

INSPECTION REPORT

**LOWTON ST MARY'S C of E (VA) PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Lowton, Warrington

LEA area: Wigan

Unique reference number: 106486

Headteacher: Mrs L C Baker

Reporting inspector: D S Roberts
1743

Dates of inspection: 11 – 14 November 2002

Inspection number: 246600

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

© Crown copyright 2002

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary with Nursery unit

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Newton Road
Lowton
Warrington

Postcode: WA3 1EW

Telephone number: 01942 769 710

Fax number: 01942 769 710

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs E Smith

Date of previous inspection: September 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1743	D S Roberts	Registered inspector	English Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology	What sort of school is it? School's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19669	F Kennedy	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
17913	B Frost	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
17767	S Power	Team inspector	Science Geography History Education Inclusion	

7222	A Watson	Team inspector	Music Special educational needs English as an additional language	
------	----------	----------------	---	--

The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia School Inspection Services

Strathblane House
Ashfield Road
Cheadle
Stockport
SK8 1BB

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	12
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	15
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	20
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	22
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	23
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	26
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	27
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	32

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Lowton St Mary's Church of England Primary School is situated in the village of Lowton in the Wigan Local Education Authority. The majority of pupils come from the local parish of St Mary's, and the number on roll is currently above the average for primary schools. At present, the school provides full-time education for 238 pupils ranging from four to 11 years of age, and part-time education for a further 74 children in Nursery classes. The proportion of pupils entitled to receive free school meals is similar to the national average. The attainment levels of children entering the Nursery classes, at the Foundation Stage, are also similar to those found nationally. Currently, 18 per cent of the pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs, which is below the national average. Nine pupils have specific learning needs, which require external as well as additional school support. At present, 13 pupils are from families belonging to minority ethnic groups. Nearly three per cent of the pupils on roll speak English as an additional language, which is a little higher than found in most schools.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school, which has made considerable progress since the last inspection. It takes good care of its pupils and places strong emphasis on their personal and social development. The teaching is predominantly good and sometimes of high quality, and is particularly effective in promoting the development of literacy and numeracy skills. Although overall standards in science are satisfactory, many pupils are capable of making better progress in developing their skills in scientific enquiry. The headteacher, governors and staff work hard to create a welcoming atmosphere, where the Christian ethos is strongly emphasised. The school is led and managed very effectively, and provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Children are given a good start to their education at the Foundation Stage, in Nursery and Reception classes.
- The school enables its pupils to achieve high standards of literacy and good standards of numeracy.
- The teaching is predominantly good and sometimes of high quality.
- Very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs.
- The school is highly successful in promoting the pupils' spiritual and moral development.
- The quality of leadership and management is very good.

What could be improved

- Improve pupils' skills in the aspect of science concerned with scientific enquiry.
- Achieve greater consistency in standards of pupils' handwriting and presentation of work which, although good in most year groups, are unsatisfactory in some classes.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good progress since the last inspection in 2000, which found underachievement by many of the potentially high attaining pupils. During the four years up to 2002 the school's rate of improvement has kept pace with the national picture.

Improved planning, which makes more specific provision for pupils at different levels of a ability, and continuing improvement in the quality of teaching, have contributed significantly towards raising standards. The proportion of teaching judged to be of at least good quality has increased from 49 per cent, in the 2000 inspection, to over 80 per cent in the current inspection.

Nearly all of the weaknesses identified in the last inspection report have been addressed very effectively. Standards of reading in classes for pupils in Years 1 and 2 are greatly improved and are now above

average for the pupils' age. Standards in information and communication (ICT), previously described as unsatisfactory, are now appropriate for pupils' age. Throughout the school, a substantial number of higher attaining pupils now achieve standards which are above those expected for their age in English and mathematics. Very good arrangements have been established for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress, as well as effective procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and the curriculum. Improving the skills of pupils in scientific enquiry remains a priority for the school. The school is well placed to continue improving by building on its many strengths and addressing the areas for improvement identified in this report.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A	A	A	A
Mathematics	C	A	B	B
Science	D	B	C	C

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

The table shows that in the Year 2002 the pupils' performance was well above the average for all and similar schools in English, above average for both categories in mathematics, and similar to the average for both in science.

Inspection evidence indicates that children at the Foundation Stage, in the Nursery and Reception classes, make good progress and most achieve the early learning goals in all areas of the curriculum before entering Year 1. By the age of seven, pupils achieve standards which are above average for their age in speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematics, and appropriate standards for their age in science. This is a broadly similar picture to the most recent National Curriculum test results in English and mathematics.

Inspection evidence indicates that, by the age of 11, pupils achieve standards which are well above average in English, and above average in mathematics. Standards in science are appropriate for the pupils' age, but the skills of many pupils in scientific enquiry are underdeveloped. Although pupils achieve appropriate standards in handwriting and presentation of their work by the end of their time in the school, this is not an entirely consistent feature throughout the school. In a minority of classes, standards in both of these aspects of their work are unsatisfactory. Throughout the school pupils achieve at least appropriate standards for their age in all other subjects. In physical education, nearly all of pupils swim at least 25 metres unaided, before leaving the school at the end of Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets identified in their individual education plans.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils demonstrate very good attitudes towards the school. They show interest and enthusiasm and are keen to take part in all activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Overall, behaviour is of a good standard. The behaviour of Year 6 pupils is consistently of a high standard. There is excellent behaviour at the swimming baths. Noise levels are sometimes too high in the open-plan classes at Key Stage 2 and in the dining room.
Personal development and relationships	Overall good, and very good in Year 6. Pupils show an increasingly mature sense of responsibility when working independently and in groups. They show respect for other pupils' values and beliefs.
Attendance	Good, above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Under 5	5 – 7 years	7 – 11 years
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.

Throughout the school, the teaching is predominantly good and sometimes of high quality. The good teaching of children at the Foundation Stage, in the Nursery and Reception classes, helps them to settle quickly and make good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of the curriculum. From Year 1 to Year 6, the teaching is very good in English, promoting high standards of literacy, and good in mathematics, enabling pupils to make good progress in extending their numeracy skills. Good teaching in ICT has contributed significantly to improved standards since the last inspection. Other subjects are generally taught effectively, enabling pupils to make at least satisfactory progress. In science, however, teachers are sometimes insecure in promoting the development of pupils' skills in scientific enquiry. In a minority of classes, teachers are too willing to accept untidy handwriting and poor standards of presentation of work by the pupils. Throughout the school, the high standard of provision made by teachers and support staff for pupils with special educational needs is a strong feature in the teaching, which enables pupils in this category to make good progress towards the targets identified in their individual education plans. Teachers also work hard to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met appropriately in terms of gender, race, background and ability, and that all pupils are involved in and extended by work in all aspects of the curriculum.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a good curriculum for children at all stages of their education. Promotion of literacy and numeracy skills is strongly emphasised. Limited classroom space continues to present problems for teachers in organising practical work, at Key Stage 2, such as science investigations and three-dimensional work in art and design.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good provision throughout the school. The work of support staff has a very positive effect on pupils' progress. Specific and measurable targets in individual education plans help to support pupils' progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good provision is made in classrooms by teachers and support staff. When necessary, the school is able to draw on specialist support by the local education authority.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. Provision for pupils' spiritual and social development is particularly strong.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are very good procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' academic and personal development. Good procedures are in place for ensuring child protection and pupils' welfare.

A good partnership has been developed with parents, the great majority of whom would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The quality of leadership and management is very good. The headteacher and acting deputy headteacher work together very effectively and liaise closely with the governing body to provide clear direction for the work of the school. They are well supported by the senior management team, subject co-ordinators and all staff. These are important factors in creating a purposeful and positive ethos for learning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors successfully ensure that all statutory requirements are met appropriately.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good use is made of local and national comparative information to evaluate performance and set targets for improvement in English and mathematics which are appropriately challenging.
The strategic use of resources	Money is spent wisely on relevant educational priorities. All resources are managed very efficiently. The school is appropriately staffed and well resourced and governors apply best value principles effectively. Governors have recently received confirmation that a building programme to extend the accommodation will commence in 2003.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The children like school. • The children make good progress. • The school is helping the children to become mature and responsible. • Parents would feel comfortable in approaching the school with questions and problems. • School expects their children to work hard and achieve their best. 	<p>A significant minority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • would like the school to work more closely with them; • would like more information about their children's progress; • feel that their children do not received the right amount of homework.

The inspectors agree with parents' positive views about the school. They find that the school has good procedures for keeping parents informed about pupils' progress and effective arrangements for working closely with parents. Arrangements for homework are generally good, but there are some inconsistencies in the setting of homework in some classes.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- 1 The attainment levels of children on entry to the Nursery classes, at the Foundation Stage, are generally similar to those found nationally. Most pupils, at all levels of attainment, make good and at times very good progress during their time in the school, and by the time they reach the end of Year 6, overall standards in the key areas of learning are above the national expectations.
- 2 Inspection findings indicate that children at the Foundation Stage, in the Nursery and Reception classes, generally make good progress and achieve the early learning goals in all areas of the curriculum by the time they enter Year 1.
- 3 Inspection findings for the end Key Stage 1, when pupils are in Year 2, indicate that standards in speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematics are above those found nationally. In science, pupils achieve standards which are appropriate for their age. This picture is consistent with recent National Curriculum test results, which showed overall standards at Key Stage 1 to be above the national average and the average for similar schools.
- 4 Inspection findings for the end of Key Stage 2, when pupils are in Year 6, indicate that standards are well above the average found nationally in English, and above average in mathematics. Standards in science are appropriate for the pupils' age. Again, this is consistent with the recent National Curriculum test results, which showed standards in English to be well above all and similar schools, standards in mathematics to be above all and similar schools, and standards in science to be similar to the average for both categories.
- 5 Key Stage 2 national test results for the four years up to 2002, indicate a rate of improvement in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, which is in line with the national trend. During the same period there was no significant variations in pupils' performance in terms of gender in English and mathematics, but girls did outperform boys by a significant margin in science. The school has identified this as an issue for careful monitoring.
- 6 In English, the great majority of pupils, at both key stages, make good progress in speaking and listening. By the time they are in Year 6 they use their skills very effectively to express ideas and offer answers to questions asked by their teachers. Their increasing ability to vary expression, in order to engage the listener, and to pay close attention to what others say, are strong features in their learning. Throughout the school, pupils make very good progress in extending their skills in reading and, by the end of Year 6, reach standards which are generally above the levels expected for their age. Younger pupils acquire a good understanding of phonics and key words, and this helps most to become competent readers. By Year 6, most read confidently with good expression, and many higher attaining pupils read challenging books and talk enthusiastically about events and characters in the stories they have read. They demonstrate a real love of reading and a growing interest in the great works of literature.
- 7 In writing, pupils throughout the school make very good progress. By Year 2, standards are above average, and by Year 6 pupils achieve standards which are well

above the average for their age. Year 6 pupils make very good use of new skills acquired during literacy lessons to write in an interesting way for a variety of purposes. Most use an adventurous vocabulary in an imaginative and interesting way and demonstrate accurate spelling and an increasing range of punctuation. Standards of handwriting and presentation are good in most lessons, but this is not an entirely consistent feature in all classes. In Year 4, in particular, pupils are capable of achieving considerably better standards in these aspects of their work.

