

## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **INCE C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Ince

LEA area: Wigan

Unique reference number: 106476

Headteacher: Mrs J A Ramsbottom

Reporting inspector: Mrs J E Platt  
11565

Dates of inspection: 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> March 2003

Inspection number: 246597

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:	5 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Charles Street Higher Ince Wigan Greater Manchester
Postcode:	WN2 2AL
Telephone number:	01942 245218
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend K Crooks
Date of previous inspection:	2 <sup>nd</sup> February 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs J E Platt 11565	Registered inspector	Physical education	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve?
Mr R Watts 9399	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school cares for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr J Fitzpatrick 19874	Team inspector	English Special educational needs Educational inclusion	
Mrs M Leah 22740	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Art and design	
Mr R Evans 20692	Team inspector	Music Design and technology History	
Mr M Dukes 32197	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology	
Mrs M Palmer 20646	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This is a voluntary aided Church of England school. It is larger than many schools, having 475 boys and girls on roll and a further 60 children attend the Nursery on a part time basis. Because many pupils move in and out of the school during the school year standards are lower than they would otherwise be. Most pupils are from white ethnic groups and a small number need help because English is not their first spoken language. Thirty-three per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, a high figure compared with the national average. One hundred and sixty five pupils (33 per cent) are on the school's register of special educational needs, which is an above average number. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. Eleven pupils have formal Statements of Special Educational Need. The area served by the school is seriously disadvantaged. Attainment on entry to the school is well below average.

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

This is a good school with some very good features that enable many pupils to overcome many barriers to reach the level expected for their age. Overall achievement is good. This is helped by pupils' positive attitudes, good teaching, a stimulating curriculum and a caring atmosphere where all contributions are valued and Christian principles strongly emphasised. The headteacher's leadership is very purposeful. She leads a team of dedicated staff and governors, all determined to provide the best for the pupils. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Teaching is good and boosts pupils' learning and achievement.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes get off to a good start and enjoy school.
- Very good leadership and management from the headteacher and key staff have established a clear way forward to continue the rise in standards.
- Pupils achieve good standards in music, art and design and physical education.
- The experiences offered to the pupils are rich and stimulating and provide very well for pupils' personal and social development. The range and number of after-school activities are excellent.
- The school has a family atmosphere and relationships are good.

#### **What could be improved**

- Standards in speaking and listening throughout the school and in reading and writing in the juniors.
- The use of classroom support staff to promote learning further.
- The marking of pupils' work and the use of targets so that pupils have a clearer understanding of how to improve.
- The effectiveness of support for the pupils who need help in learning English as an additional language.
- Attendance, which is well below the national average.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

Good progress has been made since the school was last inspected in February 1998. In response to more detailed planning, staff training and improved resources, standards have improved in information and communication technology, geography and especially in science. Although English remains below average in Year 6, the results of national tests show an improvement since 2001. The school now makes effective use of information gained from assessment to tackle identified weaknesses, especially in English, mathematics and science. Plans for future development extend beyond the current year and take financial implications into consideration. The school has effective systems for checking on pupils' health and safety. The successful introduction of performance management has resolved the concerns about the lack of appraisal of teachers. More attention is now given to monitoring teaching, which has improved so that there is more very good teaching. Accommodation has improved with considerable building and refurbishment, including improvements to the walkways, although some still require attention.

## 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				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>B</b>	well above average A above average B
Mathematics	<b>E</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>A</b>	average C below average D
Science	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>A</b>	well below average E

In English and mathematics standards were held down because the number of pupils exceeding the level expected for their age was below average. This was not the case in science where almost a half of the pupils reached above average levels. This was a significant achievement and was above the national average. Compared with similar schools the results show that pupils are doing better than expected. This is achieved despite the many disadvantages the school faces and the large number of pupils with special educational needs. The trend in results has been similar to the national picture with an improvement in all subjects last year.

Current standards in Year 6 are above average in science. This represents very good achievement especially for the pupils reaching levels higher than expected for their age. Good progress in mathematics leads to average standards with many pupils reaching the level expected for their age. Standards are below average in English. Considering the low starting point of pupils in English, these standards reflect satisfactory achievement. The number of pupils moving in and out of the school makes it difficult to predict reliable targets. However, the school was close to its targets in English last year and exceeded them in mathematics. This year's targets are challenging. Current standards indicate the school is likely to come close to them, although they may not be reached in English.

National test results in 2002 at the end of Year 2 were below the national average in reading and mathematics and well below average in writing. Compared with similar schools, results were well above average in reading and above average in mathematics. This shows pupils are reaching higher standards than expected. Standards were average in writing compared with similar schools, showing that the performance of many was satisfactory. In response to closer tracking of pupils' progress and more support for the lower attaining pupils, standards have improved and are now average in reading, writing and mathematics. Achievement is good. Standards in speaking and listening are below average and many pupils find it difficult to put their ideas into words.

Children in the Nursery and Reception classes get off to a good start. They make good progress in literacy and numeracy although many do not reach the level expected for their age because of their very low starting point. In their personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative and physical development children reach the expected level.

Pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning through English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. Pupils taught regularly by the special educational needs co-ordinator make better progress because work is very closely matched to their individual needs.

Attainment in art and design, music and physical education is above average. Standards in all other subjects are wholly satisfactory.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy coming to school. They take full advantage of the very wide range of experiences offered.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in lessons. They are sensible at break times and at lunchtime. They show respect for the feelings of others.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils willingly accept responsibility for various tasks to help their teachers. Relationships are good and contribute to the happy and secure atmosphere in the school.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Attendance is well below the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The overall quality of teaching is good and leads to effective learning. Examples of good teaching were seen in all years and all subjects. Children settle quickly in the Nursery and Reception classes because teaching is consistently good and often very good. Imaginative activities grasp the attention of these children and learning is good. Teaching is strongest in Years 2 and 6 and two lessons seen were excellent. Much new learning takes place in these years. A very small number of lessons seen were unsatisfactory. Weaknesses included insecure knowledge of the topic being taught and management not being sufficiently firm, so that pupils did not pay enough attention.

The teaching of English and mathematics is good overall. Teaching of writing is not as good in the juniors, and teachers do not insist on pupils transferring the skills they learn in literacy lessons to their other writing. In the infants, early letters and their sounds are taught effectively through practical activities. This makes learning enjoyable and pupils quickly grasp this information and use it in their reading and writing. Numeracy is taught very well and pupils rise to the challenges set in the lively introduction to numeracy lessons. This extends their problem solving skills. Computer skills are taught well and pupils apply this knowledge confidently.

The learning needs of pupils with special educational needs and those learning through English as an additional language are satisfactorily met. In lessons, tasks are not always set at the correct level and support staff are not always clear about their role in helping these pupils.

Warm relationships and a variety of teaching approaches make many lessons enjoyable and pupils are eager to learn. Strong management in most lessons leads to learning taking place in an orderly atmosphere. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subjects they teach. Their expertise and enthusiasm lead to high standards in music, art and design and physical education. Lessons are planned carefully but teachers do not always make it clear to pupils what they are to learn. As a result, pupils are unsure about the purpose of tasks. Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously but do not always make it clear to pupils how to improve.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. All statutory requirements are met. Experiences are rich and are enhanced by many exciting visits, visitors and an excellent range and number of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Assessment is used effectively to provide individual education plans for these pupils. Occasionally, these include too many targets. This makes it difficult for adult support to know how best to offer help. Pupils miss other lessons because they are withdrawn for extra literacy sessions.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. These pupils thrive in the caring atmosphere and quickly start to talk in English with their friends. In lessons, work is not always matched to their ability or experiences and this does not encourage effective learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Spiritual development is very good. Staff value pupils as individuals and encourage them to appreciate the world in which they live. Community values are very strongly promoted and pupils are taught to appreciate fairness and collaborate with each other. A good range of experiences enables the pupils to learn about their own and other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. This is a very caring school and overall procedures for health and safety are very good. Systems to assess pupils' attainment are very good. The school has started to set pupils targets so that they know what they need to do to improve. As yet, these are not clearly understood by pupils and so they are not as effective as they could be in raising standards.

The school has established good links with parents and tries hard to strengthen the partnership, but the response is not always as good as it could be.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher provides very purposeful leadership and is determined to raise standards. She is ably supported by the deputy headteacher and senior managers who work very well together and play a full part in the school's decision making. This ensures a clear direction for the future.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors are very supportive of the school. The efficient committee structure checks that all statutory duties are fulfilled. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development although they tend to rely on the headteacher and staff for this information.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The headteacher and staff monitor the work of the school closely by analysing assessment data and comparing these results with other schools nationally and locally. This information is used effectively to set school targets and to predict progress towards these.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The governors have good systems to oversee the budget. Careful consideration is given to all options when major decisions have to be made. Specific grants are used correctly in the best interest of the pupils and the standards achieved. Good attention is given to the principles of best value and money is spent wisely.

There are a good number of teachers to ensure class sizes are not too large. The school has a good number of support assistants. These assistants are not always as effective as they could be because of a lack of understanding of their role or of the purpose of tasks that they are supporting. Accommodation and learning resources have improved and are now good.

#### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching is good and teachers have high expectations of their children.</li> <li>• Their children like school and they make good progress.</li> <li>• Parents are welcomed and they feel comfortable approaching the school with any concerns.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents expressed no major concerns.</li> <li>• A few thought that the range of extra-curricular activities could be greater.</li> </ul>

The inspection team fully agrees with parents' very positive views. The range of extra-curricular activities is excellent and staff give generously of their time to support these events.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

#### The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The school successfully overcomes many barriers that affect children's achievements. Not least of these is the high number of pupils with special educational needs. Many pupils have limited experiences or come from unsettled backgrounds and do not find it easy to maintain concentration for any length of time. Effective teaching in a supportive community enables many to overcome these difficulties. Standards continue to rise and overall achievement is good.

#### *Standards and progress in the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup>*

2. Many children start Nursery with standards which are well below average, and many lack confidence in speaking and listening and in social skills. Most children make good progress and reach the early learning goals<sup>2</sup> in personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative and physical development. With sensitive help many overcome their initial difficulties and settle to enjoy school and establish friendships. From a low starting point, achievement is good in language and literacy and numeracy, although children do not reach the level expected for their age. Most enjoy listening to a story and are making a good start at recognising their letters and sounds, but few read or write with any confidence.

#### *Results and analysis of national tests for seven-year-olds.*

3. In 2002 results were below the national average in reading and mathematics and well below average in writing. Teachers' assessments showed that standards in science were well below the national average. In reading, writing and science the number of pupils exceeding the level expected for their age was below the national average and this is holding down the school's overall performance at this age. A more favourable picture emerges when results are compared with schools in similar social and economic settings. Results in reading were well above average, in mathematics above average and average in writing. Over the period 1999 to 2002, results have fluctuated but they declined in reading and writing until 2001 when standards improved.

#### *Current standards and achievement of pupils in Year 2*

4. Current standards show that the improvement has continued. More pupils reach the level expected for their age, and standards are average in reading, writing, science and mathematics. Considering pupils' low starting point, achievement is good. Improvements have been brought about by:
  - improved resources;
  - better teaching of reading in literacy lessons;
  - parents attending a reading workshop and offering more help at home;
  - more training for teachers, including advice from a local Beacon School<sup>3</sup>;
  - more detailed assessment and prompt action taken when it appears a pupil is starting to fall behind the expected standard.

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<sup>1</sup> The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and finishes at the end of the Reception class. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning. These mainly refer to communication, language and literacy; mathematical development and personal and social development, but also includes knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

<sup>2</sup> Early learning goals are the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They refer mainly to achievements children make in connection with the recommended areas of learning. There are many goals for each area of learning, for example, in language and literacy pupils should be able to write their own name and other things such as labels and begin to write simple sentences.

<sup>3</sup> This is a school which excels at one or more activities and has applied to and been accepted by the **DFES** for Beacon School status. The scheme is designed to raise standards in schools through the sharing and spreading of practical ideas and knowledge between schools.

5. In Year 2 most pupils make good progress in reading and cope with a simple text making good use of pictures and their knowledge of letters and sounds. Many are less secure in using punctuation when writing sentences. Standards in speaking and listening are below average and pupils' responses are often brief. Achievement is good in mathematics and pupils are confident handling numbers to 100 and enjoy counting in 10s. Science shows most improvement in Year 2 and in response to more focus on practical activities pupils achieve well and reach the level expected for their age. A few find it difficult to put their ideas into words when carrying out investigations.

*Results and analysis of national test results for eleven-year-olds*

6. In 2002, test results were well above the national average in science, average in mathematics and below average in English. In English and mathematics, results were low because not enough pupils exceeded the level expected for their age. This was not the case in science where 47 per cent of pupils reached the higher level, a significant achievement for the school. The comparison with similar schools shows many pupils did better than expected and results were well above average in mathematics and science and above average in English. These results are higher than the previous year and the overall trend since 2001 has been upwards.

