing themselves in two or three sentences, using well-formed letters, although less able children only write a few words. Children's progress is carefully monitored through checking writing, letter and word recognition, and extra help is given to those who need it. Good teaching in this area of learning ensures that nearly all the children reach the standard of speaking and listening, reading and writing expected for their age nationally by the end of their reception year.

Mathematical development

90. When they enter the reception class, children come from a variety of pre-school provision, and their knowledge of number and number rhymes is limited. Their swift progress is due to good teaching that uses a wide range of resources and practical, meaningful experiences in well-planned lessons and learning activities. The great majority of the children meet the early learning goal for mathematics before the end of their time in the reception classes. There is a good range of equipment to help children learn to count, sort, match and complete patterns, and numbers digits and their values are well displayed.
91. Lessons begin with a lively mental warm-up, provide frequent repetition and practice and prepare the children well for the full numeracy hour in their next stage of education. Counting skills are practised in different practical ways, such as counting by jumping up and down 8 or 10 times, and listening carefully before copying how many times the teacher claps. All children count aloud to 30, many can go further, and they can all count back from 10 to zero. They can match numbers to the correct amount of teddy bears up to 10, and about half are ready to be challenged to go further than this. They quickly spot and correct the teacher when she deliberately miscounts or omits a number from a sequence.
92. Correct mathematical vocabulary is always used, and the classroom assistant supported this well with a beanbag game she devised to help the children learn ordinal names, such as first, second and third. Children soon begin to record their work, most can write digits to 10. More able children can add one more to a sequence. All children can name a 'circle', a 'square', and most know a 'rectangle' and a 'triangle'.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

93. Children show a lively interest in the world around them, and teachers build on this well by providing a good range of experiences and activities to stimulate their awareness. Good investigational activities in science enable the children to test, discuss and then classify how toys move in different ways. This was a good link to their studies of old and new toys, helping them to see changes over time by comparing their modern battery powered toys with ones that had to be pushed, pulled or worked by clockwork. They learn about houses and build their own diagram showing correctly where all the rooms go. In the autumn, they took a 'colour walk' round the school grounds, and observed how the trees and plants prepare for winter. They also learned about routes and maps on their walk, developing early geographical skills well. They helped to plant bulbs in the school's 'Field of Hope' area, and will learn about the growing cycle of plants by observing them grow and flower next spring. Staff use the digital camera well to record the children's activities, and display the pictures to reinforce their learning. Children see and care for the plants growing in the classroom and in the courtyard garden
94. Children regularly use the computers in each room. The majority show good control of the mouse, and can point and click in response to the program. Some children, however, find it hard to manipulate the mouse because their control is not yet sufficiently developed. All the children enjoyed designing and making models of robots using a good variety of shiny, metallic materials. They build fire-engines and cars using lego and large and small bricks, learning about the world

around them and how it works. Well-planned activities and good teaching build on the children's general knowledge so that they all meet the early learning goal in this area before the end of the reception year.

Physical development

95. The provision of an outdoor classroom area is a priority in the current school development plan, and the exciting plans are at an advanced stage. At present there is only a small courtyard area. The children use this area regularly with bikes, scooters and wheeled toys, but there is not enough room for the children to run about and use large climbing apparatus, slides or bats and balls. Children have PE lessons in the school hall, and there is suitable apparatus for them to climb, scramble and balance on. They practice stretching, moving and balancing on the floor in different ways, and most children confidently transfer these movements to low tables and benches, showing good co-ordination and increasing skill. Many children skip round the room to a dance tune, but some lack the necessary co-ordination to do so. They are taught correct vocabulary, and one child showed good recall of the word 'dismount' for getting off the apparatus. They know why they must 'warm-up' and 'cool down'. The teacher used a good range of animal images to help the children move well in their own space. They work well, with regard to their own and each other's safety because the staff have established good routines and give frequent reminders. Practise manipulating equipment such as small bricks, cars, scissors, jigsaws, the computer mouse and glue sticks helps the children develop increasing control of small movements. Good teaching ensures the children make good progress and they all meet the early learning goal for physical development before the end of the reception year.

Creative development

96. Children develop their creative skills well through a range of activities. The role-play area is a popular choice from the 'choosing board'. Children enjoy dressing up in the wide selection of outfits and organising the house, which helps them to improve their social skills. However, there is little interaction between children, which limits the opportunity for language development. There are good opportunities for the children to express their creative ideas freely with a range of media and techniques from paint, chalk and crayon to modelling, collage and playdough. They carefully apply paint by using brushes, fingertips and handprints to represent numbers. They learned how to mix different colours and shades, and their results were turned into shining rainbows. By using straws to blow paint across a page, they learned about the effects of air, this linked well with science activities. Their work is displayed well, adding to the bright, colourful environment of the classroom.
97. Children have music and singing lessons each week, usually in the school hall. They have suitable experience of making sounds with small instruments. They enjoy singing, and join in well as they become increasingly familiar with the words and rhythms. They often sing number songs in mathematics lessons. Teaching is satisfactory and children meet the early learning goal by the end of the reception year.