- 8 In mathematics, pupils at all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in developing their numeracy skills at Key Stage 1. They count reliably and read, write and order numbers to a 100 with increasing accuracy and confidence. They demonstrate a good grasp of number bonds and appropriate tables and show a good understanding of place value. By Year 6, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the extension of the number system. This is reflected in their grasp of negative numbers and in their knowledge of the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages. Pupils make good progress in work on shape, space and measures. Year 6 pupils make accurate use of relevant terminology to describe the properties of two and three dimensional shapes. In work on handling data, older pupils show a good understanding of the use of measures of average, and make accurate use of terms such as "mode", "median", "mean" and "range" in relevant problem solving contexts.
- 9 In science, pupils at all levels of ability make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment. Those with special educational needs make good progress due to the additional support provided by classroom assistants. By the age of 11, most achieve standards which are at least appropriate, and some exceed expectations for their age in acquiring scientific knowledge. They demonstrate this knowledge in their studies of life processes and living things, materials and their properties and the physical processes. However, they make slower and sometimes unsatisfactory progress in developing the skills involved in scientific enquiry, mainly due to the way in which this aspect of science is taught.
- 10 In information and communication technology (ICT), standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are appropriate for the pupils' age and significantly better than at the time of the last inspection. The pupils benefit from a well planned curriculum, good teaching and regular access to computers in the computer suite.
- 11 Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. They benefit greatly from the setting of work which is appropriately challenging, and from the very good levels of support which they receive from class teachers and support staff. Good arrangements are in place to identify and support particularly gifted pupils, which help pupils in this category to work towards their potential.
- 12 The school's determination to meet the particular needs of all pupils in terms of gender, race, background and ability, enables those in all of these categories to make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. The progress of pupils for whom English is an additional language is monitored carefully, and class teachers and support staff provide valuable support to enable these pupils to make good progress.
- 13 Throughout the school, pupils achieve standards which are at least appropriate for their age in all other subjects. In physical education, nearly all pupils are able to swim 25 metres or more unaided, before leaving the school at the end of Year 6.

- 14 By the time pupils reach the end of Year 6, standards of literacy are high and numeracy standards are above those expected for pupils' age. Throughout the school, the successful implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy has a very positive impact on pupils' achievements.
- 15 The governors set appropriately challenging targets for improvements in English and mathematics for future years, which take full account of the varying ability levels of different cohorts of pupils.
- 16 Since the last inspection, the school has made good progress in raising standards. This is particularly reflected in the performance of higher attaining pupils. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 5 in National Curriculum tests has increased considerably in English, mathematics and science. In addition, the school has been able to raise significantly the standards achieved by pupils in ICT, and enable pupils to achieve appropriate standards for their age in all subjects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 17 The pupils demonstrate very good attitudes towards the school and this has a positive effect on their learning. Throughout the school, overall standards of behaviour are good. During the inspection there were examples of high standards of behaviour in lessons, in assembly and during a Year 5 visit to the swimming baths. There have been no exclusions during the past year.
- 18 Relationships throughout the school are good. The pupils enjoy school and are very enthusiastic about all school activities. Almost all of the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire are of the opinion that their children like school. The pupils' enthusiasm for school is reflected in their record of attendance, which is consistently good and above the national average for primary schools. Most absence is due to illness and the rate of unauthorised absence is below that found nationally. Punctuality has shown good improvement since the last inspection. The vast majority of the pupils now arrive on time in the mornings and the school day starts promptly.
- 19 Behaviour in lessons is generally good and sometimes of a high standard, particularly in Year 6. There are some instances, however, when a minority of pupils lose concentration and this contributes to the raising of noise levels. This is most evident during lessons in the open-plan area at Key Stage 2. The pupils' willingness to work co-operatively with a partner or as part of a group is a very good feature in their learning. They readily support one another and are sensible in sharing resources. This is often evident during work in ICT, when the pupils work in pairs at computer workstations. They demonstrate very good social skills in the way in which they help each other to make good progress during lessons.
- 20 During the inspection there were many occasions when the teaching engendered a spiritual response from the pupils. For example, in a Year 2 science lesson, the pupils worked diligently to complete a simple circuit and were filled with excitement and wonder when the bulb lit up as a result of their own efforts. In a Year 6 history lesson the pupils showed great sensitivity in the way they were able to empathise with the children who were being evacuated during World War II. They understood and were able to express how the children might be feeling on leaving their parents, to be transported out of the large cities that were potential targets for bombing raids.
- 21 Behaviour in the playground is good. The pupils are friendly and they play together amicably, helped by those pupils in Year 6 who have been trained as play leaders.

Since the last inspection the pupils have been given many more opportunities to take responsibility. Year 6 pupils set a very good example to the rest of the school, both in their general conduct and in the way in which they carry out their duties as monitors. These include staffing the school office at lunch time and tending the school garden. A 'Buddy' system operates successfully, giving Year 6 pupils opportunities for carrying responsibility and giving the Reception children a sense of security during their first year in school. Throughout the school, the pupils are keen to accept responsibility and gladly act as class monitors, with jobs such as returning registers to the office, marking team points on the wall chart and helping to collect in resources at the end of the lesson.

- 22 Pupils from Year 2 upwards represent their classes on the school council, which establishes the 'Golden Rules' for good behaviour and which gives all the pupils the chance to contribute to school improvement. A committee of representatives from Years 4, 5 and 6 meets regularly with the chair of the Parent Teacher Association, to put forward the pupils' ideas for social and fund raising events. The pupils' on-going and enthusiastic support for various charities contributes significantly to their personal and social development, extends their understanding of citizenship and reinforces Christian principles of caring and sharing.
- 23 The pupils usually move around the school in an orderly manner, for example when coming into the building in the morning and when moving from their classrooms to the hall for assembly. However, there are some occasions, especially where space is very limited, as in the older pupils' cloakroom areas, when standards of behaviour are less consistent, and some of the pupils show insufficient consideration for others. Although pupils' behaviour in the dining room is usually good, the noise levels are sometimes too high.
- 24 The pupils are very welcoming to visitors and eager to open doors and give directions. They are co-operative in showing visitors their books and explaining the work they are doing. The respect they have for school property is evident in all areas of the building and grounds, which are clean and tidy and entirely free from litter. Pupils throughout the school have a good awareness of environmental issues, as exemplified by the work of the Eco committee on which all year groups, including Reception, are represented. The committee is currently focusing on ways of conserving water and energy and has displayed colourful posters around the school to remind everyone to switch off lights and turn off taps. They are considering ways of avoiding waste of natural resources and have displayed posters in the ICT suite encouraging pupils to print only where necessary.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

- 25 The quality of teaching and learning is predominantly good and sometimes of high quality. The teaching in 80 per cent of the lessons observed was judged to be at least good. In 25 per cent of lessons, the teaching was very good or better. Just under two per cent of the teaching was unsatisfactory. Throughout the school, there is a close match between the quality of teaching and learning.
- 26 The quality of teaching for children at the Foundation Stage, in Nursery and Reception classes, is good and sometimes of high quality. All of the lessons observed were at least satisfactory, over 90 per cent were good or better, and 20 per cent were of high quality. High priority is given to promoting the children's personal, social and emotional development. This helps children to settle quickly, develop confidence in expressing themselves and learn to work sensibly and happily with others. As they progress from Nursery to Reception classes, children take increasing advantage of the range of learning opportunities presented to them and contribute with growing confidence during whole-group sessions. The teaching promotes good progress by the children in all areas of learning and contributes significantly towards the good start which they make to their education.
- 27 At Key Stage 1, in classes for pupils in Year 1 and Year 2, the quality of teaching is generally good. All of the lessons observed were judged to be at least satisfactory, nearly 90 per cent were good and over 25 per cent of high quality. Teaching in Year 1 is often of high quality, giving pupils a very good grasp of the basic skills of learning.
- 28 The quality of teaching at Key Stage 2, in classes for pupils in Years 3 to 6, is also generally good. In 70 per cent of lessons the teaching was at least good and it was of high quality in 27 per cent of lessons. Teaching in Year 6 is often of high quality, contributing significantly towards the personal and social as well as academic development of the pupils.
- 29 Throughout the school, the teaching is highly successful in promoting the development of literacy skills, which are well above average for their age by the time pupils reach the end of Key Stage 2. Good teaching enables pupils to make good progress in developing numeracy skills and achieve above average standards during their time in the school. The successful implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy has contributed greatly towards improvements in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. In most classes, good use is made of homework to consolidate and extend pupils' literacy skills.
- 30 In English, the quality of teaching is generally very good throughout the school. Nearly 90 per cent of lessons were at least good and close to 60 per cent were of high quality. Lessons are planned very carefully to meet the needs of pupils at all levels of attainment. Teachers have a very secure knowledge of the subject and a good understanding of how pupils learn. Class teachers and support staff co-operate very effectively to make very good provision for pupils with special educational needs, which enables pupils to make good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. Teaching and support staff also make good provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language. Their needs are carefully analysed and the school draws on external specialist support when necessary.
- 31 Very skilful teaching in Year 1 helps to give pupils a good grasp of the sounds which make up words, and this contributes towards their rapid progress in reading and

writing. At the other end of the school, high quality teaching of English in Year 6 promotes a strong interest by pupils in literature, and creates many opportunities for pupils to apply their increasing language skills in real life situations. All aspects of reading and writing are taught very effectively in most classes, and the very good work of teachers in Years 5 and 6 enables pupils to develop fluent and neat handwriting and good standards of presentation of their work. However, in a minority of classes, particularly in Year 4, insufficient emphasis is placed on the importance of these aspects of English and this contributes towards unsatisfactory standards of handwriting and presentation of work by the pupils.