*Current standards and achievement in Year 6*

7. Standards have improved in English but remain below average. This group of pupils did not do well in the national tests at the end of Year 2 and their current standards therefore represent satisfactory achievement. Progress is better in mathematics. Pupils reach the level expected for their age and overall achievement is good. The above average standards in science represent very good achievement for many of the pupils, especially those who exceed the level expected for their age. Overall standards are improving because of:
- more detailed assessment leading to grouping pupils according to their ability in Years 5 and 6 for literacy and numeracy lessons and so work is more closely matched to pupils' needs;
  - booster classes in literacy and mathematics;
  - more focus on investigation in science and provision of individual support booklets which pupils enjoy and use as part of their homework in preparation for the science national tests;
  - more rigorous observations of teaching and sharing of good practice;
  - analysis of assessment and adjusting the curriculum when a weakness is identified, for example increasing the focus on reading for understanding.
8. In Year 6, standards are below average in speaking and listening. Although pupils are more confident when joining in with discussions many are not very adventurous in their choice of words. Many examples of writing lack flair, are inaccurately punctuated and are below average. Although pupils write in different styles in other subjects this is not formally planned and opportunities are missed to write at length in some subjects. Standards in reading are below average because many pupils lack confidence and do not include expression in their reading. Higher attaining pupils do well and are more enthusiastic readers.
9. Pupils make good progress in mathematics and acquire the necessary skills to work out problems. Teachers effectively extend pupils' numeracy skills in other lessons. For example, in science pupils calculate their results and record them using different graphs. Talented mathematicians in the juniors make good progress with their learning. To develop its teaching further the school has established close links with the local secondary school for further advice. This led to one pupil reaching well above standards in the national tests last year.

10. Standards in science are good because teachers plan a range of practical experiences, and lead effective discussions that increase pupils' knowledge. Pupils have a broad range of concepts and the skills to apply this understanding.
11. The school has set challenging targets in English and mathematics and also has very high predictions for science. In response to the very good teaching seen in Year 6 and the organisation of booster classes to provide that little bit of additional help, the pupils are on line to achieve these targets in mathematics and science but may not quite get there in English.
12. The school is aware that girls have not been performing as well as boys and have checked that resources are suitable for girls as well as boys. In lessons seen the boys were occasionally more demanding of attention but there was no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
13. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. When supported in small groups learning is effective and matches the pupils' needs because many need extra help with very basic literacy skills. In lessons, the support which is often provided by classroom assistants is variable in quality depending upon the training and experience of the adult. Occasionally, too much attention is given to completing the task rather than questioning pupils to extend their learning. Pupils learning through English as an additional language make satisfactory progress especially in their expressive language because their peers help them and offer additional explanations when needed. Learning is less effective when tasks do not match pupils' ability or are not relevant to their experiences. When this is the case, pupils do not make enough progress.

#### *Standards in other subjects*

14. Teachers are more confident teaching information and communication technology and standards have improved and are satisfactory. The school has put in place more detailed planning guidelines for geography and pupils now reach the level expected for their ages. Standards in art and design, music and physical education are above average because of a stimulating range of experiences and strong teaching. In all other subjects standards are wholly satisfactory.

#### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

15. Pupils have good attitudes towards their education and all the activities that the school provides. In response to a questionnaire, virtually all parents said that their children enjoy school and this is borne out by conversations with pupils. Lessons generally start promptly but a few pupils who arrive late sometimes interrupt activities at the start of the day. Attitudes within lessons are dependent on the skill of the teacher in making the subject come alive. In the best lessons, most pupils are attentive and keen to answer questions. When the task is challenging, and pitched at the correct level for pupils' ability, pupils concentrate well and work hard. However, in some lessons, whilst pupils are generally attentive, the teacher has to work hard to motivate many in the class to respond. Pupils lose concentration because the task is not totally appropriate. Pupils are very enthusiastic about taking part in activities outside the classroom, such as the excellent variety of lunchtime and after-school activities. This was seen recently when 60 pupils took part in a cross-country event.
16. Overall, the behaviour of pupils is good and parents have few concerns. In most lessons, behaviour is good or better and pupils respond well to a combination of a quiet reminder to pay attention and encouragement and praise when they do so. Formal sanctions, such as the issue of demerits, are rarely necessary. In a very few lessons behaviour was unsatisfactory, with pupils being very slow to respond to instructions and not supportive of their teachers. Pupils' behaviour is usually very good as they move around the school and

in assemblies. Behaviour is satisfactory in the dinner hall. It is rather noisy but this is in part due to the small size and the need to get pupils through quickly. Pupils of all ages and groups play well together at break-times, aided by the good range of playground games recently provided. The school rarely has to resort to excluding pupils. This year only one pupil has been permanently excluded after extensive efforts by the school to moderate the pupil's behaviour failed. Pupils recognise the difference between right and wrong and accept the validity of the school rules. They have the opportunity to discuss the reasons behind the rules and to devise their own class rules to supplement them.

17. The personal development of pupils is good. When they start school, their personal skills, such as the ability to communicate, are poor but they improve as pupils get older. Although their speaking skills are still below average when they leave, they have learnt to respect and value all the pupils in the school and as a consequence relationships are good. In many lessons, there is a very good rapport between adults and pupils and pupils respond well to the efforts of staff to develop the rapport, and to the positive role models they provide. In some lessons, however, relationships can be more strained, partly because of the habit some teachers have of speaking too loudly to pupils. In a few lessons, for example Year 6 science, staff allow boys to dominate the discussion. This does not encourage the girls to learn effectively. Pupils learn to work collaboratively and be sympathetic to the needs of the few pupils who are not yet totally fluent in English, and pupils from ethnic minorities are well integrated. Displays on the walls reflect a diversity of cultures and signs in different languages show that the school is supportive of these pupils. The minority ethnic pupils spoken to were happy in school and there was no evidence of racist or other oppressive behaviour. Pupils have learnt that others may have different religions to themselves, and to respect that.
18. Pupils willingly accept responsibilities offered, for example older pupils help supervise and play with the younger ones. Pupils participate in class councils with seriousness and seek to solve practical problems that they encounter within their class.
19. No incidents of bullying or social exclusion were observed during the inspection but some pupils said that there was occasionally bullying which was either dealt with satisfactorily in the class council or by staff.
20. Overall, attendance is well below the national average but unauthorised absence has improved since the previous inspection and is now average. The school has not analysed patterns of attendance amongst groups of pupils, concentrating instead on individuals. A few pupils are a few minutes late each morning.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

21. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection and more very good and better teaching was observed during this inspection. Ninety lessons were observed. In 2 per cent teaching was excellent, it was very good in 18 per cent, good in 41 per cent and satisfactory in 36 per cent. Only in 3 per cent of lessons seen was teaching unsatisfactory. This was in the infants and the juniors and linked to a weakness in subject knowledge and management not being sufficiently firm. The excellent teaching was in English in Year 2 and in Circle Time<sup>4</sup> in Year 6. In these lessons teachers had very high expectations of their pupils which led to much new learning.

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<sup>4</sup> During Circle Time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. All pupils agree that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and so pupils can talk with ease free from interruption from other pupils.

### *Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage*

22. Teaching is consistently good and better in both the Nursery and the Reception classes so that the children become eager to learn. Teachers and support staff are very sensitive to the needs of these pupils and plan practical and stimulating activities that maintain their interest and attention. Staff collaborate with their planning so that all are clear about their tasks and the day runs smoothly. A focus on raising self-esteem is evident in the warm relationships and the value staff place on children's responses and ideas. As a result, children grow in confidence and are keen to be involved in everything on offer. By the time children have reached the Reception classes they are happy to work unsupervised and teachers have established good routines to encourage independence. This can be seen in the way drawers and cupboards are labelled and children are expected to tidy away at the end of sessions. As a result of these positive experiences children get a happy start to school and are well prepared for the National Curriculum by the time they start in Year 1.

### *Teaching and learning in Years 1 to 6*

23. Good teaching was seen in most subjects because teachers have a secure knowledge of the subjects they teach. Training is a contributory factor to this positive aspect of teaching and teachers are good at sharing their expertise. The teaching of numeracy is very good and teachers are effective in drawing from pupils the methods they use when problem solving. As a result, pupils learn from each other. The teaching of English is good overall but there are weaknesses in the teaching of writing in the juniors. Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to write at length or insist enough that pupils use the skills taught in literacy lessons in their independent writing. Effective training in information and communication technology has considerably improved teachers' confidence to help pupils as they work on computers. Good specialist expertise in music and physical education successfully helps pupils in their acquisition of skills.
24. The teaching of basic skills is good. Letters and sounds are taught effectively through a range of practical activities in Years 1 and 2 and pupils use this information successfully in their early attempts at reading and writing. Numeracy skills are taught very well throughout the school and teachers effectively promote these skills in other lessons. With the new resources for information and communication technology teaching has greatly improved. Lessons in the computer suite are organised well and pupils receive a good grounding in the use of information and communication technology.
25. Planning has greatly improved since the previous inspection because of the successful introduction of detailed planning guidelines. Teachers refer to these guidelines when planning lessons, which has effectively resolved the concern about the continuity of learning. Information and communication technology is used to support learning in other subjects. In numeracy lessons, teachers are very clear about what they want pupils to learn. They share the learning outcomes with pupils, who are then clear about the purpose of tasks. This is less effective in other lessons, especially in literacy where teachers often have too many outcomes and this leads to some confusion about what is the main focus of the lesson.
26. In the best lessons seen teachers have high expectations that pupils will learn and the pace of learning is brisk. This is very evident in the strong teaching in Years 2 and 6 and in mathematics throughout the school. Tasks that challenge are effective in raising standards especially of the higher attaining pupils. One reason for the high standards in art and design is teachers' expectations, and the focus on pupils developing their own ideas leads to much new learning.
27. A contributory factor to the pupils showing interest and concentrating well is the variety of methods teachers use to make lessons interesting. Practical activities play a major part in lessons, with pupils encouraged to investigate and find out for themselves. This is very evident in science with a focus on experimenting and discovery. Pupils often work in

- groups which extend their speaking skills. This is also beneficial for pupils with special educational needs and those who need help with English as an additional language, because they are included in discussion by the other pupils who recognise their difficulties.
28. Teachers' management of pupils is good. Pupils' co-operation is good and teachers utilise this and include many opportunities for collaboration which increase pupils' levels of concentration.
  29. In most lessons teachers receive help from additional support staff. A few are not as effective as they could be in parts of the lessons and are unclear about their role especially in the introduction. Although support staff often see the teachers' lesson plan they are not fully involved in planning. Consequently, there is some lack of clarity about the focus of the learning in the groups they lead and this restricts pupils' learning.
  30. Resources are generally used well although in several lessons seen computers were not used as much as they could be. For example, in Year 6 when pupils were planning leaflets about holidays an opportunity was missed to use computers to change font, introduce pictures and put the pupils' information and communication technology skills to good use.
  31. Time is usually used well and lessons go at a brisk pace. In the best lessons teachers set time constraints, which leads to a buzz of learning as pupils try to get their tasks finished in the set time. This was observed in literacy in Year 5 when pupils jotted their ideas down quickly on their white boards because they knew the teacher was moving swiftly onto the next sentence.
  32. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Individual education plans are drawn up by the class teachers and are usually of good quality. They indicate clearly the difficulties of the pupil concerned, the learning targets, the personnel responsible and the date for review. Some, however, contain too many learning targets, making it difficult for the staff involved to have a clear focus for the work they need to do with each pupil. In most cases the additional support leads to effective learning but the quality of support is not consistent and there were some examples when pupils with formal statements of need were unable to access lessons because the materials being used were not suitable. Such examples are rare, however, and for the most part these pupils are well involved in lessons. Pupils who have low literacy skills benefit from good teaching in small groups where work is targeted to their specific needs and leads to effective learning. In some cases pupils' learning is disturbed because they miss other lessons for individual reading and the timing of the help with reading is not organised as efficiently as it could be.
  33. Pupils with English as an additional language, especially those at the early stages of learning the language, are often unable to benefit fully from the good teaching that is available to other pupils. Teachers have insufficient knowledge and understanding of the learning needs of these pupils and of how to overcome their barriers to learning. As a consequence, they fail to plan in their lessons, how their teaching will be best suited to the needs and experiences of these pupils. Learning is often better in the opening of lessons when teachers and other pupils encourage involvement in discussions.
  34. There is inconsistency in teachers' marking. The best is sharp and precise and includes clear advice on how pupils can improve their work, but some guidance is too general and vague. Some comments are too positive and lead pupils to think the work is acceptable when it is not of a high standard. Teachers do not remind pupils of their literacy and numeracy targets and fail to give pupils prompts of what they should do to achieve them. The school is aware of the problem and has recently introduced a new policy on marking.



35. Homework is set regularly and most parents are satisfied with the amount of work done at home. Reading and spellings are regular features as is mathematics in the juniors. The extra work set for Year 6 in science makes a significant contribution to pupils' good standards.