ENGLISH

98. Standards in English in the infant department are above average in all aspects, with a particular strength in reading across the school. In the junior department, standards are also above average by the time pupils reach Year 6, although in the lower juniors, standards dip and are broadly average. This is closely linked to the quality of teaching and provision in those classes. Standards in the 2002 national tests showed similar attainment to that found during the inspection.
99. When pupils enter the Year 1 classes they already achieve well in speaking, listening and communication. During their time in the infant department, they make good progress in their

- language skills. They are encouraged to communicate and answer questions in a wide range of lessons. During literacy time, they were observed benefiting from the teachers' high expectations as they talked about the days of the week and discussed their shared text. They listened well to the questions and to others talking. In Year 2, good teaching promotes effective speaking and listening skills and helps pupils to understand the rules of conversation. They talked animatedly about one task, which was to order instructions for making either a cup of tea or a snowman. They listened carefully as pupils communicated their own ideas, using varying vocabulary and detail and giving reasons for their choice of order. For example, one pupil commented that "you need to fill the kettle before you fetch the teapot, because it needs time to boil". Another pupil commented on the need to give clear instructions about what to do with the balls of snow to make a snowman, "because it needs a head and a body".
100. As pupils move into the junior department, their communication skills are developed appropriately as they talk about their work. However, sometimes there are not enough opportunities in the lower junior classes for all pupils to speak in class. In one lesson, the organisation of the shared text meant that some pupils could not see to quickly read the words to find answers to questions, and hence could not comment. In another lesson, many questions were written down and too few opportunities to discuss or talk about the conventions of play scripts were available. Towards the end of the junior department, standards in speaking and listening improve. Pupils benefit from some very good teaching and develop confidence in their own ideas, contributing well in lessons. For example, in a literacy lesson in Year 6, pupils used good formal language as they talked about report writing, and used good standard English to explain themselves clearly.
101. Reading skills are good across the school. They are particularly good in the infant department, where some very high standards were seen. The younger pupils in the school benefit from the good structured teaching of reading and phonics. They quickly develop a basic knowledge of the usual sounds that letters make and are able to build unknown words from Year 1. By Year 2, they read a good range of books, show high levels of enthusiasm, and read willingly on a daily basis. In literacy lessons, they work hard and benefit from good, and sometimes very good teaching. In one lesson, pupils were observed reading aloud a set of instructions with the adults in the class. Because of well-prepared resources, all pupils were able to see clearly and join in. They read fluently and accurately, re-ordering the instructions quickly so that they made sense. In another lesson, they benefited from the good modelling of reading by staff and good reading targets as they read text together. Their positive attitudes to reading, fostered by staff, play an important part in their success.
102. Younger pupils in the junior department continue to read a good range of books and develop appropriate strategies to establish meaning. In literacy lessons, they make satisfactory progress, but standards dip slightly. This is because the quality of teaching is less successful and the range of learning opportunities less varied than in the infant department.
103. Pupils in Year 3 use dictionaries appropriately to find meanings to words. Many show appropriate understanding of what a prefix is, and can add them to other words to change their meaning. However, because of the way the class was organised, not all pupils could see the text they were supposed to be reading. This caused some disturbances and standards slipped. Similarly, in the other lower junior classes, although the management of literacy lessons is broadly satisfactory, there are some weaknesses in organisation and planning, which reduce the quality of pupils' learning. In one lesson, the over-prescribed task allowed neither communication skills to develop, or for pupils to show what they do independently on computers. Lack of challenge in this, and other lessons, has a negative impact on standards and on pupils' achievements. Lack of different tasks for different ability groups in Year 5, for example, led to some pupils failing to understand the conventions of a play script, and the lack of sufficient copies of the text was a weakness. However, in Year 6, standards improve and pupils catch up quickly, due to very good teaching and provision. A PowerPoint presentation to explore aspects of report writing, by both Year 6 classes, was a very positive start to some very good learning. Pupils were motivated by the high quality computer resources used, and by the very well managed lesson. They were enabled to show their