- 32 The teaching of mathematics is generally of good quality. All of the lessons observed were at least satisfactory, 71 per cent were good and nearly 30 per cent very good. Lessons are well planned and present an appropriate degree of challenge to pupils at all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs. The good support provided by classroom assistants is a significant factor in supporting the pupils' learning. Throughout the school, the teaching is generally bright and lively. Group-work is well managed and the pupils put much intellectual effort into their work. Well organised lessons help the pupils to acquire appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding of mathematics. They are interested in their work and generally concentrate hard on the tasks they are set.
- 33 In science, the quality of teaching is generally satisfactory at both key stages. Throughout the school, the teaching is most successful in helping pupils to extend their scientific knowledge, enabling them to make particularly good progress in this aspect of science. Although the most effective teaching is equally successful in promoting the development of pupils' enquiry skills, this is not a consistent feature throughout the school. In too many lessons the scientific purpose of proposed investigations is not made sufficiently clear, and lessons are not organised appropriately to allow all pupils to engage fully in each stage of the investigation process. This means that pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable in this important aspect of the work in science. Throughout the school, teachers and support staff work hard to support pupils at all levels of ability, and strong emphasis is placed on assessing and recording pupils' progress. In a minority of lessons, teachers' expectations of pupils in terms of standards of presentation of work are low, and this is reflected in the untidy work which pupils produce.
- 34 In information and communication technology (ICT), the quality of teaching is consistently good. All of the lessons observed were good. This enables pupils to make consistently good progress during their time in the school. This represents considerable progress since the last inspection, when teaching of ICT was judged to be unsatisfactory. Teachers are increasingly confident and secure in their subject knowledge. Pupils are challenged effectively by the tasks in which they engage. They make confident use of the good facilities available in the ICT suite, and achieve standards which are appropriate for their age by the time they reach the end of Year 6.
- 35 Throughout the school and across the curriculum, teachers work hard and effectively to make good provision for pupils at all levels of attainment. They respond quickly to the different needs of pupils in terms of gender, race, background and ability. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school. The effective co-operation between teachers and support staff is a strong feature which helps to promote good progress by pupils in this category. The work of all staff is guided effectively by good quality individual education plans. This enables the pupils to work systematically towards the realistic and manageable targets set for them.

- 36 In other subjects, tasks are pitched at an appropriate level to challenge pupils, and opportunities are generally taken effectively to extend literacy and numeracy skills. In art and design, music and design and technology, the teaching promotes successfully the pupils' creative development. At both key stages, the teaching of physical education is generally effective in helping most pupils to make steady progress in their physical development. Swimming is taught very effectively, enabling nearly all pupils to swim at least 25 metres unaided, before leaving the school at the end of Year 6. In most classes, homework is generally used effectively to extend pupils' learning, particularly in English and mathematics, but there is some inconsistency in the setting of homework in some classes.
- 37 The school has made significant progress in improving the quality of teaching since the last full inspection in 2000. The proportion of lessons judged to be good or better has increased from 49 per cent, in the last inspection, to over 80 per cent. High quality leadership by the headteacher and senior management team, hard work by all staff, and the successful implementation of initiatives, such as the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, have contributed greatly towards better quality teaching throughout the school.

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

- 38 The school provides a good quality curriculum for children at the Foundation Stage in the Nursery and Reception classes. It is based appropriately on the nationally agreed programme of learning. The work is planned effectively to support the children's progress towards the early learning goals for each area of learning.
- 39 The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 is also of good quality and, in most respects, is broad, balanced and relevant. However, at Key Stage 2, in classes for pupils in Years 3 to 6, the quality and range of learning opportunities in art is restricted by the lack of floor space. The lack of space also imposes some limitations on the organisation of learning activities in scientific enquiry.
- 40 Since the last inspection the school has established a well resourced computer suite and has greatly increased the number and quality of computers throughout the school. As a result, the pupils now have many more opportunities to develop their ICT skills through interesting and relevant learning experiences. In addition, the school is successful in providing increased opportunities for the pupils to be involved in activities to develop their investigative skills in mathematics. Improvements have also occurred in the implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. In particular, much greater focus is given to the development of the pupils' mental skills during numeracy lessons.
- 41 The school provides the pupils with a well balanced programme of extra-curricular activities which are popular and well attended. For example, during the inspection a group of older pupils were taken to the local football stadium to take part in a football competition against neighbouring schools. The pupils also have opportunities to take part in residential experiences in this country and abroad. The school provides the pupils with a variety of opportunities to benefit from the expertise of visitors to the school. For example, an African dance group performed in the school hall and, at another time, the pupils took part in an eight week Samba dance programme.
- 42 The school makes very good overall provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social

and cultural development, and has continued to improve provision since the time of the last inspection. Strong commitment to promoting the all-round development of every pupil is evident throughout the curriculum and in all aspects of school life. The pupils' spiritual development is promoted very successfully through assemblies, services in church, lessons and time for quiet reflection in class. Christian principles and values are central to acts of worship. For example, in an act of collective worship which had as its theme 'Peace in the World', a calm and spiritual atmosphere was evoked when the pupils from Year 6 led the assembly in prayer, with very meaningful prayers they had written themselves in class. Lessons provide many experiences that contribute significantly to the pupils' spiritual development and enhance the quality of their learning. For example, in a Year 1 history lesson, the pupils were fascinated by toys from the past and filled with awe when they were allowed to examine them and encouraged to think about how they compare with the toys of today. In a Year 1 and 2 music lesson, a sense of wonder was created when the pupils heard their own compositions being played on an electronic keyboard by a visiting musician.

- 43 The school makes good provision for the pupils' moral development. A well thought out behaviour policy is applied consistently by staff, and provides an effective framework for encouraging and rewarding positive attitudes and behaviour. The 'Golden Rules' for good behaviour are negotiated by the pupils themselves, through the school council. These are attractively displayed throughout the school. They are useful reminders of the importance of showing care and consideration for one another and respect for school property. The pupils benefit from the good role models provided by the adults working in the school and by the parents and friends of the school who help regularly in classrooms. Pupils are encouraged to have an appreciation for the natural world. All year groups are represented on the Eco-Committee which meets formally, once a month, to discuss ways in which the school can work towards protecting the environment. A working party meets each week, at lunchtime, to put into practice some of the ideas put forward by their peers. During the inspection, the pupils in the working party were designing very colourful posters, aimed at encouraging staff and pupils to save energy and water and to be economical in the use of paper.
- 44 The school makes very good provision for the pupils' social development. Throughout the school, the pupils have many opportunities in lessons to work co-operatively and to consider the thoughts and feelings of others. The school council gives pupils the opportunity to express their views and contribute to school improvement. Pupils of all ages take responsibility as class monitors, with duties such as returning class registers to the office, giving out books and collecting in resources. Opportunities for taking responsibility increase as pupils move through the school. The Year 6 pupils are given a great deal of responsibility, appropriate for their age. They act as play leaders in the playground and support younger children through the 'Buddy' system, which provides young pupils with a 'buddy' or friend to whom they can relate. Older pupils carry out duties such as staffing the school office at lunchtime and tending the school garden.
- 45 The school makes good provision for the pupils' cultural development. History lessons provide the pupils with an insight into the significance of ancient cultures and the impact of these on present day life. As part of the work on the Romans and the Egyptians, representatives from Liverpool's archaeological service visited the school recently to talk to pupils in Year 3 and Year 5 and show them interesting artefacts related to these ancient civilisations. Pupils learn about their own cultural heritage in history. In a Year 5 lesson, for example, the pupils were studying the Victorians and comparing the lives of rich and poor children in that era with the lifestyle of children in

Britain today. Through religious education, the pupils are given good opportunities to learn about other faiths and cultures that are part of their own multicultural society. Literacy lessons are used effectively to introduce the pupils to traditional tales from their own and other cultures. A well planned programme of educational visits and the many visitors who come into school, for example theatre groups, authors and musicians, provide the pupils with valuable learning experiences and make a good contribution to their cultural development.

- 46 The governing body's policy for equal opportunities is fully implemented throughout the school and monitored closely by the headteacher. The school works hard and successfully to include and involve pupils of all abilities and from all social and ethnic backgrounds. Appropriate steps are taken to ensure that boys and girls are treated fairly and given equal opportunity in all aspects of school life. The school is currently looking closely at provision in science, where the performance of girls in national tests has been significantly better than that of boys. Inspection findings indicate that although overall provision for boys and girls in the subject is equal, the way in which investigative and experimental work is organised in a minority of classes disadvantages some pupils. The school has taken positive steps to overcome traditional gender roles by ensuring that girls and boys are able to access the full range of curricular and extra-curricular activities. Library books and learning resources are checked to ensure that they give positive messages about gender, race and culture. Care is taken to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are able to participate and benefit from the full range of school activities. Good provision is made by class teachers and support staff for pupils for whom English is an additional language, and the school is able to draw on specialist support staff from the local education authority, when necessary.
- 47 At both key stages the school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. The co-ordinator works effectively with teachers to provide well focused individual education plans with manageable and achievable targets. Plans are of good quality and kept under regular review. Teachers and classroom assistants use them in lessons to provide work at a suitable level for the pupils with special educational needs. Pupils' files are well maintained with thorough and regular updating of records of all aspects of work. Reviews of progress and meetings with parents are clearly documented. Classroom assistants provide effective support for pupils in this category.
- 48 The school is successful in promoting the pupils' personal and social education. A well conceived health education programme is taught in all classes. This gives appropriate attention to sex education and the dangers of drug misuse. The pupils are taught essential facts and provided with the necessary skills to make informed choices now and in the future. The school nurse provides valuable support in this respect and visits the school regularly.
- 49 Good links have been established with the parish and local community, although at present the church is awaiting the appointment of a new vicar. The school also has good links with the local secondary school to which most of the pupils transfer. Good induction procedures are well established and help to make the process of transfer a positive experience for the pupils. In addition, a number of local colleges liaise with the school and send groups of students regularly to work with the pupils in their classes.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 50 The overall level of care provided by the school for its pupils is good and shows

marked improvement since the last inspection. Highly effective procedures have been introduced to monitor the pupils' academic and personal development. Although effective child protection procedures have been established, the significant improvements in care made since the last inspection have yet to be consolidated in an updated policy document.