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

36. The school provides a good, well-balanced range of experiences. It successfully promotes pupils' achievements and effectively reflects the school's maxim, *aim high*. The weaknesses in planning found in the last inspection have been successfully resolved. Detailed guidelines are now in place in all subjects and provide teachers with clear instructions about what pupils are to learn in each year group.
37. The curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage is good. This reflects the findings of the last inspection. Teachers in the Nursery and Reception classes carefully plan a stimulating range of activities for children of this age in accordance with the government's guidance. These arrangements successfully support children's progress towards the nationally agreed goals in the areas of learning.
38. The school provides a full and exciting range of learning experiences for pupils in the infants and juniors. This contributes effectively to pupils' good attitudes to school and to their enjoyment of learning. The school teaches all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education according to the Liverpool Diocesan Syllabus. There are very good arrangements for pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship. Pupils have regular, carefully structured opportunities to develop greater self-awareness and confidence. There is well-planned provision for sex education and teaching about the dangers of the misuse of drugs.
39. Teachers' planning is based on the most recent national and local authority guidelines and forms an effective framework for teaching and learning. The school has developed comprehensive curriculum plans designed to ensure systematic coverage of the contents of each subject and to avoid unnecessary repetition as pupils move through the school. This ensures pupils in the mixed age class in the juniors do not repeat topics. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are firmly established and teachers are structuring their lessons well based on this guidance. The nationally recommended booster classes are also being followed and effectively provide help for the pupils assessed as needing an extra boost to their literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers are successful teaching numeracy and promoting these skills in other subjects, including science and geography, although opportunities are not recorded in planning. However, there remains a weakness in promoting pupils' writing skills both in literacy sessions and in other subjects. Teachers do not always provide enough opportunity for pupils to write at length or insist that pupils use the skills they have been taught in literacy lessons. Pupils successfully use their information and communication technology skills as an aid to learning in other subjects, including mathematics, art and geography.
40. The school endeavours to provide equality of access to the National Curriculum for all pupils. The richness of the curriculum is very relevant to the needs of all. Pupils learning through English as an additional language benefit from the focus on practical activities but find it more difficult to access all aspects of the curriculum because teachers lack skills in providing work that matches the needs of these pupils. The overall provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory with some good features especially in the Foundation Stage. The Code of Practice<sup>5</sup> is fully in place and pupils have individual

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<sup>5</sup> Code of Practice- this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.

education plans to guide teachers so that these pupils can play a full part in lessons. These plans sometimes have too many targets and so support from classroom assistants is not as effective as it could be. A small number of pupils in Years 2 to 5 are withdrawn for small group or individual work with the special educational needs co-ordinator. This work is carefully tailored to the individual needs of the pupils concerned and there are examples of pupils who make exemplary progress from a low starting point. In addition, the pupils thrive on the level of success they achieve in small group work and their self-esteem and confidence grows in consequence. The withdrawal of pupils is usually sensitively handled and if pupils are withdrawn from literacy, for example, they usually do literacy work in a small group. However, the school needs to review the situation to ensure that pupils are not being deprived systematically of acquiring important skills by being withdrawn repeatedly from the same subject.

41. The school has identified gifted and talented pupils in each year group who regularly work in small groups with additional support. Gifted pupils have additional opportunities to develop their specific skills, for example in working with a visiting artist or attending extra training in sporting activities. Talented mathematicians receive additional mathematics teaching from the local secondary school. This has led to improved standards and last year one pupil reached very high standards in the national tests.
42. Pupils have opportunities to be involved in an excellent range of cross-curricular activities, including sports, dance and music. There is also a homework club, which supports pupils' learning outside the school day. Teachers organise a good programme of educational visits, such as those to the art centre, museum, theatre and zoo. Visitors include a theatre group, author, bookmaker and dancers. These activities bring learning to life. They add considerably to pupils' interest and enthusiasm for the topic and so to the quality of their learning and the progress that they make. Older pupils enjoy an activity holiday that helps develop their confidence to overcome challenges and to learn to be tolerant of others.
43. Very strong links with the community and constructive relations with other schools make a valuable contribution to pupils' education. The local vicar visits the school and leads assembly each week and pupils attend the local church. Services are also held in school each term. Other visitors include members of the Fire Service, Community Police and local professional sportsmen. Teachers arrange a good variety of local visits, for example to the vet, garden centre, library and Town Hall. This wide range of activities effectively promotes pupils' personal development and learning. The school establishes links with the families of young children joining the school and secure relationships exist with the health visitors, school nurse and doctor. The school is part of a project working with the Child Mental Health Team in Wigan and visiting experts offer sensitive support to pupils and families. These arrangements promote a smooth transition between home and school and enable links with home to be established.
44. There are good links with local primary and secondary schools so that pupils have access to additional sports, competitions and activities that stimulate their interest in subjects such as science. Teachers from the local secondary school visit and take lessons so that pupils become more confident about their move to a new school. Staff attend meetings in a local school to share expertise and take part in training.
45. The school makes very good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils. This is much better than at the time of the last inspection.
46. Provision for spiritual development is very good. The school is successful in fulfilling its mission statement *to create a community reflecting Christian values, and promoting the spiritual development of each child by example and practice*. Christian worship is a central part of the school's daily life. The vicar is a familiar figure around the school. He carries out the role of chair of governors diligently and provides unstinting support for pupils and

staff alike. The communion service, which he leads in school for children and for parishioners, provides an especially uplifting spiritual experience. Pupils respond with reverence to particularly moving moments, not least, as the choir sings a prayer. The display about Christian festivals in the hall provides an effective focus for the Daily Act of Worship and helps children reflect on the pattern of life from its beginning to its end. Class assemblies also are carefully organised to promote thought and a shared sense of corporate and personal identity under God's care. Teachers provide opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to appreciate the world around them. Reception children, for example, are thrilled to see the first green shoots as their seeds begin to grow. All staff take time to treat children with respect, to listen to their ideas and to value their opinions. They take care to display pupils' work attractively so that children are proud of what they have achieved and their feelings of self-worth are nurtured.

47. Provision for moral development is very good. Through its clear policies and well-established codes of conduct, the school strongly promotes its high expectations of attitudes and behaviour. Teachers take time to involve pupils in considering what is acceptable and desirable and in drawing up rules for their own class. These are prominently displayed and constantly reinforced. As a result, pupils are aware of the reasons for agreed rules and of the consequences of their actions. They take a pride in behaving well. The clear system of rewards and sanctions is applied fairly and works successfully in encouraging pupils to work hard and develop enthusiasm for school. Weekly achievement assemblies celebrate individual and group success and promote the school's values very successfully. In Circle Time, teachers create opportunities for pupils to pause and reflect. This enables pupils to consider global issues like the consequences of war. Pupils empathise with others and are beginning to form their own views. Stories and drama are used sensitively to teach about issues like racial harassment. Very good use is made of the excellent anti-bullying programme delivered by the Wigan Warriors to promote positive attitudes, and good relationships. Many opportunities to support people less fortunate than themselves are generously supported through charity appeals.
48. Provision for social development is very good. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to work closely with others and feel part of the school community. The house point system and the many team sports offered in extra-curricular clubs engage pupils fully in sharing team spirit and working co-operatively. Opportunities to work collaboratively are built into lessons in all age groups. Individuals are given responsibility as monitors in class as special helpers or for minor administrative tasks around school. All pupils respond enthusiastically. Older pupils in particular, carry out their special duties as house captains, library monitors, buddies and play-leaders with pride. Class councils involve all pupils in the democratic process of voting for their representatives and provide a forum to discuss school improvement. Citizenship lessons and Circle Time together with assemblies are used effectively to give pupils insights into social issues through debating different points of view.
49. Provision for cultural development is good. Interesting opportunities are provided for pupils to gain a sense of the fairly recent past through visits, for example, to Wigan Pier, to Manchester Museum of Science and Technology or to The Beatles Story. Heritage from longer ago is brought to life in visits to Tudor Days at Speke Hall or Turton Park. The celebration of festivals like that of Shrove Tuesday raises pupils' awareness of Christian traditions. Best use is made of the personal experiences of visitors and of the few children from different ethnic backgrounds in school. For instance, pupils are very interested to listen to a Moslem child describing her experience of the celebration of the Islamic New Year. Chinese parents share their lion dance and special food to celebrate the Chinese New Year. Through drama, children are encouraged to see the value of other cultures and to reflect on the significance of personal relationships. Pupils' knowledge of cultural imagery is enhanced by the study of colours and pattern in Indian art, which compliments work on daily life in an Indian village. Visits, for example, to a Hindu Temple, and a

Synagogue provide authentic experiences of diverse cultures. Teachers extend this knowledge and interest as they wear the saris purchased on the pupils' visit to an Asian department store. The study of the work of famous artists extend pupils knowledge of western cultures but opportunities to study the rich diversity of other cultures through art are missed. However, a wide range of world music is studied and an interesting variety of percussion extends pupils experience and appreciation of different traditions.

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

50. The school is a very caring community where pupils are valued and feel secure. This has a very positive impact on creating a climate for learning in an area with many social problems. Procedures for child protection and health and safety are good. Staff trained in first aid look after pupils who are ill or have accidents at school. The school maintains a close liaison with parents and carers and has several staff who can support parents and pupils who have problems either at home or at school. Child protection procedures, which meet local guidelines, are in place and staff have been appropriately trained in their use. Classroom support staff are not totally secure in this however, and require more specific training. Welfare agencies give the school good support in the cases encountered. Health and safety risk assessments of the premises and equipment are carried out thoroughly. Activities within lessons and on school trips are assessed, risks recorded and action taken to minimise any risks. The majority of the risks identified at the previous inspection have been remedied, but there still remain some issues of tripping and falling hazards in the front playground, and traffic congestion, with mixing of pedestrians and vehicles at the school entrance, continues to cause concern for the school.
51. The procedures adopted for improving behaviour are very effective. The discipline system emphasises praise and the pupils value the system of rewards, which can lead to both individual recognition and trophies for their 'house'. There is a consistent approach if they misbehave and pupils understand the overall system and respond well. When pupils have particular behaviour problems, they are set targets and their behaviour is monitored effectively. These measures have resulted in a reduction in misbehaviour and helps lesson move smoothly with little disruption to learning. Pupils discuss bullying in their class council meetings and know how to handle it, should it arise. As a result of this, and of the good relationships fostered in the personal and social development programme, bullying is low. The school followed correct procedures when a pupil was excluded. Considerable efforts, involving parents and outside agencies, were made to retain the pupil in school but the welfare of other pupils made the permanent exclusion necessary.
52. The school makes good efforts to improve attendance, but although unauthorised absence has been reduced, overall attendance has remained low. Teachers complete registers punctually at the start of each school session. Staff check for patterns of absence and parents are asked to provide reasons for all occurrences. The local Education Welfare Officer visits the school weekly, works with the learning mentor and contacts parents. The school has had difficulties in complying with the recommendation to contact parents if pupils are absent with no reason given. Pupils who are late are recorded as soon as they arrive but the school needs to persist with measures to reduce this and to analyse the reasons for absence. Pupils who have good attendance are rewarded and each class competes for the best attendance cup each half term.
53. The school has made good progress in developing assessment systems which are now very good. These start in the Foundation Stage when assessment is carried out as children start in the Nursery and when they leave the Reception classes so that progress is closely monitored. In the rest of the school assessments include assessments of literacy and numeracy twice a term, the statutory assessments in Years 2 and 6 and optional national tests in Years 3 to 5. All other subjects are assessed, using tests at the end of units of work. These assessments yield a wealth of information, which leads to

teachers and subject leaders having a clear picture of standards being achieved. Teachers review examples of work to ensure that there is agreement on what constitutes a particular National Curriculum level. These meetings help to check on the consistency of assessments as pupils move from class to class.

54. The school makes good use of assessment information to adjust the curriculum when a weakness is identified. The findings of assessment at the end of units inform planning and can, for example, lead to certain topics being dropped or new themes or topics being introduced into the long term planning. The pupils' performance in tests is analysed and extra attention given to areas identified as a difficulty for the pupils. For example, pupils' reading for understanding and writing has been a focus for training and standards are starting to improve. In Years 5 and 6, assessment information is used to group pupils according to their ability in English and mathematics. This system is making it easier for teachers to follow the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies and to plan tasks that match the ability of the pupils. When assessment data identifies a pupil is failing to keep pace with their peers in numeracy and literacy they attend extra booster classes. The school's data shows this extra help is effective in enabling these pupils to catch up with the other pupils.
55. The use of assessment to track pupils' individual progress is effective. Results of assessments are recorded on the school's tracking system that is well embedded in the school's practice. Records are up to date, which is not easy considering the large number of pupils who leave and start school at different times. These systems enable staff to quickly check pupils' progress because they can see at a glance a pupil's progress over a term, a year or over several years. Colour coding helps teachers identify those who have special educational needs and to check on the progress they are making. However, in addition to tracking the progress of individual pupils, the school should also track the progress of different groups of pupils, in particular, the progress made by pupils learning through English as an additional language and those with special educational needs. Currently, the special educational needs co-ordinator makes good use of assessment information to keep a record of individual progress in literacy and numeracy over the years. However, records do not make it clear about the progress made by different groups of pupils, such as those with formal statements of special educational need and those at different levels on the Code of Practice. This would be useful in checking that the available support is providing good value for money. The school does not have a system to monitor the progress made by pupils needing support because they are learning through English as an additional language.
56. The school sets targets for pupils on the basis of its analysis of assessment data. Recently it abandoned individual targets except in Year 6 and it now sets group targets for different ability groups in each year. However, this aspect of the assessment system is not yet influencing teaching or learning because not all pupils know their targets. Some of the younger pupils cannot read their targets, which are usually written in educational language difficult for younger pupils to understand. It was also not clear during the inspection that teachers were using the targets as a focus for their own teaching. Some pupils have too many targets and because they are not referred to in lessons they find it difficult to recall them and so are not sure how to improve their work.

