

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **WHEELLOCK PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Wheelock, Sandbach

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111036

Headteacher: Mrs M. A. Patrick

Reporting inspector: Colin Henderson  
23742

Dates of inspection: 6<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> May 2003

Inspection number: 247072

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Crewe Road Wheelock Sandbach
Postcode:	CW11 3RT
Telephone number:	01270 762878
Fax number:	01270 759447
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Broad
Date of previous inspection:	December 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Colin Henderson 23742	Registered inspector	Mathematics Geography Physical education Religious education	How high are standards? Pupils' results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Len Shipman 14061	Lay inspector	Educational inclusion	How high are standards? Attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Sonia Bosworth 30573	Team inspector	English Science Art and design History English as an additional language	
David Matthews 18505	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Foundation Stage Design and technology Music Special educational needs	

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
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	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>10</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>26</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Wheelock Primary School is an average-sized primary school, situated near Sandbach. It currently has 208 pupils on roll (95 boys and 113 girls), which is more than at the time of the last inspection. The building has been extended and improved in recent years to accommodate increased pupil numbers. Most pupils come from the surrounding village, although some are brought in by coach from new housing developments outside the village. Pupils come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds and most have had some pre-school experience. Almost all pupils are of white, United Kingdom ethnic background. Only one pupil speaks English as an additional language, which is below the national average. Eighteen pupils are on the register of special educational needs, which is broadly average. They have a broad range of learning, physical and emotional needs. Five per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is below average. Children enter the reception class with a wide range of attainment. There are considerable yearly variations and it is average overall.

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

Wheelock Primary is an improving school, with many good features. It is successful in establishing a caring, supportive and harmonious school community and an attractive and stimulating learning environment. The headteacher gives good direction to the school's work. She works closely with a supportive and influential governing body to encourage a strong team approach. All staff work well together to ensure that each pupil is valued and included in all aspects of school life. Teaching is good. It is raising standards, although the school's procedures to evaluate and target improvement are not always rigorous enough. Pupils attain average standards in most subjects and the school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory. It gives sound value for money.

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

- Pupils have positive attitudes to school and their behaviour is very good.
- The care and support for pupils are very good. Staff know their pupils very well and make good provision for their personal development
- Pupils attain standards in art and design that are above nationally expected levels.
- Teaching is good.
- The good Foundation Stage enables children to make a good start to school life.
- The links with parents and the community are good.
- The good curriculum provides a broad range of interesting learning activities.

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

- The consistent use of assessment information
- Evaluating the impact of school and subject action plans.

*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 good improvement on the issues reported in the last inspection in December 1997. Considerable improvement has been made on the quality of teaching, pupils' behaviour, the curriculum and the accommodation. Resources have improved, especially in information and communication technology. The leadership has improved. The roles and contribution of subject managers have improved, although they are not developed fully, particularly in their evaluation of teaching and learning. Standards of attainment have been maintained at the average level, although pupils present their work better than reported previously.

## 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	C	C	B	C
Mathematics	C	D	C	E
Science	A	D	C	D

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

*(Similar schools are those that have a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals.)*

Year 6 are attaining average standards in English, mathematics and science. Standards have been maintained at the level reported in the last inspection. Although the results in national tests have varied from year to year, particularly in science, they have been average overall. They are below the average of similar schools (see definition above). Standards have improved at a similar rate to schools nationally. In 2002, the school achieved above average results in English. Inspectors found that the current Year 6 are achieving average standards. Assessment information shows that this year group contains a higher proportion of lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs. Too few pupils attain above average levels, particularly in science, as teachers do not consistently challenge more-able pupils to apply their knowledge. Test results show that girls achieve better than boys. The school has introduced new topics and resources to promote boys' achievements and inspectors found that these are beginning to improve their standards.

Children enter the reception class with average attainment overall, although it varies considerably from year to year. They make good, and often very good progress, promoted by good teaching. Most will achieve the national targets by the end of the reception year in all areas of learning. Many will exceed the targets in their personal, mathematical and physical development. Inspection evidence shows that Year 2 pupils attain average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. They are below average for similar schools. Standards are the same as those reported in the last inspection, although results in national tests for Year 2 pupils have improved in the last four years. Standards reflect the results of the national tests in 2002, although fewer pupils are achieving above average levels in mathematics. Assessment information shows that the current Year 2 does not contain as high a proportion of more-able pupils. Pupils' skills and knowledge in information and communication technology are improving, especially in the juniors. They attain nationally expected levels, promoted by better resources and improved teachers' subject knowledge. Standards in art and design are above nationally expected levels throughout the school, especially in drawing and painting, supported strongly by a knowledgeable subject co-ordinator. Pupils attain above expected levels in dance. They attain expected standards in other aspects of physical education and in history, geography, design and technology and music. Standards in religious education meet the expectations of the Cheshire agreed syllabus. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and make good progress towards their learning targets. The very few pupils with English as an additional language make good progress and attain levels that are similar to those expected for their age.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. They are often very good and linked to very good teaching. Most pupils are keen to learn and to succeed.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Staff manage behaviour very effectively. Pupils are friendly and polite. They play and work together very well.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good. Pupils' caring and sharing approach reflects the school's ethos.
Attendance	Very good. Consistently above the national average.