- 51 The school nurse gives very good support to the school in matters concerning the health and general welfare of the pupils. She liaises closely with the educational welfare officer, who also provides strong support for the work of the school in following up concerns about poor attendance and lateness. Arrangements for monitoring and improving attendance and punctuality are now good. Formal monitoring systems have been introduced since the last inspection and individual and whole class rewards now provide good incentives for the pupils to attend school regularly, to arrive on time and to remember to bring with them all the equipment they will need for the day's lessons, for example their physical education kit.
- 52 Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good. A carefully planned programme of statutory and non-statutory tests are set throughout the school. The results are analysed carefully, and used effectively to track pupils' progress and set appropriate targets for future attainment. Targets for improvement in literacy and numeracy are set for individual pupils and shared with parents. These have a positive effect on pupils' progress. Teachers' marking is generally constructive in recognising what pupils have attained and setting appropriate new challenges. However, there is scope for the marking of pupils' work, by a minority of the teaching staff, to communicate higher expectations to pupils in terms of handwriting and standards of presentation. Throughout the school, the very good use made of information gathered from the assessment of pupils' work to inform the next stage of teaching and learning is a strong feature in the assessment arrangements. Very effective procedures are in place for monitoring and recording pupils' progress in all subjects.
- 53 Procedures for monitoring and supporting the pupils' personal development are very good. There is now a properly co-ordinated approach to implementing the whole-school personal, social and health education programme of study. High priority is given to developing a sense of personal responsibility for their own health, in the pupils. They are strongly encouraged to eat healthily and to develop a healthy lifestyle. Strong emphasis is placed on the importance of good teamwork, and pupils are taught the principles of good citizenship. Pupils are given many opportunities, appropriate for their age, to take responsibility inside school and to reach out to the wider community through fund raising activities for local and national charities. The importance of caring for the natural world is emphasised in many aspects of school life. The Eco-Committee was set up in September, to co-ordinate the pupils' ideas for conserving the Earth's resources. The very wide range of extra curricular activities available to the pupils and a carefully planned programme of educational visits, make a significant contribution to their personal and social development. Residential visits to the Kingswood Outdoor Pursuits Centre provide pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 with valuable opportunities to gain independence, develop leadership skills and work co-operatively with others as part of a team. Teachers now keep detailed and accurate records of pupils' personal development which enable senior managers to track individuals' progress as they move through the school.
- 54 The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting positive behaviour and for eliminating oppressive behaviour are good. Since the last inspection, whole school behaviour and anti-bullying policies have been implemented and there is now a well

thought out system of rewards and sanctions which is reviewed by the school council at the beginning of the school year. The school receives very good support from the local education authority's behaviour support team. Highly skilled personnel come into school, when necessary, to work with the pupils and to help staff develop the strategies they need to manage the pupils' behaviour effectively, in a positive way, and to promote the pupils' personal and social development by encouraging positive attitudes and good teamwork.

- 55 The induction arrangements for children entering the Nursery and Reception classes, which were praised in the last inspection report, are entirely appropriate and conducive to ensuring a smooth transition from home to school and from Nursery to Reception. This helps the children to settle quickly and happily into the Foundation Stage of their education. A 'worry box', situated in the foyer, can be used by pupils to make any worries known to the headteacher and staff. This is a good example of how the school works hard to ensure that the pupils are happy in school. The 'bus stop' scheme, which was praised by parents at the pre-inspection meeting with inspectors, is a good example of how the school encourages the pupils to be sensitive to the needs of one another. Younger pupils wait at the 'bus stop' if they need a friend to play with.
- 56 Since the last inspection the school has documented its health and safety policy in greater detail and in line with local education authority requirements. The policy statement sets out clearly the responsibilities of key members of staff. It is the responsibility of the appointed health and safety officer to lead an inspection of the school building and grounds each year, to prepare a report on the findings and to complete a risk assessment of any identified hazards.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 57 The school has built successfully upon the strengths identified in the last inspection report. Parents and carers have positive views about the school. The questionnaire, prior to the inspection, revealed that they feel comfortable in approaching the school with problems or questions concerning their children. They also feel, very strongly, that their children like school. The vast majority are of the opinion that their children are making good progress. They consider the school is helping its pupils to become mature and responsible. Inspection findings support all these positive views. The inspection also finds that parents and carers make a good contribution to their children's learning through the home-school reading scheme and through their support for homework in general.
- 58 A significant minority of parents and carers feel that their children do not receive the right amount of homework. The inspection finds that most teachers make good use of homework to support learning and that the amount of homework which is set is similar to that in many other primary schools. However, there is scope for a more consistent approach to the setting of homework throughout the school. While the majority of parents and carers feel the school keeps them well informed in relation to their children's attainment and progress, a significant minority would like more information about their children's progress. The inspection findings are that home-school communications are good. The quality of pupils' annual written reports has shown good improvement since the last inspection. They now provide parents with detailed information about their children's attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and report on progress in all other areas of the curriculum. As well as identifying particular strengths, the reports set targets for the coming year. In addition to the annual report, which is sent to parents in the summer term, a brief

interim report is sent out in the autumn. Formal parents' evenings are held twice a year and are usually very well attended. At the first of the two meetings parents and teachers together review the targets which have been set for the coming year. At the second meeting, later in the year, progress is measured against the set targets. Parents of pupils on the register of special educational needs are appropriately involved in setting and reviewing their children's targets, in line with the new Code of Practice.

- 59 The overall quality of the information provided for parents by the school, is now good. Through the prospectus, regular correspondence and weekly newsletters, the parents and carers are kept well informed with regard to the aims of the school, special events and school policies and procedures. The governing body's annual report now meets statutory requirements. At the beginning of every term parents are given useful information about the planned curriculum and this enables them to contribute to their children's education by, for example, retrieving relevant information from the Internet or visiting places of interest linked to topic work. Parents of children at the Foundation Stage, in the Nursery and Reception classes, have daily contact with staff and receive useful booklets, before their children join the school, which explain the Nursery and Reception class routines and which provide helpful advice on how to prepare the children for starting school. Reception children's baseline results are reported to parents twice a year, in December and July.
- 60 The home-school agreement, which was introduced in 1999, is now firmly established. It sets out clearly the responsibilities of the family, the pupil and the school. Parents are given good opportunities to contribute to school improvement through the suggestion box, situated in the foyer, and through a questionnaire which is distributed to parents and carers annually. Parents' views are also canvassed, by way of a questionnaire, whenever major changes to school policies are being considered.

- 61 The parents and carers continue to give good support to the school by helping in classrooms, in the Nursery and in the main school, by assisting with educational visits and by supporting the social and fund raising events organised by the Parent Teacher Association. A recently formed 'Fix it Together' (FIT) group of parents is currently involved with a project to improve the school grounds. The family literacy and numeracy courses which the school organises are helping the parents involved to participate more fully in their children's education and, in some cases, to gain access to Further Education. The school provides crèche facilities for parents with young children who wish to take advantage of the courses offered.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 62 The quality of leadership and management provided by the headteacher and senior management team is very good. The headteacher works closely and very effectively with the governing body to provide clear vision and direction for the work of the school. They are well supported by the senior management team and a hard working staff. The high calibre of leadership and management is an important factor in the school's very good progress since the last inspection in 2000.
- 63 The increasingly purposeful involvement of governors in the work of the school has also contributed significantly towards recent improvements. Governors show a good understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. Appropriate governing body committees are in place, and they work effectively and successfully to ensure that statutory requirements are met. The careful attention given to monitoring school performance is a good feature in the work of the governing body. The headteacher provides regular information to enable governors and senior management to compare the school's performance with similar schools as well as the national picture.
- 64 The governing body seeks to secure best quality and value when purchasing resources and arranging for work to be completed. Much of this is done in conjunction with the local education authority. Since the last inspection, the successful initiative to set up and develop the computer suite provides a good illustration of the governing body's success in securing best value and quality on behalf of the school.
- 65 The school's main aims are communicated effectively to parents through the very attractive Parents' Handbook. The school sets out to: "create a warm, welcoming environment where children and staff feel safe, valued and respected; provide a broad and balanced curriculum, which allows pupils to reach their potential in all areas; develop strong links with home, church and community to support pupils' all-round development; and educate the whole-child, spiritually, morally, culturally and academically, so that they will be able to play their part fully in future society". These aims are consistently reflected in all of the school's work.
- 66 Responsibilities for co-ordinating subjects and aspects of the curriculum are shared appropriately and defined clearly. Curriculum planning is scrutinised by relevant co-ordinators in order to check balance and provision in their subjects. Senior managers maintain a careful overview to check that the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils.