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

57. Parents are satisfied with what the school provides. The parents who attended the meeting before inspection were largely very supportive of the school and had few concerns. Fewer than a fifth of parents returned a questionnaire but the views expressed there were also positive with no areas of significant concern. Almost all think their child enjoys school, is expected to work hard and is making good progress. They believe that good teaching with high expectations bring this about. These positive views are confirmed by the inspection.
58. The school works hard to forge links with parents which have been effective for the majority of parents. The school provides parents with good information about the life of the school. As their child starts each stage of their education in the school, staff tell parents about how their child will be taught. Thereafter they are kept well informed of what is happening in school with regular letters. Details are given of what will be taught each term so that those parents who are able can give support from home. Pupils' annual reports meet statutory requirements. Most give good detail of what the progress the pupil has made and what he/she needs to do to improve. In a few cases they are insufficiently specific to the pupil. The comments on the pupils overall and their personal development are good and reflect an informed knowledge of the pupils. Parents are given the opportunity to discuss their child's progress at formal meetings with the class teacher. Intermediate short reports give keep parents up to date with children's progress and include the main subjects, attendance, attitudes and behaviour. The school has held meetings and workshops for parents to raise awareness of how subjects are taught
59. All the parents of pupils with statements of special educational needs attend the meetings arranged to review their children's progress. However, only about a quarter of the parents of pupils attend the relevant review meetings. The special educational needs co-ordinator tries to overcome this difficulty by speaking to the parents concerned at parents' evenings and on other occasions.
60. Whilst some parents are very supportive of the school and their children, too many are not, so that the overall impact is below the level found in many primary schools. The majority of parents help their child by hearing them read regularly at home and encouraging them to do homework. Several parents help in classrooms and hear pupils read; additional adult supervision is available for trips outside the school. However, the parents' association has folded for lack of support and meetings for parents are often poorly attended. For example, a significant minority of parents does not attend the meetings to discuss their child's progress. Less than half the parents returned their Home-School Agreement and the school has difficulty in persuading some parents to send their children to school on time or to account for absences.

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

61. The overall quality of leadership and management from the headteacher, deputy headteacher and key staff is very good. The dedicated, hardworking headteacher provides very purposeful and perceptive leadership. The focus is on collaboration and valuing the contribution of all staff. This is best illustrated in the headteacher's response to her observation that because of the large number of staff some were not playing a full part in discussions and decision making. Effective management has resolved this by setting up sub-groups where all can be involved. This action has very effectively extended the management role of staff who lead the groups as well as providing a clear direction for the work of the school which is supported by all. The school is now well placed to build on current strengths and address the areas for development identified in this report.

62. The deputy headteacher provides effective support for the headteacher and also carries out the role of managing literacy. These responsibilities are carried out diligently and are a contributory factor to the smooth running of the school. The managers for the infants and the juniors are effective members of the senior management team. They lead by example, sharing their teaching skills with other teachers. They effectively manage the school's detailed assessment system and make sure that teachers in their key stage have carried out the required assessments at the right time. They also work with the other senior managers at analysing the data and drawing up action plans on the basis of their findings. The headteacher and senior management team combine their individual skills well to make a strong team and this has earned the respect of parents who consider the school is well led and managed.
63. Good work by subject leaders is a major factor for the improvement now seen in many subjects. They have successfully introduced new planning guidelines and assessment systems and check that all of the requirements of the National Curriculum are fully met. A weakness identified in the previous inspection was the role of subject co-ordinators. The school now has a detailed system for the evaluation of work and co-ordinators carry out this role effectively. This has reaped the benefits in English, mathematics and science and adjustments to the curriculum when a weakness was identified have led to higher standards. Although standards in English remain below average the school has a clear action plan in place to lead the school forward. The next stage in extending the role of subject managers is the provision of opportunities to visit other classes and monitor teaching. This is being implemented on a rolling programme with the approval of all staff.
64. The co-ordinator for special educational needs provides good management and checks that the requirements of the Code of Practice are met. Additional advice is promptly sought to help these pupils and this includes seeking expert advice from the local authority for pupils with very specific difficulties. This has been very useful in advising staff how best to help these pupils so that they can play a full part in lessons. The special educational needs co-ordinator reviews the progress of individual pupils but does not analyse the results of tests to identify the progress being made by different groups of pupils or check that support in class is as useful as it should be.
65. The management of the needs of the pupils learning through English as an additional language is unsatisfactory because:
- staff responsibilities for this area are unclear;
  - there is no school policy;
  - the attainment of groups of pupils is not monitored adequately;
  - staff training has been minimal.
66. The overall contribution made by the governing body is satisfactory. Governors demonstrate a good awareness of the school's strengths and areas for development. They are committed to providing the best for the school and many are regular visitors to the school. The chair of governors is a listening ear for the headteacher and provides valuable help and support to parents and pupils. Governing body committees meet regularly and work effectively to ensure that all statutory duties are met. The governing body reviews the progress the school is making towards the targets set out in the school's improvement plan and this is always an item on their agendas. However, the governors are not as involved as they could be in the initial decision-making about areas for improvement for the school. They rely very much on information provided by the headteacher and subject leaders. Links with subject leaders are developing because these staff present new policies to governors. As yet, closer links are not established so that governors can find out what is happening on a more regular basis.
67. Since the last inspection good improvements have been achieved in the arrangements for monitoring teaching. A teaching and learning policy has been drawn up in consultation

with all staff and criteria for evaluation agreed. The links to effective learning are not as clear as they might be. This was apparent in the teaching seen when a few teachers included too many learning outcomes, or they were too general, and in some cases teachers confused outcome with tasks. As a result, the conclusion of lessons are not sharp enough in recapping for pupils what they have learnt in the lesson. However, observations of lessons have identified this and other areas for improvement. Effective feedback of observations and a sharing of good practice have led to more very good and excellent teaching being observed during this inspection.

68. The school's improvement plan is a well-conceived document. It is firmly based on self-evaluation and current priorities are correct with a clear focus on raising standards especially in English. Subject action plans are incorporated, which makes this a collaborative plan taking into consideration the views of all. In response to a previous weakness the school has extended the improvement plan to a longer time scale which identifies possible priorities for the next three years. The headteacher is well aware these are only predictions because targets are very much led by the analysis of the school's current situation. This analysis is carried out effectively because of the increased attention the school now gives to monitoring the school's performance. The results of tests are meticulously scrutinised and compared with similar schools and the national picture. The school is justifiably proud of its rising standards when compared with local schools but remains determined to improve performance compared with the national average.
69. Induction procedures for new staff are effective. Newly qualified teachers receive good support from the school as a whole and from assigned mentors. The practice of staff having time to evaluate and plan together is helpful to new teachers. The school, with its supportive ethos, is a suitable establishment for the training of teachers.
70. Efficient management has made sure that performance management is fully established. This has resolved the previously identified concern about the lack of systems for teacher appraisal. Staff training is closely linked to individual needs as well as the needs of the school. The school places importance on the training of staff and has initiated procedures to achieve the nationally recognised Investors in People status.
71. The school has a good understanding of budgeting and planning for the future, linked well to audits of the school's needs, and actions required. Longer term financial planning, seen as an area for improvement in the previous inspection, has been put into place but is somewhat hampered by difficulties in predicting the numbers of pupils. The school has accrued a suitable surplus to enable them to fund temporary staff if the need arises. This is effective use of funds. Day-to-day financial control is rigorous. The most recent financial audit found that financial procedures are sound and the few minor actions required have been completed. All designated funds are used for their stated purpose. The school makes good use of modern technology in the office and is starting to introduce more recent technology to aid teaching, for example, an interactive whiteboard in the computer suite. The principle of 'best value' has been put into practice, for example, by considering the most effective way of using staff. The school is using outside expertise to evaluate the best management structure for this large school. Awareness of the school's academic results in comparison with others drives the allocation of staff and resources in order to raise standards. The school consults widely when making any major decisions.
72. The buildings provide a good standard of accommodation. Classrooms are large and well equipped and several rooms are set aside for specialist activities such as special educational needs support, information and communication technology, and design and technology. There are two good halls for physical education and a satisfactory playing field. Outdoor play facilities for the Nursery children are stimulating and attractive.



73. The pupil teacher-ratio is currently better than average as a result of a decision by the school to keep class sizes down. Teachers are allowed time for planning and evaluation each week by employing some specialist staff, for example, to take music lessons. The number of classroom assistants is appropriate to the large number of pupils with special educational needs but their training and management of their time needs to be more focused on that role.
74. Teaching resources are generally plentiful and of good quality. Resources for information and communication technology are very good and there are no subjects where resources are inadequate.
75. The many strengths in the leadership of the school enables the school to reflect its motto *aim high* in the daily life of the school.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

76. In order to further raise standards and improve the quality of education the governors, headteacher and staff should:
  - (1) improve standards especially in speaking and listening throughout the school and in reading and writing in the juniors by:
    - putting into action the school's plan to raise standards in reading and writing;
    - making sure all teachers put into place the school's handwriting policy;
    - checking that pupils use the skills taught in literacy lessons in their independent writing;
    - providing more opportunities for pupils to speak at length for a variety of purposes; making the learning outcomes clearer to pupils so that they understand the purpose of their tasks (this is done well in mathematics);

identified in school's improvement plan

see paragraph numbers 5, 7, 8, 23, 25, 39, 63, 67, 89, 90, 94, 95, 96, 97, 100, 102, 115, 142.

- (2) improve the role of classroom assistants, especially in regard to supporting pupils with special educational needs, by:
  - providing more training, and including assistants more in planning, so that they are clearer about what is needed of them in lessons;
  - providing training for support staff on the skilled hearing of pupils' reading so they can identify difficulties and make more positive interventions;
  - providing opportunities for some support staff to work with the special educational needs co-ordinator.

see paragraph numbers 13, 29, 32, 73, 85, 98, 110, 137, 149.

- (3) make pupils more aware of how to improve by:
  - improving the consistency of marking, drawing on the good practice in some classes;
  - making individual and group targets clearer to pupils by writing them in language they understand, reducing the number and referring to them in lessons so that pupils remember them.

see paragraph numbers 34, 56, 101, 103, 110, 116, 137, 142.

- (4) improve the effectiveness of the support for pupils who are learning through English as an additional language by:
  - designing and putting into place a policy that shows how the school will support these pupils;

- identifying a person to have management for the school's support and to track the progress of these pupils;
- providing training for staff so they have a clearer understanding of how they can best help these pupils in lessons;

see paragraph numbers 13, 33, 40, 55, 65, 98, 117, 122, 137, 139, 149.

(5) improve attendance by finding more ways of encouraging parents to send their children to school more regularly.

see paragraph numbers 20, 52.

In addition to the key issues above, the governors may wish to consider including the following minor issues in the action plan:

- revisit the organisation of support for pupils with special educational needs to minimise the amount of time they miss in other subjects.

see paragraph numbers 32, 40, 98, 105, 130.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

90

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

39

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	2	16	37	32	3	0	0
Percentage	2	18	41	36	3	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	30	475
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	NA	169

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	11
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	163

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	9

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	36
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	43

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.3
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	33	33	66

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	25	31
	Girls	27	28	28
	Total	79	53	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (65)	80 (72)	89 (85)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	29	27
	Girls	28	31	27
	Total	52	60	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (69)	91 (72)	82 (72)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	24	27	51

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	18	23
	Girls	18	21	27
	Total	34	39	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	67 (64)	76 (63)	98 (92)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	18	23
	Girls	17	21	25
	Total	33	39	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	65 (64)	76 (62)	94 (93)
	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	416	0	1
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	3	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	0	0

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

### Teachers and classes

#### Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	22
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.5
Average class size	30

#### Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	292

#### Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	30
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	22.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	15

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
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	£
Total income	1,053,899
Total expenditure	985,932
Expenditure per pupil	1,952
Balance brought forward from previous year	95,953
Balance carried forward to next year	67,966

### Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	4
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 19.9%

Number of questionnaires sent out	538
Number of questionnaires returned	107

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	32	2	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	64	36	0	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	57	37	2	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	45	39	9	1	6
The teaching is good.	67	30	2	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	39	9	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	25	6	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	29	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	52	32	7	3	6
The school is well led and managed.	62	30	2	5	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	38	2	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	50	34	10	0	6

Percentages are rounded to the nearest integer and may not total 100

### Other issues raised by parents

No major concerns raised by parents.

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**

77. Children are admitted to the Nursery at the beginning of the school year before their fourth birthday. They attend half days for a year before transferring to full time attendance in the Reception classes at the beginning of the school year in which they are five. Currently, there are 59 part-time children on roll in the Nursery, and a total of 49 full-time pupils in the Reception classes.
78. Nursery staff promote good links with families so that children settle quickly into school. Individual pre-admission visits provide effective initial links. The Nursery booklet is helpful and informative in supporting parents in ways to prepare their child for school.
79. Whilst there is a wide variation in standards on entry to the Nursery, overall attainment is well below that expected of this age group. This is confirmed by assessments made soon after children start in the Nursery. Achievement is good in the Foundation Stage. This is due to good teaching and a rich curriculum.
80. The Nursery and Reception classes follow the early learning goals, the nationally recommended curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage. This consists of six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy development, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. Each area of learning is made up of four stages or *Stepping-Stones* from which progress and standards can be measured.
81. In the areas of personal, social and emotional development, physical development and creative development, and in knowledge and understanding of the world, Reception children are currently working on the third *Stepping-Stone*. They are in line to meet the early learning goals in each of these areas by the time they start in Year 1. Indeed, some children exceed expectations in certain aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world, and are beginning to work on the National Curriculum. Whilst children make good progress from low starting points in the important areas of communication, language and literacy and mathematical development, many are unlikely to reach the early learning goals in these areas by the time they start in Year 1. Overall, children reach standards at the end of the Reception year which are below average for their age. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early and supported effectively so that they make good progress. There are presently no children in the Foundation Stage who need support in learning English as an additional language.
82. The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the previous inspection and is now good overall, with some very good lessons observed in the Reception classes. All staff use their secure knowledge and understanding of the way young children learn to plan interesting practical experiences which meet their needs. A particular strength is the high quality of teamwork between teachers in sharing ideas and in planning together to make the best use of individual skills. Throughout the Foundation Stage, teachers have high expectations and set challenging tasks so that children achieve as well as they can. Teachers manage children very positively and establish a purposeful working atmosphere in each class, which promotes learning successfully. Assessment procedures are thorough, and used effectively to plan work that matches children's needs and interest and to track progress.