- knowledge of report writing and quickly began to organise their text to make it more interesting and accessible to the reader. One pupil commented that he was going to improve his text “by adding some different connectives and varying my vocabulary.” Pupils showed very good awareness of the importance of selecting essential points in the text and using only relevant information in the final draft. They were willing and keen to read to adults, showed high levels of enthusiasm for books, and displayed very good knowledge of a range of authors and styles of reading. Several preferred fact to fiction, and a high percentage belong to their local library. They are on track to achieve standards above average and some well above by the end of Year 6.
104. Standards in writing were identified in the last national tests as weaker than those in speaking or reading. Consequently, the school has developed a good writing programme with individual writing targets for all pupils. This is having a positive impact on standards, and on the presentation of pupils’ work. In the infant department, pupils are developing a neat style of writing and they achieve good standards. They begin to write about every-day things that interest them as soon as they start school, and quickly develop awareness of simple punctuation. They benefit from the good modelling of writing by teachers. They watched carefully as the teacher wrote on the white board a set of instructions. The good emphasis placed on neat writing and well-formed letters, encouraged pupils to do the same as they ordered their own instructions. Their work was well presented and good progress was evident.
105. In the lower junior department, pupils achieve appropriate standards in writing, but there is an over-abundance of worksheets, not only in literacy, but in the range of other subjects that generally help writing to develop. For example, in history and geography, much of the work is based on worksheets with language often too difficult for pupils to understand. A similar picture is evident in science. The literacy lessons are based on appropriate content, but the activities are sometimes inappropriate with too few opportunities for pupils to develop their own ideas and write extended accounts of their experiences. However, by Year 6, more imaginative and very good teaching styles enable pupils to make very good gains in learning, so that by the time they reach the end of the year, they are predicted to achieve high standards in writing. Evidence from the examination of pupils’ work shows a very good range of writing, written in a neat ‘joined up’ style. For example, in a personal response to the Hiawatha poem, pupils highlighted questions that they would like to ask Hiawatha about his life. They showed good understanding of the style of the poem. Pupils have re-written extracts of Macbeth in a lively, well sustained way, and are developing a good formal style when writing accounts. During the inspection, the quality of teaching writing in Year 6 was very good and enabled very good achievement in both lessons. The very good use of ICT to support report writing, enabled high quality, independent responses to the task. Their content was well-organised and well written with the reader in mind, enabling high standards to be achieved.
106. The quality of teaching and learning in English is good overall. It is very good in some lessons in the infant department and is also very good in Year 6. The impact of this on pupils’ learning is that they achieve well in the infants and in Year 6, but learning is only satisfactory in the lower juniors. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, the teachers’ very good skills in providing activities appropriate to the ability of each group, led to high achievement by all groups. The very good use of support assistants in lessons has a positive part to play in the achievement of all pupils, but particularly those with special needs. Teachers manage behaviour well and strong relationships ensure positive attitudes to learning.
107. The quality of leadership and management in English is satisfactory with some good features. The good analysis of results from national tests is a strength, and has led to a major impetus in the development of writing standards across the school. This is having a very positive impact on writing standards, and on teachers’ expertise in teaching early writing skills. Effective records of achievement have been introduced, which enables pupils’ progress to be monitored as they move through the school. Training for the National Literacy Strategy has been part of a whole-school training initiative and is having a good impact on teaching and learning. There has been an

improvement in resources for English recently. However, not enough liaison takes place between the infant and junior departments, and the two co-ordinators do not have sufficient opportunity to monitor teaching in the subject. This has led to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and provision, and consequently in the achievement of pupils.

108. The infant library contains a very good range of books, which are carefully displayed and support pupils' learning well. However, there are fewer books in the junior library. They are not attractively displayed, or easily accessible to pupils and a significant number need replacing.

MATHEMATICS

109. Standards are average for the current pupils in Year 2 and in Year 6. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make overall satisfactory progress. These results agree with the findings of the 2002 national tests.

110. The National Numeracy Strategy is well implemented by all teachers and it provides them with good support in planning and developing lessons.
111. Infant pupils experience good quality teaching. This is well supported by a part-time, additional teacher to enable the formation of three groups of pupils, so that pupils are taught according to mathematical ability. More able pupils are usually well supported by being presented with tasks that match their ability. Classroom assistants and interested, capable parents support pupils' learning effectively.
112. At an early stage of their Year 2 experience, pupils have a developing understanding of place value involving tens and units. They use this to enable them to work with money totals up to £1. Most pupils can order numbers up to 99 with a clear understanding of the concept of odd, even and a variety of patterns in a 100 number square. They can count forwards and backwards in 2's, 5's and 10's with confidence. They know the mathematical names for common two-dimensional (2D) shapes. They have a clear appreciation of the need for standardised measures and work accurately with whole centimetres and metres. For instance, lower attaining pupils are clear about when to use metres and when to use centimetres. Nine less able pupils in the class exhibit well below average attainment and work with digits to make totals up to 9. They are unsure of the number after 40 when counting in 10's and the concept of 'more than' is underdeveloped.
113. Year 6 pupils exhibit their very sound knowledge and understanding of place value when successfully rounding numbers with two figures of decimal notation. They solve multiplication problems by partitioning and use horizontal notation when multiplying and dividing. Most pupils can order fractions using their well developed understanding of equivalence, as well as finding unit and non-unit fractions of given totals of standardised measures. They accurately estimate and measure angles before developing skills of angle construction, using ruler and protractor. They measure the perimeter of regular shapes and have wide knowledge of 2D shapes, related to sides and angles. They draw block graphs of grouped data related to the number of letters in words and also to scores in card games. They accurately construct pie-charts in fractional parts to represent different coloured cars. In one class a good number of pupils clamour to attempt the concluding mental problem of $1\ 000\ 000 \div 'x' = 25.6$. The challenge is enjoyed by all of them. Approximately twenty-five per cent of the cohort cover the same lesson content, but work at lower levels of attainment.
114. The overall quality of teaching throughout the school is only satisfactory, because teachers in the junior department do not use assessment well enough to move pupils' learning forward. Examination of pupils' books in the early years of the juniors shows that teachers are ignoring the results of the national tests (where pupils achieved a better than nationally expected number of higher grades in 2002) and setting repetitive mundane tasks. Pupils' progress in the juniors is disrupted because of the variations in the quality of teaching.
115. The quality of teaching in mathematics lessons observed during the inspection ranged from excellent to unsatisfactory, with the overall standard being good. Two lessons were excellent. In one Year 2 lesson for the least able pupils, the teacher knows the pupils very well and is able to match tasks to their individual needs. Excellent, supportive relationships are well-established and patience and humour is used very effectively to support pupils' learning. In one Year 6 lesson all pupils are well challenged through additional extension activities. Independent learning is developed, when the teacher encourages more able pupils to choose the mathematical method they judge most appropriate to solve their decimal problems. High expectations of pace, attitude and neat presentation of work ensure a most positive working environment with humour a constant ingredient. Where teaching is good or better, the purpose of the lesson is shared with the pupils so that they know what they have to do and re-visited at the end of the lesson to identify and assess learning that has taken place. All pupils are involved in tasks that challenge them to make progress. The beginnings of lessons are used effectively to develop the pupils' mental agility with questions varied to extend pupils of all abilities. Class management skills are well

developed and maths is fun.

116. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, as in a Year 4 lesson, less than half the class is actively involved in the lesson, while other pupils sit in a docile manner. Planning is not specific to the lesson and tasks are not matched to the different abilities of the pupils. One pupil is visibly upset when she is unable to understand what is expected of her. Pupils make overall unsatisfactory progress.
117. Good quality support assistants are often under-used in the juniors and spend large parts of lessons listening to the teacher, rather than supporting pupils' learning. The use of ICT to support pupils' knowledge and understanding of graphical representation is good. For instance, Year 5 pupils study the effects of exercise on blood circulation and graphs are generated to show changes in pulse rate before, during and after exercise. However, the use of ICT in lessons is under-developed in daily lessons in many classes. The quality of marking is satisfactory overall with strengths in the infant department and in Year 6. When it is good or better it is undertaken in a positive, encouraging style and identifies how individual pupils might improve. In a number of classes marking is less consistently applied and in a small number of classes marking neither motivates pupils to present their work neatly, nor shows them how they might improve. There is clear need for a marking policy, common to infant and junior departments that all teachers consistently apply in order to improve pupils' learning.
118. Regular assessment in junior classes comprises tick sheets of work covered. Achievement of individual pupils is not matched to National Curriculum levels and consequently does not support planning and teaching matched to pupils' needs. Good opportunities are missed to involve pupils in setting their own targets towards improving their individual attainment in mathematics.
119. Subject management is good. Both co-ordinators teach mathematics well, have attended a good number of local authority courses and are keen to further improve standards. However, the leadership role of the co-ordinators is under-developed. They have no opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. Of equal importance, monitoring of pupils' workbooks is not undertaken. This is an area for urgent development to support consistency in pupils' progress. The junior department co-ordinator has used assessment information to monitor gender imbalance within overall attainment. This is a very good development. Resources for mathematics are good. They are very well organised in topic containers and are easily accessible.

SCIENCE

120. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are above those expected for pupils of these ages. This supports the results of the 2002 national tests. Standards in the infants are due to good teaching. Booster sessions for Year 6 pupils, together with effective teaching in these classes, lead to good achievements and high standards.
121. By the end of Year 2, pupils learn about light travelling through transparent materials and understand important vocabulary, such as 'transparent' and 'opaque'. Pupils already have been encouraged to predict what they think might happen and during investigations, they use and share their equipment fairly and sensibly. They record their results correctly and clearly enjoy their practical activities. Pupils sort materials into groups following discussions with an adult. They display responsibility by tidying up, organising resources and showing good personal independent skills.
122. In Year 3, pupils recognise different materials and understand their properties. In Year 4, pupils investigate how to keep ice cold and link their findings to real life situations. They are aware of the rationale of an unfair test and boys and girls work together in reasonable harmony. In a Year 5 lesson, emphasis again was placed on investigation and problem solving. Working together in small groups, pupils were given appropriate materials to respond to a set task. This involved

considerable discussion and collaboration in order to achieve their group objective. Throughout the lesson, the teacher used such scientific vocabulary, such as ‘vibrate’, and ‘travel’, and ‘movement of air’, which pupils were then encouraged to use in discussion and in their writing. In Year 6, pupils investigated procedures in order to separate solids from liquids using a filtration process. Before the investigation, pupils were expected to predict and to record these predictions. Following the investigations, pupils compared their findings with their predictions and discussed in groups not only the discrepancies but also why they were made.

123. In the majority of classes, pupils enjoy experiences of discovering scientific principles for themselves. This is beneficial to pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs. Pupils of lower ability receive good support, which helps to raise their understanding of scientific principles. Opportunities are provided in most classes for pupils to work collaboratively together. This not only raises standards, but also supports their social and moral development and promotes speaking and listening skills effectively.
124. Overall, the quality of teaching in the infants is good, but it varies in the juniors from barely satisfactory to very good and is therefore, satisfactory overall. Where teaching is good, pupils are provided with opportunities to collaborate, predict, carry out investigations sensibly and discuss and record their findings. Management of pupils’ behaviour is good and achieved through lessons carried out at a brisk pace, introductions and explanations clear, high expectations, opportunity for collaborative work and high focus on the use of scientific vocabulary. When this occurs pupils in both infant and juniors respond to the challenge, work industriously, address problems scientifically and are enthusiastic and excited about their work. Where the teaching is less effective, management of pupils’ behaviour requires attention, lessons are not as interestingly introduced and the main purposes of the lesson are not as rigorously pursued. This results in restlessness, limited progress and understanding and teachers’ questioning which is not so probing.
125. The quality of leadership and management is good. The co-ordinators of both infants and juniors recognise the need to collaborate on establishing a scheme of work to encompass a whole school approach with a skills focus. The co-ordinators acknowledge the need for monitoring of teaching, learning and standards and are already working on strategies, gathering publications and looking at resources to respond to this need. Analysis of SAT’s data is already being undertaken by both co-ordinators in order to identify areas of concern and reinforce the many strengths in this area. Resources are good overall.