- 67 The headteacher and senior management team work closely with co-ordinators. This helps to create a team approach and a strong sense of commitment to continuing improvement. Co-ordinators play an important part in producing and updating subject policies and schemes of work which help teachers to set appropriately challenging work for pupils at all levels of attainment. Their work contributes strongly towards the good quality policies and schemes of work, which are now in place for most subjects and aspects of the curriculum. The very good work of co-ordinators has helped the school to address very successfully the areas for improvements identified by the last inspection. The school is now well placed to continue improving by building on its existing strengths and addressing the weaknesses identified in this report.
- 68 The good work of the governing body contributes significantly towards the very good provision made by the school for pupils with special educational needs. The governing body is very successful in ensuring that the requirements of the Code of Practice for special educational needs are addressed successfully. Good provision is made for all pupils, ensuring that all, irrespective of gender, race, background or ability, are included and involved in all aspects of school work.
- 69 Since the last inspection very effective procedures have been established for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching. These arrangements form an important part of the school's strategy for performance management. The headteacher and acting deputy-headteacher visit classrooms regularly to evaluate teaching and the quality of curricular provision, and are sometimes supported by relevant subject co-ordinators. Criteria for evaluation are agreed with class teachers in advance. The feedback from lesson evaluations is considered during interviews with individual teachers, and personal targets for improvement are agreed for the year ahead. The standard and quality of work produced by pupils are monitored at regular intervals by the headteacher and relevant co-ordinators. Increasingly good use is made of information technology to store information and track pupils' progress.
- 70 The requirements for staff appraisal are met very effectively through the annual personal interviews, which form an important part of the school's performance management procedures. Strong emphasis is placed on the professional development of staff. Teachers, support staff and governors are given opportunities to attend relevant training, and there are appropriate procedures for supporting the induction of newly qualified teachers and staff who are new to the school.
- 71 A highly effective school improvement planning process has been established. The arrangements enable staff and governors to identify issues for development. Parents' views on various matters are sought through questionnaires and taken into account before priorities for attention are confirmed. Co-ordinators for subjects and aspects produce their own action plans, which are appropriately fed in to the main school plan. Improvement plans are well presented and include appropriate information about timescales, personnel with particular responsibilities for initiatives, cost implications and criteria for measuring success.
- 72 Very effective improvement planning means that educational priorities for attention are accurately identified, and this results in very good use of all available funding. Effective use is made of the element within the school's budget for making provision for pupils with special educational needs. The governors' finance committee liaises closely with the headteacher and local education authority's finance support service to oversee financial matters efficiently and effectively. Good use is made of information technology to monitor spending and ensure effective financial support. The most

recent audit of finance, carried out by the local education authority, found financial systems operating in the school to be sound. School administration staff are highly effective in supporting the efficient day-to-day running of the school.

- 73 Resources are managed very efficiently. The school has sufficient suitably qualified and experienced teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum for pupils at all stages of their education; they are managed and deployed very effectively. The school works hard and generally successfully to overcome the problems presented by very restricted accommodation for the large classes at Key Stage 2. Although imaginative strategies are adopted to ensure that curricular provision is not restricted, they are not entirely successful. The range and quality of learning opportunities in art and design and scientific enquiry are limited because of the lack of space. The governing body has recently been informed that a building programme to extend the accommodation is to take place in 2003. The school is well resourced and has made very good progress in improving provision for ICT since the last inspection.
- 74 Throughout the school, standards of cleaning and caretaking are high, and the quality of the internal environment is considerably enhanced by displays of pupils' work which are used effectively to celebrate pupils' achievements, support their learning and promote enquiry.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

75 In order to raise standards and the quality of work further, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

i) Improve the standard of pupils' handwriting and presentation of work in the minority of classes where standards are currently unsatisfactory by:

- * implementing a policy to achieve a consistent approach in all classes;
- * monitoring regularly;
- * providing appropriate training for staff who need additional support in promoting good standards of handwriting by their pupils.

(paragraph references: 7, 31, 33, 92, 110)

ii) Improve pupils' skills in scientific enquiry by:

- * improving the way in which scientific enquiry is currently organised and taught;
- * ensuring that all pupils are able to participate in and experience directly the key stages of the investigation process;
- * monitoring carefully to ensure appropriate progress by pupils in terms of gender and their own individual ability;
- * providing appropriate training in order to improve staff expertise and their understanding of scientific enquiry.

(paragraph references: 9, 33, 107, 109, 110, 111)

In addition to the key issues above, the following recommendations arising from areas of relative weakness should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- * Increase the range of learning opportunities for pupils at Key Stage 2 in art and design; (paragraph references: 39, 114)
- * Seek to achieve a quieter and calmer working environment by reducing noise levels in some of the open-plan classrooms and in the dining room. (paragraph references: 19, 21)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	57
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	13	31	10	1	0	0
Percentage	4	23	54	18	2	0	0

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

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)	37	238
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	n/a	27

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	42

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	8

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

National comparative data	5.6
---------------------------	-----

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	19	15	34

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	15	18
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	31	30	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (100)	88 (95)	97 (97)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	18	18
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	31	33	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (97)	97 (97)	97 (97)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	12	23	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	11	12
	Girls	21	19	22
	Total	32	30	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	91 (89)	86 (85)	97 (85)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	11	12
	Girls	21	19	22
	Total	32	30	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	91 (89)	86 (85)	97 (89)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

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

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
151	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
5	0	0
0	0	0
74	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)	9.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	163

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	106
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
----------------	---------

	£
Total income	589,738
Total expenditure	574,640
Expenditure per pupil	2,090
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	15,098

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	275
Number of questionnaires returned	105

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	42	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	46	6	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	27	60	7	2	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	21	47	14	5	13
The teaching is good.	30	54	5	0	11
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	42	16	7	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	48	48	2	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	43	45	1	1	10
The school works closely with parents.	27	49	12	5	7
The school is well led and managed.	32	48	8	1	11
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	31	62	4	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	45	10	4	14

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

76 The children at this stage are taught in two Nursery classes and two Reception classes. School records indicate that the attainment levels of children, on entry to the Nursery, are broadly in line with those found nationally.

77 Children make good progress at the Foundation Stage and most achieve the early learning goals in all areas of their learning before entering Year 1.

Personal, social and emotional development

78 This area of learning is emphasised strongly and planned carefully so that the children quickly demonstrate confidence working with adults and each other. The children settle readily into the routines of the Nursery and enjoy the experiences offered. They willingly share equipment and show patience when waiting for their turn, for example when collecting their name cards to stick on a number line during registration. All of the adults who work in the Nursery and Reception classes have a good understanding of the children's needs. Through a variety of appropriate activities, the teaching is successful in helping the children to develop a good understanding of acceptable behaviour and what is right and wrong. For example, the children in one Reception class understood the importance of walking quietly and sensibly when moving from their classroom to the computer suite. They achieved this with the minimum of fuss and showed good awareness by not disturbing others. Relationships throughout the Foundation Stage are very good. All of the adults provide good role models for the children. Staff achieve a high level of interaction with the children. As a result, the children show developing maturity when selecting and engaging in activities which demand a measure of concentration and perseverance.

Communication, language and literacy

79 The children benefit from a range of interesting and relevant experiences in this area of their learning. The children in the Nursery develop an increasing capacity to listen carefully and to respond sensibly when answering and asking questions. In all of the Foundation Stage classes, appropriate emphasis is placed on literacy. The Nursery children enjoy books and know a good repertoire of stories, rhymes and poems. They also enjoy browsing in the well organised reading area. For example, two children shared a book together. They picked it up upside down and quickly corrected its position. They understood how to turn the pages consecutively, and knew that print and pictures carry meaning. The Reception class children make good progress in reading. They can recognise a range of familiar words and understand how to link sounds to particular letters of the alphabet. Many are beginning to use their phonic knowledge to write simple regular words and to make phonetically plausible attempts at more complex words. Good quality teaching provides the children with an appropriate range of purposeful activities which encourages them to 'write' spontaneously. For example, in the Nursery activity area set up as a café, the child playing the part of the waitress wrote down the order given by the child pretending to be the customer and passed it on to the chef. Throughout the Foundation Stage the children's language development benefits considerably from the work in the different areas of learning. This enables them to develop confidence, share ideas and negotiate with others. The increasing emphasis placed on role-play activities has a very positive effect on children's language development. For example, in one activity

children wearing firemen's hats worked alongside each other amicably. One child called the fire brigade to a garage fire and remarked, "Quick, put the ladder through the window, there is someone in here!"

Mathematical development

- 80 Well planned activities enable the children to make good progress in this area of their learning. In the Nursery, they can recall a growing repertoire of number songs and rhymes which they enjoy. Through a variety of activities, including role play in the café, creative work designing poppies, and story, the children make good progress in saying and using number names in order. Most can count reliably to five and recognise the numerals used. Some of the older Nursery children have well developed counting skills and, with help, can count to 50. The successful adaptation of the National Numeracy Strategy is very successful at the Reception class stage. The children demonstrate a growing understanding of the order of numbers. Most show reliable counting skills and can order numbers, one to ten, on a number line. Some of the higher attaining children understand how to count on and back from a given point. They also understand and use terms such as 'more than' and 'less than'. Some of the lower attaining children, during role play in the area set up as the witch's house, were able to recognise numbers to eight when using recipe cards to make spell mixtures. At the Foundation Stage, the children's learning and progress occur through a variety of mathematical experiences. For example, in the Nursery, a group listened to the story of 'Goldilocks'. This was effective in helping the children to understand the language of size and position. By the end of the activity the children could use the Velcro board to match the correct size of bears to the beds, chairs and spoons.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 81 Good quality organisation and teaching is effective in underpinning the work in this area of learning. Many of the Nursery children already show much confidence and co-ordination in using the mouse to select and click on screen images, when using computers. The Reception class children have access to the computer suite, and continue to make good progress. At the Foundation Stage, the children are helped to understand the passage of time through talking about the days of the week, birthdays, the changing seasons and events in their own lives captured through photographs. The children have frequent opportunities to take some responsibility and to develop a measure of independence in their learning. This is a reflection of the good teaching they receive in this area of their learning. Through many of those experiences they develop good skills in shaping, assembling and joining materials. For example, in the Nursery, the children used clay effectively to design well formed leaf shapes, as part of a topic on the seasons.

Physical development

- 82 Good provision is made for the children's physical development. They are helped to understand changes that occur in the body when taking part in vigorous physical activity. The Nursery children demonstrate growing confidence when using the climbing frame, controlling their movements with due attention to their own safety and that of others. In the large hall, the Reception children make good use of the available space and respect the space used by others. They co-ordinate their movements well when, for example, they march like soldiers to the beat of their teacher's tambour. They moved with confidence and imagination. In the classroom, the Reception class children build on the good start made in the Nursery. They make good progress handling crayons, pencils, paint brushes, modelling tools, construction toys and malleable materials. They demonstrate increasing control and confidence and understand how to use equipment safely.