Pupils' behaviour has improved considerably since the last inspection. Their positive attitudes and very good relationships and behaviour support pupils' learning.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good. It is often very good, especially in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1, 2 and 3, and, on occasions, excellent. Good teaching was observed in each year group and is a key factor in raising standards. There was no unsatisfactory teaching which is a considerable improvement since the last inspection. Good teaching in the reception class enables children to settle quickly and happily into school. The teaching of English and mathematics is good and develops pupils' literacy and numeracy skills effectively. Teachers require pupils to apply and extend these skills soundly in other subjects, for example history and geography. Teachers manage their classes well to encourage pupils to sustain their interest and attention. An analysis of pupils' work since the start of the school year shows that teachers do not always challenge pupils, especially the more-able, to build their skills and knowledge effectively on prior learning in some subjects, particularly science and geography. Some became class teachers in year groups that they had not previously taught. As they became more aware of the range of ability, pupils achieved more. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. It is focused closely on their learning targets. The teaching of the very few pupils with English as an additional language is good overall

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. All subjects are taught and enriched well by visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities. Curriculum planning has improved, although pupils' skills and knowledge do not always build well enough on prior learning in some subjects, for example history and geography.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils are supported well by teaching and support staff. Learning activities are matched well to pupils' needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The very few pupils receive good individual support. They make sound progress overall in improving their language skills and applying them in a broad range of subjects.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The very good social provision promotes very good relationships and supports the school's caring and sharing ethos. Improved spiritual and cultural provision enables pupils to reflect upon the school's values and increase their understanding of their own and other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. A very safe and caring learning environment. Staff know their pupils very well and support successfully their personal and academic development, especially in literacy and numeracy.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Good. Many parents work closely with the school and value the co-operation. Very good induction procedures help their children settle happily into school life.

The school's caring approach, good range of learning activities and good links with parents are important factors in encouraging pupils' positive approach. The active 'Friends of the school' help improve resources and facilities for pupils' learning.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides good leadership. She has been influential in promoting a positive school ethos and establishing a good team approach. The management is sound overall. The role and contribution of subject co-ordinators have improved, but they do not rigorously evaluate their action and its impact on attainment.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are very well informed about the school's strengths and improvement priorities. They fulfil their responsibilities well. Governors are supportive and influential in working closely with the staff, although not always focused strongly on pupils' attainment.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The procedures for monitoring and evaluating standards of teaching and learning have improved. The school uses an increasing range of information to identify areas for improvement, although it does not consistently evaluate their progress towards improvement targets.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school makes good use of funds to support improvement, for example by maintaining staffing levels. It makes good use of the best value principles.

The school has a good number of teaching and support staff who work well together to ensure that all pupils are included fully in all activities. The accommodation has been improved significantly and is very good. Resources have been improved, for example in information and communication technology, although they are limited in some aspects of physical education and geography. The library is not used enough to extend pupils' research skills.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school and make good progress.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• Teaching is good and teachers have high expectations.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• The school helps their children to mature and take responsibility.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of extra-curricular activities.</li> <li>• Inconsistencies in homework and more challenge to older pupils (a few parents).</li> <li>• A few would like the school to work closer with parents.</li> </ul>

Inspection evidence supports the parents' positive views. Inspectors found the links with parents and the range of extra-curricular activities to be good. Homework is given consistently by most teachers, especially in the juniors. Inspectors found that teachers do not always challenge the more-able juniors to achieve above average standards, especially in science.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