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

83. All children enjoy coming to school and leave their carers happily. They respond positively to the carefully established rules and routines. For example, they become increasingly confident to collect their name and photograph to self-register at the beginning of each session. Many Nursery children need help from an adult in selecting a task and tend to move on quickly with short spans of concentration unless an adult is present. They are keen and enthusiastic to take responsibility for daily tasks and are very proud to be chosen as Special Person of the Day. Many find it difficult to wait their turn and share as for example they are expected to do when playing with a jigsaw. Reception children select activities confidently and many sustain interest for considerable amounts of time even when not directly supervised. They are independent, for instance, when choosing to play with the clay, collecting aprons and equipment and quickly setting to work. In the main, they respond very well to class rules. Most children are learning to wait their turn at snack time and when playing outdoors with a football. Teaching and learning are very good. Consequently, children achieve very well in this area. All staff use encouragement effectively to build secure and caring relationships. They show respect for the children's ideas and value their efforts. Routines are clearly established and frequently and positively reinforced and explained. All adults deal calmly with challenging behaviour, taking individuals aside quietly to explain where they have gone wrong. Good opportunities are provided for children to take responsibility. For example, all are expected to manage snacks independently, and to tidy their equipment away at the end of lessons. In the Reception classes, there is increasing emphasis on promoting skills of independence. Resources are organised efficiently to enable children to make choices and extend their own ideas.

## **Communication, language and literacy**

84. Most children enjoy sharing a story. They watch the pictures and generally understand what is happening. Few answer the teacher's questions in sentences and many respond in single words which lack clarity. Whilst children are learning to enjoy books with adults, few children choose to 'read' independently in the attractive book area. Most make marks on paper when writing letters for Postman Pat to deliver. Children in the Reception classes are becoming confident talkers. They communicate simply with each other, for instance, in the role-play garden centre but their vocabulary is limited. They do not listen well and tend to talk over each other. They respond very positively to class story sessions, and eagerly anticipate the book's contents by looking closely at the cover. About half of the children are beginning to recognise a few familiar words and some letters by shape and sound. They are starting to use the initial letter of a word to guess at its meaning. Higher attainers read labels and short sentences from the first reading books with some accuracy. Three-quarters of the children are aware of the concept of a word. They look carefully to pick out key words in their story. Lower attainers (about one-quarter of the group) are beginning with help to hear and identify sounds but cannot relate what they hear to the correct letter. Most pupils use some initial sounds and some random letter shapes in their own writing. Higher attainers are beginning to compose sentences using their knowledge of letter sounds, for example, *I sAw SUM BarDs*. They are beginning to space out their words but use a mixture of upper and lower-case letters. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers use their secure knowledge and understanding to plan a series of small steps in learning which enable children to build consistently on what they already know. They create interesting and attractive activities, including the stimulating role-play areas, so that children are successfully motivated to learn. Effective use is made of puppets to sustain children's concentration and to promote listening skills. Particular emphasis is rightly given to the promotion of speaking and listening skills. For instance, when Nursery children recall their visit to a pet shop the teacher uses the first-hand experience to extend vocabulary. The teacher encourages children to express themselves purposefully and listen to others carefully. Basic skills of recognising letters

and their sounds are taught skilfully in the Reception classes and elements of the National Literacy Strategy are appropriately included. The learning support assistants are well informed and carefully deployed to support learning. Occasionally stories in the Nursery are too long and children lose interest and become restless. Sometimes, when there are too many follow-up activities, it is impossible for the teacher to check whether all children are achieving appropriate learning outcomes.

### **Mathematical development**

85. Children join enthusiastically in number action rhymes and in a wide range of lively and practical sorting, matching and counting activities. Children in the Nursery count candles on the birthday cake with enthusiasm. They carefully watch the teacher making a repeated pattern with up to three objects. Higher attainers anticipate which will come next. With help, they all print a repeated pattern of their own, or continue a pattern using two colours. Children in the Reception class can link numerals to the numbers they represent and place numerals to ten in the correct order on a washing line. Higher attainers order beyond this and lower attainers are unsure of ordering numerals to five. About half of the Reception group partition a set of ten articles into two groups. With help, they use this first-hand experience to make up a number sentence such as six and four make ten. Lower attainers carry out the same task with five objects. Children's use of positional language is weak. Nursery children find it difficult to follow instructions to place an object in front of, behind or on top of a box. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Learning is rooted in a wide range of well-focused practical activities. Number skills are promoted in all areas of the curriculum. Staff give clear demonstrations so that children know how to succeed. Whole class input is usually followed by carefully organised group work that reinforces learning successfully. Occasionally, however, in group work adult helpers are not fully aware of the appropriate tasks planned for children of differing attainment. This sometimes leads to a lack of challenge for some children when all undertake the same task. Lively *Big Mathematics* sessions in the hall each week are fun. They involve Reception children fully in a range of practical number games and are very successful in generating enthusiasm and promoting learning.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

86. All of the children use their senses to investigate the world around them, whether visiting local pet shops with Nursery or exploring how seeds grow in the Reception classes. Nursery children show interest in the different pets they saw, ranging from exotic snakes and parrots to dogs. They use their own experience to consider a pet dog's needs and to create a suitable home. They engage in imaginary role-play, for instance, to brush the dog's coat and prepare his food. Reception children are filled with wonder when they get their first glimpse of the shoots from their seed pushing through the soil. From their own observations and investigations, most children know that *roots are growing down to suck up water, shoots are growing up to the sun*. They carefully observe changes in their seedlings as they grow and are excited to see the sudden, overnight change in the colour of carnations that have been standing in green dye. Higher attainers identify parts of a plant like roots, stem, leaf and flower accurately. Children in Nursery and Reception are becoming increasingly adept at using the mouse to control objects on screen. Teaching and learning are very good and children achieve very well especially in learning about living things. Teachers use questions skilfully to help children make observations, extend their ideas and care for living things. Good use is made of educational visits such as to pet shops, and to extend children's experience beyond home and school. Occasionally, some group work, for example, sand and water play, lacks sufficient focus and does not challenge children to explore the media as well as it could.

## Physical development

87. Very few children in the Nursery are independent in dressing for their daily outdoor play session. They are becoming aware of space and of others when steering large wheeled toys around the track. Reception children clearly enjoy their daily outdoor play session. They show increasing control over their bodies in jumping and hopping along a number line and in kicking and dribbling a football across the playground. They negotiate space successfully when playing chasing games. They are just beginning to co-ordinate their activities to pass a ball overhead or through their legs as part of a team game. Most children have reasonable skills in using tools like scissors, paintbrushes and pencils and higher attainers have good control in picking up and threading beads. Teaching and learning are good. Good use is made of the secure outdoor play area and of the school hall. Teachers give clear instructions and demonstrations but sometimes opportunities to use pupils' work as exemplars of good practice are missed. Lessons frequently are clearly focused on skills to be learnt and so promote learning well. Teachers manage children very well with praise and encouragement so that they try hard to succeed. Good use is made of the expertise of outside agencies, such as a local football league team, to extend children's skills.

## Creative development

88. Children explore a variety of creative media including bubble painting, clay modelling, collage and three-dimensional cardboard construction. They are generally unadventurous in acting out familiar situations in the attractive role-play areas. Nursery children play alongside rather than with each other. They have few ideas of their own, although with adult intervention they show some imagination, for instance, in looking after imaginary rabbits in the pet shop. They respond to the props provided to imitate what they have observed, and use these ideas when the adult is not there. Children in the Reception classes show tremendous enthusiasm in making cat puppets out of brown paper bags. They work independently to glue on ears, eyes and whiskers to make cat faces. This leads to spontaneous role-play as several children use their puppets and enter into characters to give messages to each other. Whilst children enjoy exploring media for their own purpose they also respond particularly well to stimuli from the work of famous artists. For instance, they look closely at *Beechwood* by Gustav Klimt. They use pastels and pencils to create their own pictures of trees, using spots to represent leaves and lines to look like trees. All join in a range of rhymes and songs and explore sound using percussion in the weekly music sessions. Teaching and learning are good. Role-play areas are particularly well organised to encourage pupils to develop their ideas. Adults intervene to extend play by working with groups as well as by providing a succession of appropriate props to stimulate ideas. Resources are well prepared so that children have access to a good range of creative media and are able to develop their own ideas. Sometimes, in music lessons, there is too much emphasis on practising sounds and not enough time given to the enjoyment of playing together.

## ENGLISH

89. By the age of 7, pupils attain standards in speaking and listening that are below the national average, and standards in reading and writing that are close to the national average. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards in reading and writing were below average. By the age of 11, pupils attain standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing that are below the national average. This is in line with the standards at the time of the last inspection. However, an analysis of results of national tests in Year 6 indicates a gradual rise in standards since the last inspection, especially in 2002.

90. The national test results for 2002 for pupils at the end of Year 2 were below the national average in reading and well below it in writing. When compared with similar schools a more positive picture emerges and results were well above the average in reading and in line with the average in writing. Similarly, the results of pupils at the end of Year 6 were below the national average in English but above the average attained by pupils in similar schools. The comparison with similar schools shows many pupils are doing better than expected. In both the infants and the juniors the national test results in 2002 marked a considerable improvement over the results of the previous year.
91. Improvement has been brought about by:
- the thorough assessment of pupils' language development;
  - careful recording of pupils' achievements and tracking of progress that promptly identifies those in danger of falling behind;
  - additional booster groups when pupils need a little extra help;
  - pupils being taught in groups according to their ability in Years 5 and 6 which enables the teachers to set work more closely matched to pupils' ability;
  - pupils keeping good records of their reading and support assistants adding extra information which gives the teacher a clear picture of the level of reading, how many books are being read and also the amount of help being received from parents and support assistants;
  - improvement in the books in the library, which now has a good computerised system for recording the books pupils borrow. The pupils operate it themselves, in the infants and the juniors and an enthusiasm for reading is developing.
92. Since pupils enter school with skills in language that are well below expectations, the standards they attain by the age of seven represent good achievement. Most pupils in Year 2 read simple texts with a sound level of understanding. They make good use of the pictures to help them understand the text and are starting to use their knowledge of letters and sounds to tackle new words. Higher attaining pupils cope with more demanding texts and read with a good measure of fluency and accuracy.
93. Most pupils in Year 2 can order their thoughts on paper, albeit with some difficulty and in some cases only with support from adults. They rely heavily on their spoken language and find it difficult to make their writing imaginative. Most understand that writing changes for different purposes and have written a report about their visit to a museum and instructions to decorate a Christmas tree. Higher attainers produce a good volume of writing using more imaginative vocabulary and can structure a short story. They are more accurate with their use of simple punctuation.
94. Although teachers help pupils to broaden their vocabulary and to pay attention to more interesting words, the spoken language of pupils is fairly restricted. While they contribute interesting words and phrases in response to the teacher's questions, few are able to make extended contributions, to ask leading questions or to give examples from their own experience. A small number rarely say more than a few words in lessons and a significant number have difficulty in communicating anything other than simple ideas. Pupils listen to stories carefully but do not give sufficient attention to instructions and then are unclear about the purpose of their tasks.
95. Pupils in Year 6 attained below average standards in the national tests at the age of seven and their achievement in the intervening years is sound. Many pupils move in and out of the school during the school years and this leads to them missing important aspects of the English curriculum. Standards in speaking and listening are below average. Teachers do not always encourage more extended answers, by teasing out pupils' brief initial replies to questions and by organising occasional debates and discussions. Most pupils make themselves understood in speech but they frequently lapse into informal language and only a few speak at length to a point in lessons. Pupils enjoy working in groups and taking

part in activities, but limitations in their vocabulary and in their command of sentence structure restrict their ability to express complex ideas or to marshal arguments clearly and express them cogently. They are more confident in informal than in formal situations. A small number of higher attaining pupils are fluent and confident speakers and in some classes teachers make good use of their skills by pairing them with weaker pupils or those for whom English is an additional language. In one lesson the higher attaining pupils were encouraged to evaluate the presentation of other pupils. Listening improved and comments were supportive and one pupil very confidently demonstrated how comments could be improved by including drama and changing the way he spoke.