Creative development

- 83 Good teaching and access to a variety of appropriate activities enable the Foundation Stage children to make good progress and do as well as expected for their age. They enjoy frequent opportunities to paint, make models, engage in role play, listen to music and play instruments. The children particularly benefit from the support provided by classroom assistants and voluntary helpers. For example, in the seaside café, the interaction of the adults was highly effective in helping the children to sustain their interest and concentration. The children were helped to develop their own storyline and to respond imaginatively to the customers' varying requests for a variety of food and drinks.
- 84 In all areas of learning the quality of teaching at the Foundation Stage is consistently good. The teaching is particularly effective in promoting the children's literacy and numeracy skills and for supporting their personal, social and emotional development. Work is planned carefully and assessment is well used to plan future work. In general, a high level of adult co-operation enables the children to be taught in a purposeful and supportive learning environment, which prepares them well for the next stage of their education. However, at times, particularly during work to promote language and mathematical skills, children are organised in groups which are too large to allow an appropriate level of participation, and on such occasions the effective contribution of support staff and voluntary helpers is restricted.
- 85 Since the last inspection, the good standards of teaching at the Foundation Stage have been maintained. In addition, the school has appointed an experienced co-ordinator who is working hard and effectively to strengthen further the already good provision for children under five.

ENGLISH

- 86 Standards in Year 6 are well above the national average and consistent with the results of recent National Curriculum tests. This represents continuing improvements since the last inspection when standards were judged to be above the national average. Standards in Year 2 are above those found nationally and considerably better than those apparent in the last inspection, which were judged to be below average for the pupils' age.
- 87 Pupils at levels of attainment make very good progress during their time in the school. Those with special educational needs benefit greatly from the setting of work which is appropriately challenging and the good quality support provided by teachers and support staff. This enables them to make very good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are supported very effectively in classrooms and by specialist support, provided by the local education authority, when necessary. This enables them to make very good progress during their time in the school. The programme of work in English meets fully the requirements of the National Curriculum.

- 88 In speaking and listening, pupils throughout the school make good progress and achieve standards which are generally above those expected for their age. Younger pupils make rapid progress in increasing their confidence and skills, and this is very apparent during literacy lessons. The skilful way in which teachers organise the whole-class elements of such lessons encourages a high level of participation by the pupils and contributes significantly to the pupils' rapid progress at this stage. Pupils respond quickly and enthusiastically to questions and are keen to share their ideas. By the age of seven, most pupils show a capacity to listen carefully and respond appropriately to what others say and higher attaining pupils show a growing ability to talk and listen confidently in different contexts. Pupils continue to make good progress at Key Stage 2. They show an increasing sense of audience and a growing ability to vary the amount of detail and the use of vocabulary during discussion. By the time pupils reach the age of 11, they talk and listen confidently in a wide range of contexts, including whole-school assemblies, school council meetings, whole-class and group settings. Participation in school production enables many of them to enhance and extend their skills. The ability of a significant number of older pupils to vary expression and vocabulary to engage the listener is a strong feature in their learning, as is their willingness to pay close attention to what others say. This was evident when a group of Year 6 pupils talked about the books they had read recently. They talked enthusiastically about the characters and events in some of the stories and conveyed very successfully their love of reading.
- 89 In reading, pupils make very good progress during their time in the school. By the time they reach the age of seven, reading standards are generally above average for their age. Pupils benefit considerably from the support of parents, particularly in the early stages of their education. The strong emphasis placed on the development of pupils' ability to recognise and use sounds and key words, during literacy lessons in Years 1 and 2, contributes significantly towards the good progress made by pupils at Key Stage 1. In a Year 1 lesson, for example, the teacher helped the pupils to apply their increasing knowledge of sounds to decipher new or unfamiliar words. They did this with impressive accuracy, demonstrating a good grasp of phonics. By the age of seven, most pupils use appropriate strategies to help them read unfamiliar and increasingly challenging texts. Pupils benefit greatly from regular opportunities to practise their reading in class, and many of them read with increasing fluency, showing a good understanding of what they have read. At Key Stage 2, in Years 3 to 6, pupils build successfully on this good start. Many read expressively a wide range of stories, plays and poems, and show growing competence in finding information from reference materials and the Internet. By the time pupils reach the age of eleven, standards are well above average for their age. Many read challenging novels of their own choice, and are able to discuss confidently the plot, characters and style of books. They derive great enjoyment from the books they read, and their increasing competence in reading contributes significantly towards their good progress in other subjects.
- 90 In writing, pupils make very good progress during their time in the school and, by Year 6, achieve standards which are well above average. In Years 1 and 2, pupils benefit greatly from the literacy hour and, by the time they are seven, most are able to write in a sequence of sentences, making appropriate use of capital letters and full stops, and generally spelling simple words correctly. A significant number of higher attaining pupils write with growing imagination, showing good skills in spelling more complex words and making increasingly accurate use of a growing vocabulary. The pupils' progress is greatly assisted by the way in which teachers achieve a good balance between teaching the basic skills of writing and creating opportunities for the pupils to

apply these skills in extended writing.

- 91 By the time pupils reach the age of 11, their writing is lively and thoughtful. Most use an appropriate range of punctuation with accuracy, and understand how to construct paragraphs. Older pupils, in Years 5 and 6, benefit greatly from very good quality teaching during the literacy hour, which challenges those at all levels of attainment. This enables pupils to make good progress in acquiring new skills in writing. Many high attainers use an increasingly adventurous vocabulary and make accurate use of the new skills, acquired during literacy lessons, to produce extended writing which is often of very good quality.
- 92 Most teachers are successful in enabling the pupils to produce well presented work with good standards of handwriting. However, this is not an entirely consistent feature throughout the school. In Year 4 in particular, standards of pupils' handwriting and presentation of work are unsatisfactory. The close attention given to these aspects of the work in English, in Years 5 and 6, enables pupils to achieve good standards of handwriting and presentation of work before reaching the end of their time in the school.
- 93 The increasing use of ICT to support work in English has a positive impact on the standards of pupils' achievement in the subject, as well as extending the pupils' capabilities in the use of ICT. Pupils enjoy seeing good quality presentation of their work, and often incorporate carefully selected illustrations to complement the text. They benefit from the use of the spell-check facility to identify and improve weaknesses in their spelling, and extend their research skills significantly by using the Internet and CD-Rom facilities. Pupils further their awareness of the value of ICT when using the library. All books are on a computerised database, and pupils scan books using their own bar codes when borrowing books.
- 94 The quality of teaching is generally of a very good standard, and is the main reason for the very good progress which pupils make during their time in the school. Nearly 90 per cent of lessons observed were at least good and nearly 60 per cent very good. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. Throughout the school, teachers work hard to prepare challenging and relevant lessons. This enables them to be secure in their subject knowledge. Much care is taken to ensure that appropriate tasks are set for pupils at all levels of attainment. Pupils respond positively to challenging work, and make good progress in developing their literacy skills. The arrangements for agreeing targets for learning with each child helps to give them a good self-knowledge of their own learning. Texts for the introductory element of the literacy lesson are carefully selected and "big books" and other materials, such as posters, are used effectively as shared reading texts. Literacy lessons are very well planned. Careful explanation and highly effective questioning skills enable teachers to capture pupils' attention and interest. In lessons for younger pupils, the very good use of strategies for securing the participation and involvement of pupils, during the whole-class elements of lessons, is a very strong feature in the teaching. For example, the use of individual writing boards in Years 1 and 2 allows each pupil to write down their own response to particular questions and then hold the board up to show their response to the teacher.
- 95 In the very good lessons for older pupils teachers convey a strong sense of their own enjoyment and appreciation of the great works of literature, such as Shakespeare's Macbeth, and often use humour very effectively to stimulate, encourage and introduce a sense of fun into pupils' learning. This creates a positive context for learning, where pupils know that their efforts will be valued and are not afraid of making a mistake. In many classes, the very effective contribution of support staff is of particular benefit

during group work, helping to achieve an acceptable level of interaction between pupils and adults in large classes, and helping pupils to work productively. The high expectations which teachers have of their pupils is a strong feature in most lessons. Class management is nearly always very good, contributing significantly towards good quality work by the pupils and high standard of behaviour in lessons. In a small minority of lessons, however, less effective class management during group activities results in noise levels which are too high and this often contributes towards untidy handwriting and poor presentation of work by the pupils. In general, however, pupils take a pride in their work. They listen attentively during whole-class text work and work productively during group and independent activities. During all aspects of the work, teachers take appropriate steps to include and involve all pupils. Their questioning takes care not to favour either gender, and learning activities challenge effectively pupils at all levels of attainment.

- 96 The highly effective work of the subject co-ordinator has contributed significantly towards considerable improvement in the quality of teaching, which was described as satisfactory in the last inspection report and is now of high quality. Better quality teaching is the main reason for the continuing improvements in pupils' standards of achievement, particularly by higher attaining pupils.

MATHEMATICS

- 97 In Year 2 and Year 6, standards are above those found nationally. This reflects the most recent National Curriculum test results which showed the school's performance to be above the national average and above the performance of similar schools. The vast majority of the pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress during their time in the school.
- 98 By the age of seven, the pupils have a good understanding of basic number work. They know how to read, write and order numbers to 100 and beyond. The higher attaining pupils are particularly quick when completing missing numbers on a 1 to 100 number grid. Good quality teaching gives careful attention to mental work and the seven year olds demonstrate quick recall of bonds and appropriate tables. The pupils make good progress in their understanding of place value. They know that the position of a digit signifies its value and use this concept well when ordering numbers in various sequences. The pupils generally make good progress in their calculation work, selecting and using appropriate addition or subtraction processes.
- 99 The older pupils continue to make good progress in numeracy and benefit from good quality planning which builds successfully upon their previous learning. The pupils make good progress in understanding place value work and show increasing accuracy in computation work using the four rules. However, in some classes in the first half of Key Stage 2 standards of presentation are inconsistent and this sometimes impacts upon the accuracy of the pupils' calculations. By Year 6, the pupils have a good understanding of the extension of the number system. This is reflected in their work when using negative numbers and in their knowledge and understanding of the relationship of fractions, decimals and percentages.
- 100 Throughout the school, the pupils benefit from a range of well planned activities and experiences which support effectively their work related to shape, space and measures. In such work the pupils are taught to use precise mathematical language. As a result, the pupils develop a good knowledge of the associated terminology, which they use effectively when describing the properties of three and two dimensional

shapes. For example, in a Year 6 class, during the final plenary element of the lesson, individual pupils were invited to draw various quadrilaterals on the board according to given criteria. One pupil, when explaining a shape, remarked, "This has one pair of opposite, parallel sides". Another said, "This has two pairs of adjacent sides that are equal in length", when explaining a different shape. By the end of the lesson the pupils demonstrated good skills in describing a range of quadrilaterals including a kite, rhombus and trapezium.