ART AND DESIGN

126. Standards in art and design are in line with what is expected at age seven and all pupils, including those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. However, by age eleven standards are below what is expected and all boys and girls make unsatisfactory progress.
127. Most Year 2 pupils print satisfactorily using sponges and leaves to create backgrounds for their pictures of Sankey Valley. They add black silhouettes of ducks, reeds and dragonflies to capture the atmosphere. They carry out careful observational drawings of plants, leaves and berries that they found on their walk; the best show details such as the veins on the leaves and the buds on the twigs. The infant ‘Art Day’ enriched the curriculum well and gave pupils a chance to participate in activities such as mask making and weaving. Year 2 pupils tried their hand at drawing a rocking horse in charcoal and white chalk with variable results. The most able pupils captured the head and the movement of the beast well. Some pictures show careful attention to detail, when drawing the hooves and the stirrup.
128. There was little information to show what Year 6 pupils can achieve because the art topic is only just starting. However, evidence from the Year 6 art portfolio shows that pupils make collages using materials such as tissue, felt and cellophane, but the work is at a lower level than normally

found. The sketchbooks show that observational drawing skills, for example a silver birch and foxgloves, lack the detail expected of Year 6 pupils. Discussion with pupils shows that, apart from the most able pupils, few can name more than one artist. The junior 'Art Day' gave pupils more mundane experiences to make and paint pots and to model using junk.

129. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in the infants where a good number of adults support pupils' learning. They are encouraged to work together, share the resources, and to make choices, such as which size of brush they should use. Teachers plan lessons using a good range of paints, papers and tools that encourage pupils to use their imaginations. For instance, in Year 1 there are some good quality bonfire pictures created when pupils used both collage and splatter paint effects to capture the feeling of bonfire night. However, in the juniors, teaching is unsatisfactory. Despite the very good quality range of resources teachers too often offer pupils the opportunity to use crayons, pastels and felt tips. Art lessons are used too often to illustrate part of a topic rather than to develop pupils' skills in art and design.
130. The curriculum is unsatisfactory and does not aid the smooth progression of pupils' learning. Both schools have their own schemes of work. Art and design in the infants is generally taught alongside design and technology, with no clear distinction of the skills involved. There is insufficient co-operation in planning between the two departments, so that, for instance, Year 2 pupils make clay 'thumb pots' in design and technology and Year 3 pupils also make them in art and design. The challenging scheme of work in the juniors is not being used well enough to support pupils' learning. For instance, the scheme of work for Year 3 says that pencil, chalks, pastels should be used to create mood and to make different types of marks. The result is a self-portrait that has been coloured in with no regard to mood or 'mark-making'.
131. Overall, day-to-day management is satisfactory. Leadership is good in the infants, but not so effective in the juniors. The junior co-ordinator is new and has not been on any courses to improve her knowledge. The junior policy is dated 1997 and is in urgent need of reviewing to provide teachers with sufficient guidance, which the school recognises. The infant co-ordinator has been in post for longer and has attended a recent course to improve her knowledge. She has more awareness of standards because she helps out in art lessons. Her action plan recognises the need to form links with the junior co-ordinator. ICT is not used well enough to support pupils' learning. For instance, opportunities were missed to use repeating patterns to support the work on William Morris in Year 5.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

132. Few lessons were observed in design and technology during the inspection week, but discussions with co-ordinators and pupils and a scrutiny of pupils' previous work confirm that standards are in line with what is expected nationally at the ages of seven and eleven. The achievement of the majority of pupils is satisfactory in both infant and junior classes. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress and receive appropriate support in lessons through the effective deployment of teaching assistants.
133. Year 1 pupils looked at a variety of products before creating their own designs on paper. They carefully practised making their pot in plasticine before making the final pot in clay. Each pot is individually decorated and then proudly put in a safe place for the other pupils to admire.
134. In discussion, pupils in Year 6 enthusiastically describe the range of projects that they have undertaken during their junior years. They listen well to one another, add information and explain their work. They design and make slippers of a good standard. They explain that the soles of the slippers are made of foam and have grips on them to stop the wearer slipping; the inner-soles are lined with felt or fleece to keep our feet warm; the designs on the uppers of the slippers are individually designed to look attractive and be fun. A clear explanation is given of how work is

planned, how they set about their task, and how they are given a choice of materials to use. Evaluation of the project is regarded as an important element to them and they can give a good description of the processes through which this was achieved.

135. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers' medium-term plans show that a suitable range of tasks are planned, with some tasks linked to other areas of the curriculum. Many pupils produce interesting designs for their project, but sometimes opportunities to build on pupils' originality of ideas are missed and this slows their learning. In the lessons seen there were good relationships among the good number of adults supporting pupils' learning, which helps all boys and girls to make progress. A good choice of resources and the purpose of the task helped to motivate pupils well.
136. The quality of leadership and management is good. There are appropriate subject policies and schemes of work for both the infants and the juniors, which are regularly reviewed. There are plans for a whole school review to produce a policy and guidelines for the whole school. The subject is led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator in both departments. The junior co-ordinator has received appropriate training. Teachers half-termly planning is monitored, the pupils' planning and evaluation sheets retained and the outcomes monitored. Resources are generally satisfactory. There is a well-organised range of tools and materials, but there is an insufficient range of construction kits available. Little use is made of ICT other than in research, for example, when Year 6 made papier-mache Greek vases, which were to be suitably decorated. There are plans to use control technology in the summer term.