96. While higher attaining pupils cope well with demanding texts and read with fluency, speed and accuracy, a large number hesitate frequently at unfamiliar words or read slowly and with little expression. This hampers their understanding of the text and their ability to read between the lines and predict what might happen next in the story. Most recognise the difference between fiction and non-fiction texts and are able to look up information using an index. This supports their learning in other subjects.
97. Pupils produce a reasonable range and volume of writing but much is spoiled by poor handwriting and a great many spelling errors. Many have not acquired a fluent style of joined-up handwriting. A small number of pupils continue to have difficulty in producing writing that is more than a few sentences in length. Pupils do not transfer the skills taught in literacy lessons to their independent writing and often forget to use basic punctuation correctly. Higher attaining pupils give more attention to the final presentation of their work and are starting to recognise and correct their errors.
98. The progress made by the large proportion of pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements of special educational needs, is generally in line with that of the other pupils in both the infants and the juniors. Additional support is available for many of these pupils and in these small group sessions learning is effective because it includes practical activities that are closely matched to the pupils' needs. Classroom assistants are available in many lessons and many provide effective help as pupils work in small groups. Some are better trained for their roles than others and the good practice seen of providing clear instructions for the support assistants was not followed consistently throughout the school. Occasionally, pupils miss parts of the literacy lesson for extra reading and this interrupts their learning in the lessons. Pupils who are learning through English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. They benefit from the introduction to lessons when teachers and pupils include them in the discussion. Learning is less effective in the group part of the lesson when tasks are not matching their experiences or ability. Teachers need more advice about planning for the needs of these pupils.
99. The quality of teaching and learning is generally good in the infants and sound in the juniors. The best teaching seen was in Years 2 and 6 and much new learning takes place in these classes. In the infants some of the teaching was very good and excellent. In two lessons in the juniors the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory. Through the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy, good attention is given to the teaching of letters and their sounds. This is done in a practical way that helps pupils to recognise and cope with different letter blends. This makes a major contribution to the pupils' growing competence in reading, helping them to sound out and pronounce words that are new to them, and helps also to improve their spelling. One excellent lesson in Year 2 focused on making pancakes, in keeping with the time of year, and by helping pupils to come to an understanding of the procedures involved enabled them to gain a command of a wide range of relevant vocabulary. In response to lavish praise the pupils used words like *pouring*, *whisking*, *cooking* and *sifting* and some even referred to *ingredients*. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, were involved in their learning throughout the session, eagerly answering questions and taking part in activities. The pupils'

behaviour was very well controlled and they stayed focused and worked hard till the end of the lesson.

100. Lessons are usually carefully structured and in the best examples pupils have a clear grasp of the learning outcomes. In two sound lessons in the juniors, in Years 3 and 5 respectively, pupils were thoroughly prepared for writing tasks by prior reading and discussion during the introduction. As a result, pupils read confidently from the shared text displayed at the front of the classroom and showed a good command of terms like *title*, *sub-title*, *heading*, *sub-heading*, *bold* and *italics*. The pupils were well supported during their group work and some worked well on the classroom computers while others identified key words and ideas in a text, taking notes. By the end of the lesson most had produced a creditable amount of satisfactory writing. In the other lesson, pupils read a story about an animal with appreciation and then, in groups, proceeded to label the parts of an animal in an outline drawing, making use of interesting vocabulary such as *sharp fin*, *sparkling eyes* and *speckled fur*. Spelling was well supported by the teacher's blackboard display but some pupils spelled a number of words incorrectly although they did include many correct sounds, such as writing *trowsus* for *trousers*. Although computers were used effectively in this lesson this is not always the case. For example, in Year 6 pupils were learning to write travel brochures and the computer remained unused. This was a missed opportunity for pupils to practise their skills of changing the style of writing and importing pictures.
101. Both of the lessons in the juniors where teaching was less than satisfactory had sound and even good features but overall limited new learning took place. In one lesson insecure subject knowledge led to examples being used that were misleading; too much time was devoted to a limited task and was not sufficiently tied in with the pupils' own writing. In the other, one group of pupils strayed off the set task, the class became unsettled and noisy and this disturbed the learning of other pupils. Although the behaviour of the pupils is generally good and most are keen to do well, some are difficult to teach because of their poor command of basic skills and their tendency to lose interest and relax their concentration when the opportunity presents itself. Teachers mark pupils' writing conscientiously and, in the best examples, indicate clearly and precisely how the pupils can improve their work. In some cases, however, guidance on improvement is too general.
102. Teachers promote literacy skills in other subjects and are sensitive to the language needs of pupils. However, some subjects, such as history, do not give sufficient attention to pupils' language needs and teachers do not explicitly plan for the deliberate development of pupils' writing and speaking skills in imaginative and varied ways. Teachers do not insist that pupils make use of the skills taught in literacy lessons in their writing in other subjects.
103. Subject management is good and the school has a clear plan of action to improve the quality of writing. The school has a rich collection of books that support the National Literacy Strategy. The subject co-ordinator monitors standards by means of lesson observations and review of pupils' work. Assessment is used to provide group targets but these are not being referred to in lessons and so are not being as effective as they could be in raising standards. Pupils are not clear about how to improve because the targets are often written in complicated language.

## MATHEMATICS

104. Pupils' standards in mathematics are in line with the national average in Years 2 and 6. These findings reflect those of the last inspection. Given the limitations of the pupils when they start school, they do well to achieve these standards. They make good overall progress. Progress is often very good in Years 5 and 6, where teaching is consistently challenging and the pupils achieve much in their final years in school. Following the last inspection, there was a dip in attainment, but standards have risen in recent years. Improvements have been brought about by:
- the effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, supported by local guidelines for planning;
  - improved teaching in response to staff training, monitoring and sharing of expertise;
  - data from national and other tests being analysed and the information used effectively in planning and in setting targets for groups of pupils;
  - organising teaching groups for mathematics in Years 5 and 6 so that pupils of all levels of attainment receive focused attention to enable them to achieve the standards of which they are capable.
105. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because in most lessons they receive effective support from teachers and support staff. Occasionally, their learning is disturbed in lessons when they are withdrawn for additional reading or literacy support. They make very good progress in Years 5 and 6 because they work on tasks that consistently extend their understanding and skills in very well planned steps. Teachers focus consistently on extending pupils' understanding through practical activities and the use of essential mathematical terms. This enables pupils who speak English as an additional language to cope successfully in lessons and to participate actively in all activities.
106. In the 2002 national tests, results for 7-year-olds were below the national average but above the average for similar schools. Although the number of pupils exceeding the expected level was broadly in line with the national average, the school's overall performance was reduced by the numbers scoring below or at the lower end of the expected range. The results of national tests for 11-year-olds in 2002 were average compared with all schools but well above the average for similar schools. Talented mathematicians are provided with work by the local secondary school and last year saw one pupil score well above the national average in the national tests. There are no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls.
107. Year 2 pupils read, write and sequence numbers to 20. They recognise number patterns and spot odd and even numbers on a number square. Teachers encourage using numbers to 100 and most pupils count in tens forwards and backwards to and from 100. They know the pairs of numbers that add up to ten or, in the case of the higher attaining pupils 20, and use this to carry out simple calculations quickly and accurately. Pupils are less secure in giving reasons for their calculations or in checking their answers. Most pupils solve problems involving familiar coins and higher-attaining pupils calculate change from £1.00. With adult support, lower attaining pupils find coins for amounts of money up to 20 pence. Pupils understand how to measure in centimetres and understand mathematical vocabulary like *longer* and *shorter*. Through practical activities pupils recognise a half and a quarter and can describe the number of sides and corners in a good range of two-dimensional shapes. They use scales to weigh objects and understand how to record their findings on a table.
108. Year 6 pupils work confidently with number. They enjoy solving problems mentally. Most pupils accurately use the number facts they have learned, including their knowledge of multiplication tables. Teachers successfully encourage pupils to use correct mathematical language and higher attaining pupils confidently give reasons for the conclusions they

reach. For example, they describe how they order fractions by converting them first to decimals. Pupils learn to draw and measure angles but many lack accuracy. By counting squares pupils recognise how the perimeter of a shape is calculated. Higher attaining pupils extend this information and accurately use the formula to calculate a rectangle's area. All pupils collect data and record it clearly on a range of tally charts, frequency tables and line graphs.

109. Pupils use their numeracy skills soundly to support their learning in other subjects. In science, pupils record their findings in different formats and use their numeracy skills to calculate their results. Pupils satisfactorily reinforce their mathematical skills in activities such as weighing ingredients and measuring materials in design and technology. Pupils' work in information and communication technology successfully promotes pupils' data handling skills.
110. The quality of teaching is good and leads to effective learning because:
  - detailed subject planning highlights what pupils are to learn so that teaching and learning are focused and purposeful;
  - teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject. Several teachers have particular expertise in the subject, notably those teaching Year 6 pupils. This expertise gives clarity to teaching and inspires the confidence of pupils;
  - planning emphasises the development of number skills, and mental agility work forms a lively part of most lessons. This improves the speed and accuracy of pupils' thinking. Teachers target questions skilfully so that pupils of differing levels of attainment participate actively and make good progress in learning;
  - in many instances, teachers use the results of regular tests and observations to closely match work to pupils' differing needs and abilities. This is most consistent in Years 5 and 6;
  - teachers value all pupils' contributions so that pupils of all levels of attainment are confident and have good attitudes to mathematics. They are willing to put effort into their work and present it carefully;
  - teachers use practical activities and good quality resource materials to promote pupils enjoyment and understanding;
  - teachers set regular homework that effectively reinforces the work that pupils do in school.

These effective features of teaching contribute successfully to the quality of pupils' learning and to the good progress that they make. In some classes, however, there are areas of relative weakness and inconsistency in teaching because:

  - in a small number of classes support staff are not actively engaged in lessons and are not effective in supporting teaching and learning. This reduces the progress that some pupils make;
  - teachers do not consistently use marking to give guidance to pupils about the strengths and weaknesses of their work or how they can improve it.
111. The co-ordinator leads the development of this subject effectively. Lessons are observed and the co-ordinator's expertise shared with other teachers. This has brought a greater consistency to the teaching of mathematics since the last inspection. Effective management led to the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy which teachers follow in their planning. This leads to a full range of experiences and ensures the requirements of the National Curriculum receive attention.



## SCIENCE

112. Pupils in Year 2 reach the level expected for their age. This level is exceeded by the end of Year 6 and attainment then is above average. The evidence from the inspection is that standards of work in science are in line with national expectations. However, with the enhanced teaching which the Year 6 pupils receive, inspection evidence shows they should soon make rapid gains, as they did last year. Thus, they are on target to reach standards that are above average, signifying very good achievement for the majority of pupils. Achievement is good in the infants and very good in the juniors. This dramatic improvement in standards since the last inspection has been brought about by:
- careful monitoring of lessons and sharing of ideas which have led to teaching being consistently good and better;
  - the implementation of a detailed scheme of work to guide teachers' planning and ensure continuity of learning as pupils move from year to year;
  - good arrangements for assessment and tracking of pupils' progress;
  - evaluation of test results and changes made to the curriculum when a weakness is spotted. This has led to investigation receiving more attention and has been significant in improving learning in lessons;
  - individual support books which pupils use at home to consolidate their scientific knowledge.
113. By the age of 7, pupils enjoy science and are beginning to plan their own investigations. They know about the different properties of materials such as wood, plastic and wool. Many are developing good observation skills, for instance, in describing what happens to pancake mix when heat is applied. Pupils are beginning to use their scientific knowledge and classify foods. They understand about healthy foods and plan a balanced meal. Pupils know about forces and about electricity. This can be seen in the way they distinguish between toys that need a pushing force and those that need pulling. Pupils enjoy scientific investigation and know how to create a circuit to make a bulb light and can draw a simple pictorial representation of a circuit. However, a few pupils find it difficult to put their ideas into words as for example in describing what is happening using scientific terminology. Many are starting to understand about fair testing but are not yet confident in predicting outcomes or suggesting different ways to record their findings.
114. By the age of 11, pupils successfully plan and evaluate their own fair tests. For example, they make well thought out predictions about which kinds of parachute would take longest to reach the ground. They plan thoughtful tests and compare the results with their predictions, although because of the low levels of their literacy skills, many pupils find this hard. Higher attaining pupils use scientific vocabulary in their explanations with growing confidence. The pupils' knowledge and understanding of life processes and living things are well developed. For example, they have a good understanding of the functions of a plant and of food chains. Pupils know about viruses, bacteria and fungi and how yeast works in the making of wine, beer and bread. The pupils also have a good grasp of electrical circuits and appliances and of light and darkness.
115. The quality of teaching overall is good and as a result pupils are enthusiastic learners. In general, better teaching in science was seen in the juniors with very good teaching in Year 6 enhancing progress in the final year in school. Planning is good and teachers draw effectively on detailed guidelines based on national recommendations. This ensures that the pupils receive enough science teaching, covering suitable topics and delivered in a sequential way. In the best lessons teachers have clear learning outcomes and share them with the pupils so that they understand the focus of the lesson. However, in some lessons teachers focus too much on the tasks to be completed rather than on what the pupils are to learn. This was not the case in Year 5 when the teacher carefully explained the learning intention of the lesson to ensure that all pupils understood. This helped the pupils to focus on the learning. In this very good lesson, learning was enhanced by a

display of helpful scientific words and ideas. The pace of teaching was brisk and included fun and humour to maintain the pupils' interest and attention. For example, while the pupils were set challenging questions on the nature of sound and vibration, they were encouraged to shout a chant at a group wearing industrial earmuffs who reported back their observations. The teacher regularly questioned the pupils to check the extent of their learning and modified his teaching when necessary. In most lessons because teachers have good management skills, behaviour is good and activities are carried out in an orderly manner. Lessons often include a useful conclusion that both extends and consolidates learning, and involves the pupils assessing the learning they have made in the lesson.