- 101 Throughout the school, the teaching is successful in providing the pupils with appropriate challenges. The older pupils are introduced to handling data. They make good progress collecting information, recording their results and interpreting their findings. For example, in a class of older pupils they produced some good work using class test results. They understood how to organise their work when producing graphs and frequency tables. They were able to draw conclusions from the statistics, which also revealed their developing understanding of measures of average. They were able to use correctly appropriate language such as the mode, median and range in the course of this work.
- 102 The pupils benefit from opportunities to practise and consolidate their mathematical skills in other areas of the curriculum. For example, in classes of older pupils they were able to use quite accurate measuring skills when engaged in work on balanced forces in science. Since the last inspection, the use of ICT to support the pupils' mathematical development shows much improvement and is now a regular part of the programmes of work.
- 103 The quality of teaching is generally good. All staff work hard and successfully to implement the National Numeracy Strategy. Lessons are well planned and the content is interesting and relevant. In all classes the work is matched carefully to the pupils' different levels of ability. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection, particularly so with regard to the higher attaining pupils who are now challenged appropriately. Throughout the school, the high quality of support generally provided by classroom assistants is a significant feature of the provision. In particular, the lower attaining pupils are well supported so that they make consistently good progress towards the targets set for them. In most lessons, good quality questioning techniques probe the pupils' thinking, consolidate their learning and identify where additional support is required. Group-work is usually managed effectively and the content interests the pupils so that they generally put much intellectual effort into their work. However, in some classes, particularly those located in the open-plan classes at Key Stage 2, the pace of the work sometimes slows because noise levels are allowed to rise too high during group-work time. However, the pupils generally enjoy their lessons in mathematics and respond positively to the tasks they are set.
- 104 The school has made progress since the last inspection. For example, much has been done to improve the standards achieved by the potentially higher attaining pupils, who now reach the standards expected of them. The precision with which the pupils use correct mathematical language is a further step forward. In addition, improvements have also occurred in the planning of the mental starter in lessons. As a result, the pupils' competence to recall and mentally manipulate numbers is much better. They also demonstrate increasing confidence in explaining the strategies they use. Following good quality training provided by the local education authority personnel the teaching is more successful in helping the pupils acquire skills in using and applying mathematics in a range of contexts.
- 105 The subject is well co-ordinated. Assessment results are analysed carefully in order

to raise standards even further. The organisation of the curriculum enables all of the pupils, irrespective of gender, race, social background or ability, to have equality of opportunity and access to the subject. Mathematics makes an important contribution to the aims of the school. The subject is resourced adequately and is allocated an appropriate amount of time. The content of the work meets the requirements of the National Curriculum.

SCIENCE

- 106 Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are appropriate for the pupils' age and similar to recent National Curriculum test results. Since the last inspection, standards have risen at a similar pace to the national trend. During the last four years girls have performed significantly better than boys. The school has identified this as an issue for close monitoring.
- 107 Throughout the school, the overall progress made by pupils, at all levels of attainment, is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the close support provided by classroom assistants and make good progress. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in extending their scientific knowledge and understanding. However, many pupils at Key Stage 2 make unsatisfactory progress in scientific enquiry, mainly due to the way in which lessons are organised and taught.
- 108 By the age of seven, the great majority of pupils reach standards which are at least appropriate for their age in all aspects of the subject and a significant minority achieve higher levels. Most pupils at this key stage, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior levels of attainment, in all areas of science. Most pupils develop satisfactory levels of knowledge about how they grow and change and about the similarities and differences between themselves and others. They can name some sources of light and know about things that work by electricity. Most pupils are able to construct a simple circuit in order to light a bulb, and know about the dangers of electricity. In scientific enquiry, they are able to make relevant observations about the events they observe. For example, in their investigation to find the pupils with the biggest hands they were able to give reasoned predictions, measure the size of hands, and describe their findings in simple terms.
- 109 By the age of eleven, most pupils achieve standards of scientific knowledge and understanding that are at least in line with those expected for their ages, and many achieve higher standards. However, in scientific enquiry, the progress of many pupils is unsatisfactory due mainly to the way in which this area of the subject is taught. By the end of the key stage pupils have developed good levels of knowledge about the structure and function of different parts of the body, including the main organs. They can explain the function of plant parts, such as leaves and roots, in scientific terms and have a satisfactory understanding of the reproductive systems of a plant. They know about solids, liquids and gases and that water exists in different states. They develop a satisfactory understanding of how forces act in different situations and know that forces are measured in Newtons. Most pupils can describe accurately the effects of gravity and friction in different circumstances, such as when objects drop or move across different surfaces. In their work on electricity the pupils make satisfactory progress in their understanding of how electricity functions in a circuit, but are not as confident in this area as in other areas of scientific understanding. Although most pupils know about fair testing, their ability to apply the basic principles systematically and carefully in practical situations is not sufficiently well developed during the key stage. Many pupils do not recognise the need for careful collection of data, and require support in interpreting their findings scientifically in terms of the

question they are investigating.

- 110 The quality of teaching in science is generally satisfactory and sometimes good, particularly in Years 1 and 6. Here, lessons are well planned and organised appropriately to give all pupils opportunities to engage in practical investigative work, which has a clear learning focus. Too often, however, work in scientific enquiry is not organised sufficiently effectively to enable all pupils to participate in and experience the key stages of the investigation process. The teaching of scientific knowledge and understanding is far more successful, and this is reflected in the better progress made by pupils in these aspects of their work. In a minority of lessons, teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of pupils in terms of the presentation of their work.
- 111 In general, teachers take appropriate steps to include all pupils, regardless of gender, ability or ethnic background in all aspects of the work in science. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and boys and girls are treated equally in lessons. However, the present approach to the organisation of scientific enquiry, in which different pupils take responsibility for specific parts of the investigation process, means that pupils are not always fully involved in essential stages of scientific enquiry.
- 112 Science lessons provide appropriate opportunities for the pupils to practise and extend their numeracy skills in activities such as measurement, data collection and graph construction. Good use is made of ICT to support pupils' learning in most lessons.
- 113 The overall management of science is satisfactory. Assessment arrangements are thorough and give the school a clear picture of the needs of different cohorts and pupils at different levels of attainment. The school improvement plan accurately identifies scientific enquiry as a focus for further development. Very restricted classroom space continues to create problems for teachers in organising and managing practical investigational work and contributes towards restricting improvement in the standards of scientific enquiry.

ART AND DESIGN and DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 114 In art and design and design and technology, standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are appropriate for the age of the pupils and similar to the last inspection. In both subjects, pupils at all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, make good progress at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory progress at Key Stage 2. Although the programme of work in both subjects broadly meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, the range of learning opportunities provided for pupils at Key Stage 2 is fairly narrow, and are often restricted by the limited amount of floor space. This contributes towards a relatively slower rate of progress by pupils at Key Stage 2.
- 115 In art and design, younger pupils respond to and explore ideas enthusiastically. They use a variety of materials to produce drawings, painted pictures and models. They begin to make use of ideas gained from examining closely the work of famous artists when producing their own pictures. As they progress through the school, pupils work with increasing precision. Pupils in Year 3, for example, produced some very good quality self-portraits using coloured pastels. In Year 5, still-life sketches from direct observation indicated very good drawing skills. In Year 6, pupils produced some good quality work following a visit to the Drumcroom Art Centre. Having examined work by the artist Michael Brennand-Wood, they collected a variety of materials and used

them to produce attractive and colourful collages.

- 116 In design and technology, younger pupils make good progress in extending their skills in designing, making and evaluating what they have produced. They make good use of methods for creating movement. In Year 1, for example, following time to plan and design their product pupils used lever techniques to produce pictures with moving parts. Pupils benefit from opportunities to examine commercially made products before producing their own. This was evident in Year 2 when pupils drew effectively on ideas gained from examining a variety, of puppets, before designing and making their own. Older pupils consider more specific requirements when planning and designing products. In Year 3 for example, they recognised the importance of stability when designing a picture frame. In classes for older pupils the importance of providing strong structures for models are recognised when pupils plan and design moving toys.
- 117 The quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2, and some high quality teaching was observed in Year 1. Lessons are well planned and organised. Teachers and support staff co-operate very effectively to provide a good level of interaction with the pupils and an appropriate degree of intervention to support their learning. This helps pupils to make progress in both subjects, and also contributes positively towards the development of their speaking and listening skills. In a high quality lesson in Year 1, the teacher allowed time for the pupils to think about what they wanted to make, and to discuss their plans with a partner, and an excellent variety of resources were used to stimulate pupils' thinking. Throughout the school, class management is generally a good feature. At times, however, the noise level during activities is too loud, particularly at Key Stage 2. Very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs, and appropriate care is taken to ensure that all pupils, irrespective of gender, race or ability, are appropriately involved and supported.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

- 118 Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are generally appropriate for the ages of the pupils. Pupils at different levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, make at least satisfactory progress during their time in school. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 6 make good progress in the development of history and geography skills and knowledge. At the time of the last inspection there was insufficient evidence of standards and teaching. This situation has improved and, in this inspection, there was clear evidence of standards achieved by pupils and the quality of teaching in both subjects.
- 119 In history, by the age of seven, the pupils have made good progress in the development of their knowledge and skills. They know about famous people, such as Samuel Pepys, and are able to carry out simple research from secondary sources, such as pictures and documents, to find information about him. In their studies of the Great Fire of London, most pupils know about the circumstances and main events of the fire and place the key developments in correct chronological order. They show appropriate awareness of the distinction between past and present, and use appropriate vocabulary to describe the passing of time, such as in their descriptions of old toys.
- 120 By the age of eleven, the pupils make satisfactory progress in extending their knowledge of ancient civilisations such as the Romans and Greeks. When given the opportunity, the pupils show good skills in searching for and finding appropriate

information to support their work, for example how the Roman invaders adapted to life in Britain. The pupils know that there is a difference between fact and opinion and that not all representations of the past are reliable. In their studies of the Tudor and Victorian eras the pupils were able to make appropriate use of secondary sources such as books, videos, CD ROM and contemporary pictures to find out what life was like for people in those times. Good use was made of census information to research children's names in Lowton during the 1800s. Pupils in Year 6 made particularly good use of photographs of the wartime evacuation programme to find out what it was like to be an evacuee.