GEOGRAPHY

137. Only one lesson was observed in geography during the inspection week, but discussions with co-ordinators, pupils and a scrutiny of pupils' work confirmed that standards are in line with national expectations at the ages of seven and eleven. The achievement of the majority of pupils is satisfactory in both infant and junior classes overall. However, progress is inconsistent in the juniors, where it is slower in some lower junior classes, and accelerated in the upper juniors. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress and receive appropriate support in lessons through the effective deployment of teaching assistants.
138. In discussion, Year 2 pupils satisfactorily describe their visit to the Sankey Valley. They have drawn a map of the valley and ably describe the route they took when visiting it. They could identify and describe features they observed 'en route', such as the canal, the bridge, the church and different buildings. They described the use of maps and how valuable they were to "find your way if you get lost". They know that hot countries are 'abroad' and identified different countries that fruit came from. They were also aware that Wales and Scotland were not abroad because these could be reached by car. Throughout the infant department, pupils develop their mapping skills and comparative skills well. They clearly enjoy their lessons.
139. In Year 6, pupils study the rain forest of the world. They carefully consider location, housing, food, medicines and transport. They work collaboratively together in small groups, with each group being responsible for finding information from various sources, such as videos, CD ROM and the Internet and reporting their findings to the whole class for further discussion and consideration. By the end of the juniors, pupils have developed satisfactory mapping skills. They know that different types of maps have different uses, for example, Ordnance Survey maps to follow a route. They understand that different symbols are used on these maps and they know the difference between these maps and maps showing relief features. Throughout both key stages pupils are introduced to geographical vocabulary, such as 'features' and 'symbols', 'relief' and 'meander' and most pupils use these words confidently, particularly in upper juniors.
140. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, although in one lesson seen in upper

juniors, the teaching was of high quality. This teacher used evidence, such as videos, the Internet, CD-ROM and maps effectively. She made groups of pupils responsible for interpreting data, retrieving information, decision making and reporting findings to the whole class. All pupils, including those with special educational needs were equally involved. This promoted their moral and social skills as well as developing their speaking and listening skills effectively. Teaching, however, is inconsistent and whilst it is effective in the infant and upper juniors, it is variable in lower juniors. The presentation of reports, diagrams and labelling is often of good quality, but there is evidence in some areas of an overuse of worksheets. Pupils are mostly given suitable opportunities to develop their enquiry and problem solving skills, but this is not planned for in all areas.

141. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject is appropriately led by the two co-ordinators, but there is a need for them to work together to secure an appropriate whole school scheme of work that would provide all teachers with suitable guidance and ensure that all aspects were covered and pupils' learning progressed smoothly. It is however, their intention to tackle this issue as a matter of urgency. Day-to-day assessment is satisfactory from the scrutiny of pupils' previous work and marking observed, but use of assessment to inform future lessons is unsatisfactory. Currently, opportunities for teachers to monitor teaching, learning and standards are limited. There is also a need to establish a school overview to ensure the development of key skills. However, the school acknowledges these areas of concern and is now in a strong position, both in terms of necessity and commitment to address them. Resources are satisfactory and where the school uses computer programs and videos, they are used well and impact positively on pupils' learning.

HISTORY

142. Pupils attain standards that are in line with those expected for their age nationally by the end of their time in the infants, and they make satisfactory progress. For pupils in the juniors, although progress and attainment are satisfactory overall, they have too little opportunity to question and interpret historical evidence, or to organise and present their findings in a wide variety of ways. Pupils who have special educational needs make satisfactory progress.
143. By the time they are seven, pupils satisfactorily compare the way people lived in the past with their lives today by looking at changes in housing, in the materials used for buildings and record their evidence in picture form. They develop their knowledge and understanding of important events in British history when they learn about the significance of Guy Fawkes and Remembrance Day, and know that poppies are worn to remind people of the battlefields of World War 1. Teachers make good use of videos and photographic evidence to bring history to life, and pupils learn about the history of their own locality when they identify pictures of war memorials in and around St Helens.
144. By the time they are eleven, pupils show a good sense of time when talking about their studies in history, and know that the Egyptian civilisation was much earlier than the Roman Empire or the Tudor period in Britain. They understand that the Ancient Greeks left a lasting legacy of the Olympic Games and that many of their words are still found in modern languages. However, pupils' books show that they are not able to interpret or identify primary or secondary sources of evidence, or present their knowledge in a variety of ways other than writing and drawing. Year 3 pupils know that the eagle was a symbol of great power to the Romans, but not all of them know where the Romans actually came from. Year 5 pupils study the lives of Victorian children, and compare the lives of rich and poor children, saying that they would have preferred to live in the rich family. In a practical lesson, they made toys and pastimes, and know that Victorian toys were expected to be educational or to have religious significance, such as a wooden model of Noah's ark. Pupils found it difficult, however, to present their work to the class orally. Enquiries may be carried out, using books or the Internet, for example when pupils research Greek Gods,

but some pupils simply download whole passages of text rather than interpreting and using the information.

145. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Lessons vary from very good to unsatisfactory, and much of the better teaching was seen in the infant classes. In the better lessons, teachers build up their pupils' learning in small steps to help them acquire knowledge and understanding progressively. Pupils show a lively interest and behave well when they are provided with practical activities and investigations. Lessons with little historical content do not challenge or interest the pupils, so they lose their concentration and their behaviour deteriorates. In other lessons, there are too few opportunities to interpret the different ways the past is represented or to learn that some sources are more reliable than others. The schemes of work followed by the infant and junior departments are different, which means pupils are not able to build on their previous lessons progressively. The quality of teachers' planning varies from good, with suitable purposes for each lesson, to minimal, with one statement to cover a half term's work. The infant teachers check pupils' progress against nationally expected levels, so that they can plan for pupils' future learning.
146. Other curriculum subjects are often used to support history. Pupils design and make Greek urns from papier-mache, using their artistic skills to illustrate them with myths and legends. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is successfully promoted in some history lessons. Year 2 pupils reflected on the experiences of soldiers in World War 1, and decided that, morally, war is wrong.
147. Leadership and management are satisfactory in the infants. The subject leader has a clear view of standards, introduced a revised scheme of work and prepared an action plan for future development that includes monitoring the quality of teaching. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory in the juniors; the subject leader does not have a clear view of standards, and no firm plans for development or to adopt the same scheme throughout the school. There are sufficient resources and artefacts to support the history curriculum, supplemented from the local loan service.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

148. Standards are in line with what is expected for pupils aged both seven and eleven. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make at least satisfactory progress.
149. Recently the infant pupils have had access to the computer room in the junior building. Most Year 2 pupils can set up their work with a specific font and letter size. They know how to spellcheck their work and the more able pupils are confident in deleting unwanted letters and words and selecting capital letters. Pupils know how to select bullet points to organise their instructions. Once they are reminded how to do it, they select suitable coloured ink and print off their work.
150. Most pupils in Year 6 can create a coloured background, select a range of different fonts to create lettering and import an appropriate picture. They use these skills well to create a firework poster. The most able pupils pay good attention to the layout and lettering on their poster and the effect this will have on their intended audience. The lower attaining pupils use one type of font and choose a less relevant picture for their poster. Pupils are beginning to put together a multi-media presentation on the rainforest. They use their skills satisfactorily to set up six pages and a contents page and to create hyperlinks between them. The most able pupils are confident at doing this and a few begin to add features such as 'drop down' pictures and sound effects to their work. Year 6 pupils benefit from being able to attend an ICT club to refine and improve their skills.
151. The quality of teaching and learning overall is satisfactory. It is good in the infants, but is too variable in the juniors; ranging from very good to unsatisfactory. Teachers make very good use of ICT to support pupils' learning in literacy and good use to support learning in numeracy,

particularly in the computer room. In other subjects, there are missed opportunities to support learning, especially on a day-to-day basis in the classrooms. Most pupils enjoy their lessons, work co-operatively in pairs and persevere when things get tough. Most teachers use the interactive whiteboard well to demonstrate skills and techniques to pupils and allow them to show what they can do. Many teachers have good management strategies to allow pupils to work in pairs quickly and efficiently. The ICT assistant is used well to allow all pupils to learn; her support and guidance is especially valuable with the lower ability pupils. In a very good Year 6 lesson, the co-ordinator gave a very effective PowerPoint presentation which informed pupils of both the English and ICT skills they would need to write a report. This teacher had confident knowledge and understanding of the subject, took the lesson at a brisk pace and was very clear about what she expected pupils to achieve. In the unsatisfactory lesson seen in Year 3 the teacher's management of the lesson was unsatisfactory, time was not used well enough and expectations were too low to move learning forward. At present there is some duplication of pupils' work, for instance when both Year 4 and Year 6 make firework posters.

152. Leadership and management are good and there is a long-term strategic plan to continue to raise standards. All staff have been trained and this has increased their confidence and the rate of pupils' progress. The junior co-ordinator has had additional training and has taught demonstration lessons for her colleagues. At present there is no monitoring of colleagues' lessons, but this is planned for later in the year. Assessment procedures need updating, so that teachers are more aware of what pupils already know. In the infants, the co-ordinator is keen and enthusiastic to ensure that staff use their ICT skills for a range of tasks. There are two different schemes of work at present, which does not aid pupils' smooth progression in their learning, but there is a whole school ICT policy. Overall, there are sufficient resources. During the inspection the computer bay in the infant school was out of action due to a leaking roof.