116. Teacher assessment is good as the pupils are assessed after each unit of work to check on their levels of understanding. This enables the teachers to fill any gaps in learning and leads to the pupils learning well. However, marking of work is not always as useful as it could be. Although work is marked regularly for correctness, it often provides insufficient feedback to pupils on what they need to do next to reach the next stage of learning. The school sets regular homework in science in Year 6 where it supports learning particularly well.
117. The good teaching in science is made accessible to all groups of pupils. However, pupils with English as an additional language are often unable to benefit as fully as they could from science lessons because teaching and planning fails to meet their specific needs. Also, in a few of lessons, the teaching does not take full account of providing equal opportunities for both boys and girls. In spite of this, the results of boys and girls, minority ethnic pupils, and for those who speak English as an additional language are broadly in line with the other pupils overall. Pupils with special educational needs make progress which is as good as other pupils in the infants and slightly less in the juniors. Higher attaining pupils make good progress overall but sometimes teachers miss the opportunity to extend their learning further by offering a higher level of challenge in the work. Their rate of learning increases in Year 6 where they are given responsibility for their own learning and much is achieved in this year.
118. The high quality classroom displays of science reveal the teachers' enthusiasm for the subject. In turn, this enthusiasm is transferred to the pupils who demonstrate a very positive attitude to the subject. Pupils talk with pride about their work in science and they explain with confidence how they have conducted tests and what the findings are.
119. The basic skills of literacy are developed in the subject as pupils regularly write their predictions, descriptions of fair tests and evaluations. Numeracy skills are also used and consolidated, particularly in measurement, recording and graph work. The school has identified how information and communication technology can enhance the learning in science and computers are used effectively by teachers. Teaching in the subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' social, moral and cultural development, particularly through the regular co-operative work in the subject and the consideration of ethical decisions for scientists.
120. The leadership and management of science are strong. Good plans to improve the subject have been successfully implemented. Monitoring of standards is carried out by the reviewing of planning and pupils' work. However, monitoring is not as effective as it could be because it is infrequent; it has not included the monitoring of the quality of teaching so that future developments can be based on first hand information. The school is aware of this and has drawn up a timetable for subject leaders to observe lessons.

## ART AND DESIGN

121. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are above national expectations and are higher than those reported in the previous inspection. This improvement is due to:
- consistently good and often very good teaching;
  - the implementation of a well-planned curriculum based on the step-by-step development of skills;
  - the appointment of a subject leader who provides effective management.
122. Achievement is good overall. In Year 2 and Year 6, where teaching is often very good, pupils achieve particularly well. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included and make good progress. Good provision is made for talented pupils in Years 5 and 6 to extend their skills through working with an artist in residence. This group includes one pupil who has special educational needs but whose strengths in art have commendably been recognised. The few pupils who are learning English as an additional language receive little extra support in the subject. Their progress is satisfactory.
123. In Year 2, pupils collaborate to make a landscape collage and character puppets based on the story of The Gingerbread Man. Almost all are confident and independent in exploring ideas and investigating a wide range of interesting materials. Higher attainers are especially thoughtful in creating specific effects. For instance, two boys choose a shiny blue material and persevere to cut out a long *wiggly* strip to represent the river. A girl chooses a patterned green organza and uses her headband as a template for a *humpy* hill. When making puppets, pupils plan their ideas and select appropriate fabrics, colours, beads and buttons to represent particular characters. They respond very positively to their teacher's perceptive questions, as when considering different joining techniques. For example, they decide whether to use split-pins, glue or staples to attach beads. They are enthusiastic about sharing their work with others and discuss what has worked best. In Year 6, pupils' three-dimensional work on *fantastic vessels* linked to a history topic on Ancient Greeks is of a high standard. Pupils sketch a variety of modern pots and jugs with good awareness of shape, light and shade. They research pots from different periods commenting carefully on style, shape, colour and decoration before making their own with papier mâché. Outcomes are very impressive in terms of the variety of styles and shapes, imagination shown, attention to purpose, detail and finish. Pupils' evaluation of their work is, however, somewhat superficial and limited in many cases by their below average communication skills. In their drawings, pupils are beginning to show some understanding of perspective.
124. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers plan lessons and units of work in line with the school's scheme of work to build soundly on what pupils already know. Relationships are good and teachers use praise effectively to give pupils confidence to select and explore media and techniques for themselves. Positive feedback through the way pupils work is respected and carefully displayed reinforces self-esteem and enthusiasm very successfully. Teachers plan lessons carefully with a clear focus on the skills to be learnt and provide clear examples and demonstrations to increase pupils' understanding. In Year 3, for instance, the teacher goes to great lengths to ensure that pupils are aware of how pattern in the natural world has influenced people like William Morris and Gustav Klimt before pupils begin to explore pattern for themselves. Pupils are managed very positively and effectively so that even in informal situations like sketching in the playground they concentrate very well and persevere with their tasks. Occasionally, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work or that of others in order to improve. Sometimes introductions go on too long and pupils who are keen to start work become restless. In the very good lessons, the teachers' high expectations, the brisk pace of learning, and the well-planned opportunities for independent work, ensure that pupils learn to develop their own ideas and try hard to succeed.

125. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The curriculum co-ordinator has a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject and this is shared effectively with less confident teachers. Although examples of work are reviewed to obtain an overview of standards teaching has not been observed so the co-ordinator does not have an informed picture of the teaching of skills. Information and communication technology is used very well to support learning and pupils frequently try out ideas on screen. For instance, in Year 2, pupils explore ideas for a landscape before making a collage. There are good links with other subjects particularly with English, geography and history. Stories are often used as stimuli and excellent opportunities for the promotion of speaking and listening skills are provided when pupils discuss their plans and their finished work. Good attention is given to extending pupils' vocabularies in the use of subject specific language such as when discussing ideas of 'perspective', 'background' and 'foreground'. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, but there are insufficient opportunities to study art work of non-western cultures, and pupils' knowledge of the rich diversity of this area is weak.

## **CITIZENSHIP**

126. The school gives a high priority to developing pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in citizenship and it succeeds in doing this well. It provides a very good range of opportunities for pupils to take responsibility, to show initiative and to develop an understanding of living in a community. For example, pupils elect their own representatives to their class councils. They draw up their own agendas and discuss and make decisions about issues that affect themselves and the whole school during their weekly meetings.
127. In addition, each class has a weekly Circle Time and citizenship lesson. Infants learn how to discuss and debate and to follow rules. They begin to understand the needs of others and how to improve the environment. The juniors build on this foundation to research and debate topical issues. They learn how to give criticism and how to give help and to resolve differences. They develop a broader understanding of rules and know about rights and responsibilities. Teachers show that they value pupils' achievements in this area by awarding termly citizenship awards and certificates, as well as holding the annual citizenship day. These activities enrich the curriculum and provide a broader dimension to the work of the school. The pupils respond well by demonstrating positive and responsible attitudes around the school. Behaviour is good in lessons and there is no evidence of bullying or oppressive behaviour.
128. Teaching and learning are good and in one lesson in Year 6 it was excellent. A positive feature in the lessons is the warm and positive relationships between pupils and teachers that lead to pupils having confidence when sharing their personal experiences. Pupils know their contributions are valued and teachers encourage respectful listening and pupils learn to respect the feelings of others and how their actions can sometimes be hurtful. Discussion is encouraged but pupils also have the opportunity to opt out if they feel insecure about any of the topics being covered. This was handled exceptionally well in Year 5 when pupils shared their experiences about what made them afraid. In this non-threatening situation pupils learnt that it is alright to admit being scared and that help is available if required. Lessons are short but structured well so that all are included and time is given to return to the main focus of the discussion and to draw effective conclusions.
129. The leadership of this subject is good. There are high quality policies and procedures in place for this subject to ensure that pupils of all ages receive the teaching that they should. There are plans in place to improve the subject further in the future.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

130. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 pupils attain satisfactory standards as identified at the time of the last inspection. Given their low starting point this represents good achievement through the school. Pupils with special educational needs and those whose first language is not English generally receive satisfactory support in lessons from teachers and learning assistants. They too make good progress and benefit from the focus on practical activities and working in small groups. However, pupils miss valuable learning experiences as they are withdrawn for extra literacy support.
131. In Year 1, pictures with moving parts show pupils' careful cutting and gluing skills and imaginative pictures. There is good progress in making puppets across the two years. Pupils in Year 1 design and make sock puppets with good decorations. These skills are extended in Year 2 and pupils produce good design sketches showing materials and step by step making procedures. Their puppets are carefully cut out, sewn together and well finished. They also design and make functional vehicles with sturdy bodies, wheels and axles. There is no evidence that pupils refer to their designs in the making process or that they suggest ways to improve the finished puppet.
132. Samples and displays of pupils' work in Years 3 to 6 indicate that there is sound development of skills. In Years 3 and 4, pupils make purses, wallets and photograph frames. In Years 5 and 6 they bake biscuits and make model shelters, musical instruments and slippers. In this range of work there is evidence of satisfactory understanding of the skills involved and their careful application. Pupils show imagination in designing and decorating their products. However, there is less emphasis on producing full design briefs before the making phase commences. Pupils do not use design books in which to develop their designing technique systematically. There is little evidence that by Year 6 pupils have acquired knowledge and experience of making objects with mechanical features such as pulleys, levers and gears. Numeracy skills are developed through measuring, weighing and estimating but the incorporation of information and communication technology is underdeveloped.
133. Teaching and learning are good and some teaching seen was very good. Resources are stimulating. For example, in Year 5 pupils beginning a project on making musical instruments examined a range of instruments from various countries. This was a valuable exploration of music from world cultures. The teacher led a very good discussion on what materials would be needed, the steps in making each instrument and the tools required to shape and join the components. Stimulating teaching, 'hands on' experience of handling instruments and references to cultural and scientific knowledge led to very good all-round learning. Pupils responded enthusiastically. They were fascinated by the instruments and chose which one they wanted to copy. There was good co-operation as they shared the instruments that they handled with great care. Pupils' artefacts are very carefully made and the sound development of the skills necessary for making each artefact indicates that teaching is good overall. Teachers follow nationally recommended planning guidelines and this ensures a range of experiences and includes a focus on teaching skills. Teachers assess pupils' work at the end of each unit on the basis of how well pupils have overtaken its objectives.
134. Management of the subject is satisfactory. However, the co-ordinator, is based in the infants and has had limited opportunity to influence development in the junior classes except through informal contact with colleagues and scrutiny of pupils' finished work.

## GEOGRAPHY

135. Standards in geography are in line with the levels expected for pupils in Years 2 and 6. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. These findings mark an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were average in the infant classes but low in the junior classes. Standards have risen because:
- planning is based on national and local authority guidance, so that the school covers all aspects of the geography curriculum more thoroughly and repetition is avoided;
  - improved resources, including up-to-date atlases, support teaching and learning.
136. Pupils in Year 2 have a sound knowledge of their immediate surroundings. They learn about a town in Mexico and enjoy finding similarities and differences between Tocuoro and Ince, such as aspects of school life. Pupils answer questions about people and places in Mexico and begin to use books as a source of information. In Years 3 and 4, pupils make satisfactory progress in learning about villages. They become familiar with Ordnance Survey maps and understand that symbols are used to represent features, such as a church or a public telephone. They develop skills in finding routes using grid references. Pupils successfully extend their study by finding out about a village in India. They look at features, such as houses and the use of water, and are able to compare these with their own locality. They use local and world maps and identify continents and countries, including Asia and India. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 understand that water is important and know about the water cycle, use of water in the community and major rivers of the world. They make satisfactory progress in using co-ordinates and developing their map reading skills.
137. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and promotes sound learning. In some lessons teaching is good. For example, Year 4 pupils make good progress in learning about life in an Indian village because the lesson is particularly well structured, building progressively on what pupils have learned before and providing worthwhile opportunities for pupils to share and explain their findings. Teachers and support staff consistently encourage pupils with special educational needs so that they participate actively in lessons and make satisfactory progress. Occasionally a lack of clarity about what pupils are to learn in group tasks makes this support less effective. Teachers provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to discuss their findings and to work in small groups. These arrangements enable pupils with English as an additional language to make progress in line with other pupils in their class although they have difficulty when asked to write at length. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure. Teachers plan carefully so that links with other subjects add relevance and promote pupils' interest and learning. For example, pupils' extend their knowledge about villages through their work on settlements in history. Teachers make satisfactory use of videos to extend pupils' knowledge in geography. They enable pupils to use their information and communication technology skills purposefully to extend their learning, as when Year 4 pupils work with a simulation program based on the life of an Indian boy. Pupils reinforce their numeracy and data handling skills in geography lessons. For example, Year 5 pupils collect information about the ways in which pupils travel to school and present it as a graph. Teachers assess and record pupils' progress at the end of topics. However, they do not consistently use this information when they plan activities and often set similar tasks for all pupils, regardless of their prior attainment. This limits the progress of some higher attaining pupils. The quality of teachers' marking is variable. Although it usually recognises what the pupil has done well, it does not consistently indicate weaknesses in the work and how these can be improved. This limits the pupil's progress. Teachers establish good relationships with pupils. Pupils evidently enjoy geography topics and readily discuss their work. Teachers organise activities that successfully promote pupils' enthusiasm and extend their learning, such as a visit to the local water treatment centre and a residential visit to the Lake District.

138. The subject is satisfactorily led and co-ordinated. The manager has recently taken over the role and has a clear understanding of standards in the subject because teachers' planning and samples of pupils' work have been examined. As yet, the co-ordinator has not had an opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom; this forms part of the school's long-term programme.