- 121 In geography, by the age of seven, the pupils gain a basic sense of place in relation to their own locality and develop a satisfactory awareness of places further away, recognising that not all places are the same. The work they are given enables pupils to develop appropriate geographical skills, such as drawing plans of their route to school and constructing graphs to show how many pupils use various ways of travelling to school.
- 122 By the age of eleven, most pupils develop a sound understanding of maps of different scales and are able to interpret these with increasing accuracy. They are able to use maps and plans to locate human and physical features of their local area, the British Isles and the Indian sub-continent. They recognise some of the ways in which human activity affects the environment, and are able to suggest ways in which energy could be conserved and the environment improved. In their study of the contrasting locality of Chembakolli, for example, the pupils were able to make relevant comparisons between key features of life in India and their own lives in areas such as employment, farming and housing.
- 123 The quality of teaching in history lessons is at least satisfactory, and good in some classes, particularly in Years 1, 5 and 6. All teachers have good levels of subject knowledge and are adept at presenting the learning in ways that interest their pupils. In the good lessons, the teaching makes high demands on the pupils and challenges their thinking through well matched tasks and focused questioning. The lessons have a secure focus for teaching the required history study skills and teachers expect high standards of behaviour and effort from their pupils. In some lessons, the pace of learning is slower and insufficient demands are made of pupils in terms of standards of presentation and productivity. No lessons in geography were scheduled to take place during the inspection, but the work seen indicates that teaching is at least satisfactory and there was evidence of good teaching in Years 1 and 5. The work in geography gives satisfactory opportunities for developing the required skills in contexts that interest the pupils. For example, Barney Bear's travels in Year 2 enabled the pupils to think about differences between their own locality and places further afield. In Year 5 pupils' learning about an overseas country was made more effective by drawing direct comparisons with their own lives.
- 124 Work in history and geography makes satisfactory use of ICT to support learning, and history makes a strong contribution to the pupils' social and cultural development. However, in some classes the demands made on pupils' standards of presentation are too low, so that the written work produced does not always reflect the pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- 125 Both subjects are managed very effectively and the subject managers have a secure understanding of their roles in promoting higher standards and quality. Monitoring in both subjects is carried out and documented meticulously and the targets for both subjects are entirely relevant. Visits and visitors make a valuable contribution to both

subjects. In the recent past, visits to localities such as Southport and Pennington Flash have greatly enhanced the fieldwork requirement of the subject. A visit from Liverpool University archaeologists was particularly valuable in helping pupils to realise how historical artefacts give information about the past, and a visit to Wigan Pier enriched learning about the Victorian era. Resources for history and geography are sufficient and appropriate for each subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 126 By Year 2 and Year 6, pupils achieve standards which are at least appropriate for their age. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection, when standards were unsatisfactory at both key stages. Throughout the school, pupils at all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. The programme of work in ICT meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Good provision is made for all pupils, ensuring that they are included in and extended by all aspects of the ICT curriculum, and meeting successfully their particular needs in terms of gender, race and ability.
- 127 In Years 1 and 2, pupils make good progress in the communication element of ICT. By the age of seven, they are able to access and use appropriate tools to produce, amend and enhance text. With help, they sometimes incorporate an illustration to accompany the text. They demonstrate increasing skills in using ICT for data-handling, producing simple graphs to represent the results of class surveys, for example. Pupils also develop good early knowledge of control technology, demonstrating an ability to programme the roamer robotic toy to travel various distances and change directions.
- 128 At Key Stage 2, in Years 3 to 6, pupils build progressively on previous learning. In word-processing, they retrieve and refine their work, and make appropriate adjustments to the size and style of print and the layout of their work to suit the needs of particular tasks. They confidently incorporate graphic images to enhance their work, and use techniques such as "cut and paste" effectively, to move text about when editing their work. Older pupils make good use of sound and colour to produce multimedia presentations, sometimes presenting their work to entertain younger pupils.

- 129 In the handling information element of ICT, pupils show good skills in entering, amending and retrieving information from CD-Roms and the Internet, and recognise the importance of precision in framing their research questions. During the course of the year, pupils extend their ICT control skills to an appropriate level for their age. They use the Logo programme to enter a set of instructions, in order to programme a screen image to produce some quite complex geometrical shapes.
- 130 There are good examples of the imaginative use of ICT to support learning in other subjects. For example, older pupils show good skills in the use of spreadsheet, and are able to enter data and the formulae for various calculations. This contributes significantly towards the development of their mathematical skills. The imaginative use of ICT to communicate and present information gives pupils the opportunity to apply and consolidate their literacy skills. Activities to find relevant information from Internet and CD-Rom sources enhances pupils' learning in subjects such as history and geography and helps them to develop important general skills. For example, pupils in Year 6, who had been assigned various occupations, such as marketing specialist and sound technician, searched the Internet for suitable work. They downloaded the information into their own files, before comparing notes with others in the class. These activities extended their knowledge of the world of work, as well as enhancing their ICT skills.
- 131 The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection and is now of a good standard. All of the lessons observed were good. Teachers are increasingly confident in the subject, and benefit greatly from clear guidance about the areas to be covered during ICT lessons. Regular access to the computer suite is enabling teachers to introduce new ICT skills to whole-class or half-class groups. Explanations are provided in a clear manner, and good questioning skills enable the teachers to check that pupils have understood what has been taught. Class management is good, enabling teachers to overcome successfully the problems presented by large numbers in a relatively small room. This contributes to good standards of behaviour by the pupils and efficient use of time.
- 132 Pupils enjoy their work in ICT and show a mature sense of responsibility when working at work stations. They draw well on prior learning and show confidence in learning through trial and error. The valuable contribution of support staff and voluntary helpers helps to achieve a good level of intervention in the work of pupils, particularly those who require regular help. Work in ICT is co-ordinated effectively, contributing significantly to the improvements made in provision and pupils' achievement since the previous inspection.

MUSIC

- 133 In Year 2 and Year 6, standards are appropriate for the pupils' age. The great majority of the pupils including those with special educational needs, make good progress during their time in school.
- 134 Younger pupils make good progress in exploring how sounds are made. They begin to sing tunefully. For example, during the inspection they were observed singing 'Who Will Sing With Me Today?' and 'High Low Chick-a-Low' in a range of appropriate voices. The pupils were able to recognise single beat and half beat notes and follow a graphic score effectively.
- 135 Older pupils make good progress in understanding rhythm patterns and are able to

hold a melody line in such songs as, 'My Grandfather's Clock'. They follow the directions of a conductor effectively. This was evident during their singing of 'Row, Row, Row Your Boat', as a round. Pupils are helped to recognise the cultural diversity of music by engaging in work such as studying rhythm patterns in Indian music. They make good progress in extending their vocabulary and make accurate use of technical words such as 'pitch', 'rhythm', 'compose' and 'conductor'. Many pupils benefit from specialist instrumental tuition.

- 136 The quality of teaching is good throughout the school, and pupils' learning in some classes is enhanced by visiting specialist teachers. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and know how pupils learn. Planning is detailed, and the programme of work meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The most effective teaching uses a variety of teaching methods. This adds pace to lessons and helps to sustain the pupils' interest. In most lessons the pupils' work is assessed effectively as the lesson proceeds, and good use is made of the information to inform future curriculum planning. The pupils are well motivated and enjoy lessons. They are well behaved and show a good respect for the instruments and resources which they use. They collaborate well and respect each other's contributions. Relationships are mature and productive.
- 137 Since the last inspection, standards in music have been maintained and adequate time is now allowed for the subject.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 138 Standards in physical education are appropriate for the pupils' age. In almost all lessons, the great majority of the pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good and often very good progress.
- 139 The youngest pupils show good levels of co-ordination, use space effectively and link their movements together with increasing skill and confidence. By Year 6, the pupils build effectively on their earlier achievements and create sensitive dance sequences, working at different heights. They bring variety and interest to their performances, using techniques and ideas which include challenging bends, twists, turns and balances in their work.
- 140 In gymnastics, the older pupils demonstrate increasing skills in developing well thought out and effectively co-ordinated sequences of movement. For example, good quality teaching, in a Year 5 class, enabled the pupils to link together five difficult types of movement into their chosen sequence. The teaching emphasised appropriately the important aspects of safety, and provided the pupils with the necessary skills and techniques for them to execute good quality performances.
- 141 By the end of Year 6, almost all the pupils can swim at least 25 metres unaided and many perform at a higher level. The pupils are confident in the water and know how to use a range of recognised strokes. They are taught how to breathe correctly so that they swim efficiently and safely.
- 142 At other times in the year all pupils take part in games, and older pupils participate in athletics and outdoor adventurous activities.
- 143 The quality of teaching is usually good and sometimes of a higher calibre. However, in a minority of lessons at Key Stage 2 too little is expected of the pupils in gymnastics, and pupils therefore make insufficient progress. In most lessons, however, the

teaching demonstrates good subject knowledge and expertise. The pupils are taught a range of appropriate skills and techniques and are helped to refine and improve their movements. Classes are generally well managed and the pupils are provided with appropriate challenges. Classroom assistants frequently make significant contributions to the progress made by pupils with special educational needs. For example, in a Year 4 class, the high quality of this support resulted in some of these pupils making better progress than others in the class. The deployment of such staff reflects the school's aim to provide an inclusive education for all pupils.

- 144 The work in physical education makes a good contribution to the aims of the school. The subject is well co-ordinated and is allocated an appropriate amount of time. The overall standards achieved by the pupils have improved since the last inspection. The content of the work meets the requirements of the National Curriculum.