MUSIC

153. Standards are in line with what is expected for pupils aged both seven and eleven. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make at least satisfactory progress.
154. Pupils in Year 2 experiment with louder and quieter sounds and find different ways of playing a drum. Boys and girls are equally willing to demonstrate for the rest of the class. More able pupils are offered good activities when they are encouraged to play in the opposite way to the given instruction, such as 'quiet' or 'slow'. Most pupils are able to clap in time following the teacher's rhythm and they sing enthusiastically. Pupils listen to a wide variety of music from different cultures, which aids their cultural development.
155. The singing in the junior assembly and hymn practice is very tuneful, with all the older pupils singing very well. Singing is a strength of the school. Pupils in Year 5 listen to six pieces of music to convey a particular mood. However, neither class listen particularly quietly. The lessons are linked to the history topic of the Victorian House. Pupils respond to the short pieces of music and evaluate them using appropriate vocabulary. They work together satisfactorily in small groups to produce their own musical sounds to compliment the rooms in the Victorian house.
156. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, overall, but is better in the infants. In the infants there is voluntary teaching support from an ex-teacher from the school with expertise in music. In a good lesson in the infants taken by a music specialist, pupils were encouraged to experiment with the sounds of an instrument and were introduced to suitable musical vocabulary. The more able pupils were encouraged to achieve their best through expert questioning. The quality of singing was good because the pupils tried hard to improve their performance. This lesson was taken in the hall, which is a thoroughfare and the number of interruptions allowed the pupils' concentration to wander. Year 5 lessons were taught in the music room, which has limited space for practical work and this inhibited work during the lessons.

157. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject is organised by two co-ordinators, one in each department. The policies for the subject have been merged, but there is work to be done to achieve a cohesive whole-school scheme of work. There is no formal assessment, in either department, but records are kept of pupils with good musical abilities in the infants and group booklets are kept in the juniors. The use of ICT requires development. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities including recorder club and choir and pupils sometimes play the piano in assembly because musical talents are valued by the school. The range and quality of instruments in the infants is adequate to deliver the curriculum, but in the juniors, resources especially the percussion instruments, require updating and developing. There is also a need for more World music and the appropriate instruments to accompany it.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

158. Standards in physical education are in line with what is expected at age seven and eleven. Pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and all, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress.
159. Swimming is offered to pupils in all four of the junior department years. Assessment records indicate that a very large majority achieve at least the minimum national recommendation. Swimming is a strength of the physical education programme for junior pupils.

160. Boys and girls in Year 2 work together co-operatively to develop a sequence of walking, leaping and jumping in response to a piece of music, they work together in pairs to practice and improve their skills of catching, sending and receiving a ball.
161. In Year 6 good planning of progressive activities and good coaching mean that pupils steadily develop the ball skills that they need to play netball. Pupils catch the ball comfortably and quickly move the ball back to their partner. About half of them have mastered the 'shoulder pass'. In the Year 6 gymnastics lesson, pupils are very well trained to set out large apparatus safely, for differentiated group work. They develop good sequences of six different activities at floor level before transferring to link similar movements on high and low apparatus layouts. A full range of apparatus is utilised very effectively before pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own performance and that of their peers in a positive manner.
162. Pupils have sound knowledge and understanding of the effect of exercise on their bodies. They can explain the importance of 'warming up' and 'cooling down'. They enjoy gymnastic, dance and games activities. Many older boys and girls perform gymnastic movements at above average levels of achievement. In Year 4 dance lessons, pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes when making good progress in developing a range of step and jump patterns, while learning the Sambalpuri Chain Dance of Bangladesh. They evaluate their own performance and that of their peers. Behaviour during lessons reflects directly the quality of teaching. Boys and girls co-operate happily when working in pairs and also as small teams. They enjoy their lessons.
163. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is however, too variable with two lessons, one in Year 6 and one in Year 2, being very good but a Year 5 gymnastics lesson, teaching being unsatisfactory. Very good lessons are characterised by well-established, positive relationships that support high expectations of activity, quality of performance and behaviour. In the Year 2 dance lesson, the teacher demonstrated body movements very well, while motivating her pupils' very good quality response to the music of Tchaikovsky and his 'Sleeping Beauty'. In the unsatisfactory lesson, insecure subject knowledge, related to safe deployment of apparatus, in addition to under-developed teaching of pupils to carry and position equipment safely, led to negative health and safety issues. Most teachers dress appropriately to allow free demonstration and to motivate pupils to dress correctly themselves.
164. Pupils' learning is supported strongly by local sports organisations and a good number of capable and enthusiastic parents. They all play a big part in helping games skills' acquisition and in pupils having fun. The inclusion of infant and junior pupils in activities such as 'Healthy Body', 'Movement and Dance' and football clubs represents very good provision. Observation of over forty infant children receiving good quality games skills coaching in small groups during unfavourable weather conditions, was a joy to behold.
165. The leadership role of the co-ordinators is under-developed. They are given very limited opportunity to either monitor the subject, or to support teachers by giving demonstration lessons. Researching for a method of assessment that will not impinge too greatly on teachers' time is ongoing. Resources to support teaching of all elements of the physical education programme are good.
166. Subject co-ordinators have a good understanding of the subject and are both keen to develop its role in the overall curriculum. The recently appointed infant department co-ordinator has already developed a new gymnastic scheme up to Year 1 and is aware that games and dance are areas for development. She organised a sports day to celebrate the regionally presented Commonwealth Games, with pupils adopting the colours of different countries before taking part in an afternoon of 'potted sports'. Her junior department colleague is the organiser of the school's residential visit. It provides pupils with an opportunity to experience outdoor and adventurous activities. Although these experiences are not officially part of the curriculum, they represent very good opportunity to promote pupils' physical and social development. Some inter-school, competitive sport takes place

in rounders, kwik-cricket and rugby, but they provide limited opportunities for boys and girls to practise the skills they have learned in class lessons.