## HISTORY

139. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are satisfactory and have been sustained since the last inspection. However, there has been an improvement in pupils' research skills that were underdeveloped. Overall achievement for many pupils is now good. This has come about because lessons are now more strongly focused on developing the skills of historical enquiry, using primary and secondary sources of information. The improvement in the school's information and technology resources including access to the Internet and increased use of the school library has contributed to this. This includes pupils with special educational needs and those whose first language is not English who benefit from the focus on the use of resources and discussion although they find it difficult to record their ideas.
140. Scrutiny of pupils' work in Years 1 and 2 and discussion with pupils in Year 2 reveals that they are developing a good sense of changes between past times and the present. Year 1 pupils draw toys from the past and contrast them with those they play with now. They also draw toys they have seen at the Opie museum. Year 2 pupils studying Florence Nightingale describe graphically the hospital conditions she found in the Crimea and contrast them with hospitals today. In discussion they recognise that Florence Nightingale was largely responsible for establishing the nursing profession. They know that she founded a college to train women as nurses. Pupils have good factual recall and are beginning to develop skills of deduction. Visits make an important contribution to their learning. They describe artefacts, buildings and locks which they saw on a visit to Wigan Pier.
141. Pupils in junior classes satisfactorily cover a range of topics, from a study of Ancient Greeks to 'Britain since 1948'. Some original writing especially in Years 5 and 6 makes a sound contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills. For example in Year 6 pupils write as participants in the battle of Marathon and Year 5 pupils describe the social conditions of child labour in Victorian times. They write letters of complaint to Lord Shaftesbury. In the lower junior classes work is not so challenging particularly for higher attaining pupils. There is less original writing and too much reliance on the completion of worksheets. A very good example of the development of historical skills occurred in a Year 5 lesson when pupils studying Britain in the second half of the last century considered the life and career of John Lennon. They examined photographs, read newspaper reports, looked at video clips and listened to his music. Pupils discussed these sources with interest and insight and formulated good questions which they would have liked to put to the musician. The question they were considering was 'Why were the Beatles so popular?' As a follow-up task they designed posters to advertise records of Beatles' songs.
142. Teaching is good and leads to effective learning. Strengths of the teaching were good subject knowledge, use of resources, detailed planning and good management of the lessons. Where there were areas for development they were mostly particular to the lesson. For example, pupils asked to formulate questions for research were given insufficient guidance as to the type of question. They therefore tended to come up with questions only requiring a simple factual answer. In the very good lesson the teacher's skilful questioning developed the discussion on John Lennon's work very well, allowing some pupils to speak at length. Teachers have a very good relationship with the pupils which leads to enjoyable lessons and pupils being eager to learn. Teachers' planning is

generally good and builds effectively on detailed guidelines. Teachers assess pupils' work at the end of a unit using a simple pro-forma. The main weakness in the subject is the inconsistent development of pupils' written work. They do not have sufficient opportunity to express their own findings and reactions to historical events and personalities. Teachers' marking is also inconsistent. Some is very thorough, detailing how pupils can improve. Weaker marking is confined to correcting literary errors with sometimes exaggerated praise for ordinary work and presentation.

143. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has been in post for only a few weeks but is keen to develop the subject and has good ideas for broadening the curriculum. The curriculum is enriched by visits to places of historical interest such as the Roman remains at Chester, Turton Tower, a Tudor house and the mill at Wigan Pier and these contribute strongly to pupils' learning.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

144. The school provides very well for information and communication technology. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 reach the standards expected for their age and overall achievement is good. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning through English as an additional language make good progress because of the effective teaching which allows pupils to learn at a rate suitable to their needs.
145. Improvement since the last inspection is good and has been brought about by:
- more time being allocated to the subject;
  - an improvement in resources;
  - more detailed planning which includes effective links with other subjects so that learning is more relevant for pupils;
  - very good procedures for assessing the progress of pupils;
  - the training that teachers have received which has increased both their subject knowledge and confidence
  - very good leadership of the subject co-ordinator
  - the enthusiasm and good behaviour of the pupils.
146. Most pupils in Year 2 are confident to load the program that they require, to use a mouse for a range of functions and to save their work and log off. They use a graphics programme successfully and use the 'brush' and 'fill' features well, for example when designing a puppet in design technology. They use word processing for their writing and highlight text in colour. Pupils have good opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy skills when working with computers. For example, pupils in Year 1 used their numeracy skills to try to beat a computerised 'number cruncher' machine in calculating number doubles.
147. Good progress is made in the juniors, and pupils in Year 6 illustrate and calculate data on a spreadsheet, produce computerised art work in the style of Monet and layout the front page of a newspaper using texts of different styles and sizes and incorporating graphics. Their word processing skills improve and they begin to add, amend and combine information from a variety of sources to present their ideas. Year 5 pupils used formulae with spreadsheets to calculate prices of items. Throughout the school pupils use their literacy skills whilst word processing their writing and in using information gathered from the Internet. Gaps in pupils' experiences are linked to a lack of appropriate software and the school is tackling this so that pupils can give more attention to the use of the Internet and the use of e-mail.
148. There is a minority of pupils who do not yet have the skills and confidence of their classmates. For example, in the infants there are pupils who are not yet able to log on and begin work without support. In the juniors in Year 4 there are pupils unable to operate a



computer effectively, and in Year 5 groups of pupils who still need help with loading programs.

149. Teaching in information and communication technology is good in the ICT suite, and as a consequence, pupils are enthusiastic and learning is good. Teachers impart new skills confidently to their pupils because their own subject knowledge has been developed through recent training. They use equipment such as the interactive whiteboard effectively and this helps pupils learn new skills as they see them closely demonstrated. Lessons are organised well so that the pupils have ample hands on time to practise their new skills. Classroom assistants play a limited part in the opening of lessons but are more supportive helping pupils as they work at the computers. Teachers do not make as much use of the computers in their classrooms as expected. For example, in English in Year 4 when pupils were learning their spellings an opportunity was missed to use computers to extend their word processing skills by writing sentences. Sometimes, teachers fail to ensure that pupils with English as an additional language understand important instructions. As a result, these pupils do not always benefit as much as they should from the subject
150. Management of the subject is good and advice is readily available for teachers who need it. Resources are now good, and the number of computers available to pupils is in line with recommended levels. A filter system is in place to ensure pupils do not access unsuitable material. Policies and procedures for the subject are high quality. Very good arrangements for the assessment and recording of pupils' progress have recently begun. The co-ordinator monitors the teaching and learning and provides demonstration lessons. The weekly parents' computer club enables parents to contribute to their children's learning in the subject.

## MUSIC

151. Pupils' reach the level expected for their age in Year 2 and exceed this level in Year 6. Achievement is satisfactory in the infants and good in the juniors. This includes pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is not their first language. These pupils often make significant contributions to lessons, individually and in group work. The findings of the inspection represent an improvement since the last report when pupils' standards and progress were said to be satisfactory. More detailed planning and a focus on skills have brought this about.
152. Pupils in Year 2 understand music can be represented by symbols or as seen in one lesson by numbers. They successfully play tuned and untuned percussion instruments in response to a number chart on the board. Each number represents a different category of instrument. When the teacher points to a particular number those pupils have to play. According to the size of the numeral they play loudly or softly. Some squares on the chart are blank, indicating silence. Pupils respond to this challenging exercise with concentration and are anxious to succeed. Some pupils are chosen to lead the activity, pointing to the numbers. Taking charge of the class they direct the activity very seriously and effectively. This gives them a good feeling of self-satisfaction. All pupils make good progress in the lesson in understanding the discipline of playing an instrument correctly at the right time. Pupils also listen attentively to recorded music demonstrating percussion instruments and move in response to the rhythm of the music.
153. Year 6 pupils have a well developed sense of rhythm and can clap different patterns against a steady pulse. They accurately read and clap rhythmic notation on cards using words to define the rhythms. Using a rhymed verse pupils compose rhythms and melodies to fit the words. They work in groups and perform their melodies accurately for the class. Year 5 pupils confidently play instruments following symbols on a graphic score on the board. Pupils are very responsive, listen carefully and play loudly or softly as directed by the teacher. Pupils also join in with African 'call and response' songs. The teacher

explains the need for phonetic spelling in order to pronounce the words correctly. Asked to sing along with a tape pupils do so with enthusiasm. Their singing is tuneful and they quickly pick up the rhythm and pronunciation. Younger pupils explore sounds to represent animal movements. The teacher produces sounds from percussion instruments and objects found in the classroom and the pupils' learning is effectively extended as they make connection between the sounds and the characteristics of different animals. There is good vocabulary work as pupils think of descriptive words such as *creepy*, *slithery*, *bounding* and *galloping*.

154. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are good and sometimes very good. In assembly they sing with enthusiasm and commitment. Their singing has good tone and diction.
155. A music specialist undertakes all teaching from the Nursery to Year 5 and in Year 6 teaching is the responsibility of a musically qualified class teacher. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are well planned and organised with a very strong emphasis on practical music making by the pupils. Consequently, pupils thoroughly enjoy their music lessons and are fully involved in instrumental work. Teachers have very high expectations of the pupils' work and behaviour to which pupils readily respond. Lessons include opportunities to work in groups and pupils They collaborate well in pairs or groups and are anxious to succeed. They handle instruments with great care and put them down when they are not playing them.
156. Management of the subject is good. Planning is reviewed, ensuring a good balance in lessons, including all aspects of the National Curriculum, and pupils' skills of composing and performing, listening and appraising are well developed. The subject manager leads by example giving up time to teach violin and keyboard.
157. Music makes a good contribution to pupils' multicultural development. There is a good range of resources including ethnic instruments. The school choir rehearses regularly and performs in assemblies as well as the Christmas and Easter services in church. All Year 6 pupils participate in an annual summer production which is well supported by parents and friends. Pupils attended a performance by African drummers. Musicians from a folk group, the Wigan Music Service and the Halle Orchestra have enriched the curriculum in school.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

158. Standards in Year 2 are the same as identified in the last inspection and are as expected for pupils' ages. Achievement in the infants is satisfactory. Achievement is good in the juniors because several teachers have a personal interest and flair for the subject. They share their enthusiasm with the pupils and as a result, standards are above average. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning through English as an additional language benefit from opportunities to work with a partner or in a group and so make the same progress as their peers. Improvement has been brought about by:
  - more detailed planning guidelines;
  - assessment at the end of a unit of work and a check list of skills so teachers are more aware of the ability of the pupils;
  - very effective leadership brought about by involvement in a sports co-ordinator project organised by the local authority which has enabled the co-ordinator to have time to develop close links with other schools and improve overall management skills;
  - the exceptional richness of the curriculum with 47 different extra activities to capture pupils' interest.These changes have led to the school being awarded the nationally recognised Activemark for its strong commitment to promoting the benefits of physical activity.

159. In Year 2, pupils have satisfactory control of their movements when jogging and jumping. They change direction to make different pathways, taking care to use space carefully and avoid each other. Pupils are beginning to combine their actions and find ways of linking movement to a roll on the floor. They do not always give enough attention to instructions and few suggest improvements to their performance. In a games lesson in Year 2 pupils recognise different ways to throw a bean bag and most are confident catching it because they move and keep a close eye on the bean bag. A few find the task too easy and do not give of their best. No dance was seen in Year 2. However, the pupils in Year 1 recognise they can represent a story in movement and enjoyed interpreting parts of the story of the *Three Billy Goats Gruff*.
160. In Year 6, pupils experience a wider range of games. They understand basic tactics and pupils in Year 4 had invented their own game with a clear set of rules and an interesting approach to scoring goals. As the goalkeeper was the only player who could score a goal a lot of collaboration and passing had to take place if the team was to be successful. Pupils in Year 6 were being introduced to tennis and quickly learnt how to grip the racquet because of effective teacher demonstration. They have good hand and eye co-ordination and move quickly to be in the correct position to hit the ball, and many maintain a lengthy rally of accurate passes. Pupils' demonstrations are used effectively to develop pupils' skills of evaluation. They give due attention to the performance of others and suggest altering the grip or not hitting the ball too hard. This skill of analysis was also seen in dance in Year 5 and pupils suggested how movements could be more varied to give a truer reflection of the action of a ball in a tennis lesson.
161. Currently almost all pupils in Year 6 can swim and are moving on to improving their style and other skills. Approximately 19 pupils are just starting to swim and another term of lessons is planned to help them improve.
162. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in the infants and good in the juniors. All teachers plan carefully so that lessons run smoothly. Pupils understand that exercise is beneficial for them because teachers make this clear in the lively warm-up activities that start lessons. Relationships are good and in most lessons behaviour is good. When interest wanes it is because the pace slows and the lack of variety fails to capture pupils' enthusiasm. This was not the case in the lessons seen in the juniors when the pace was brisk and new skills were introduced that challenged the pupils who persevered to improve. Demonstrations are used effectively to show skills but not all teachers allow pupils to practise after a demonstration and so they are not as effective as they could be.
163. Management of the subject is very good. The subject co-ordinator leads by example sharing enthusiasm and advice with other staff. Teachers have shared good practice by observing each other's lessons. More formal observation is planned for the near future so that a clearer picture of overall standards and areas for development can be obtained.
164. Many teachers give generously of their time to provide an excellent range of activities for pupils after school. These include competitive games against other schools as well as the popular gymnastics club. Numerous links are established with local clubs and professional coaches so that talented pupils especially can make good progress in their identified skill. These activities promote pupils' moral and social skills as they learn the need for fair play and the importance of playing as part of a team. Dance includes opportunities to learn about other cultures and the school has taken part in a local multi-cultural dance festival.