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

1. Children enter the reception class with standards of attainment that vary significantly from year to year. They are average overall. An increasing number of children have benefited from pre-school education. Assessment information shows that many are above expected levels in aspects of social development, although their attainment on entry in communication, language and literacy is often lower than in other areas of learning. Teaching and support staff work very effectively together to ensure that children settle quickly and happily into school life. The good, and often very good teaching, a well-organised, good range of learning activities and very good relationships enable children to make good progress overall in the required areas of learning. They make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development and physical development. Many are likely to exceed their early learning goals<sup>1</sup> in these areas. Most will achieve their goals in the other areas of learning.
2. Year 2 pupils attain standards in reading, writing and mathematics that meet the average for all schools nationally. Standards are below average for similar schools. Standards have been maintained at the level reported in the last inspection, although the results of national tests for seven-year-olds show improving standards over the last four years from well below average to average levels. In the 2002 national tests, the proportion of pupils attaining the nationally expected Level 2 or above was above average in mathematics and average in reading and writing. The proportion achieving above Level 2 was above average in writing and mathematics, and below average in reading. Inspection evidence shows that current Year 2 pupils are attaining average standards overall. The proportion of pupils attaining above Level 2 is lower than last year and below the national average. Assessment information shows that the present group of Year 2 pupils contains a higher number of lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs.
3. Inspectors found that pupils in Years 1 and 2 make sound progress overall in developing their basic literacy and numeracy skills. Many make good progress in lessons, especially in their handwriting and presentation skills. The small group of more-able Year 2 pupils in the mixed Year 2/3 class, benefit from working with older pupils. They make good progress, for example in mathematics and writing, and achieve above average levels. Pupils' reading skills are developed soundly, with good use being made of guided-reading activities and shared-reading sessions with parents and carers, at home and at the start of the school day. The school continues to promote writing effectively in the infants. Year 1 and 2 pupils are provided with many opportunities to complete pieces of extended written work. Most use punctuation correctly, although not with consistent accuracy. Infant pupils' number skills and knowledge are sound. Many have an above expected knowledge of some other aspects of mathematics, for example their knowledge of different shapes. Most Year 2 pupils attain average standards overall in science, reflecting teacher assessments. They have a sound knowledge and understanding and are confident in predicting and carrying out a scientific investigation.
4. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain average standards in English, mathematics and science. Standards have been maintained at the level reported in the previous inspection. They reflect the results overall of the national tests for eleven-year-olds over the last three years. The school's results have improved in line with the national trend. In 2002, the results of the national test showed that standards were above average in English and met

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<sup>1</sup> Early learning goals are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They refer to achievements children make in the following six areas of learning: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

the national average in mathematics and science. They were below the average of similar schools. The school achieved its challenging target of 85 per cent of pupils to achieve Level 4 or above. It almost achieved its target in mathematics of 80 per cent. In 2002, the proportion of pupils attaining above the nationally expected Level 4 was above average in English, average in science and just below average in mathematics. Inspection evidence shows that the current Year 6 pupils are likely to attain similar results in mathematics and science, although lower in English. The school is likely to achieve its target of 75 per cent in English and 80 per cent in mathematics, although fewer pupils are likely to achieve above average standards. Assessment information shows that this year's group of pupils does not contain as many higher-attaining pupils. Last year, Year 6 pupils were taught by a specialist, experienced English teacher.

5. Most junior pupils make sound progress overall in their learning of basic skills. Many make good progress in aspects of the work, for example in speaking and listening, and attain above expected standards for their age. Older pupils are confident and articulate. They express their views clearly and use a good range of vocabulary. Inspectors found that good teaching and the school's good strategies for literacy and numeracy are raising standards. For example, an increasing number of Year 3 and 4 pupils are attaining higher than expected levels for their age in reading and mathematics. Standards in writing are improving with most pupils, for example in Years 4 and 5, using good sentence structure and more imaginative use of words. Teachers extend pupils' writing skills well by using them in a broad range of subjects, for example history, geography and religious education. Pupils' skills in reading for information are limited by weaknesses in the school's library provision. Most junior pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of different number strategies. They use them to solve number problems, although the accuracy of their work is let down by some uncertainties in their understanding and not always setting down their working out clearly. Pupils make sound progress in all aspects of science. Improvements in the recording of science investigations and the good use of practical investigations are promoting standards. There are still uncertainties in pupils' understanding of fair testing and more-able pupils are not always challenged to achieve above average standards. National test results show that girls are achieving better than boys. The school has introduced new topics and resources to address this issue. Inspectors noted that, although these have only recently been introduced, they are beginning to improve boys' attainment in some year groups.
6. Pupils with special educational needs are supported successfully by good teaching and good teaching assistants. They make good progress in developing their basic skills and attain standards that are not significantly different from those expected for their age. The very small number of pupils with English as an additional language benefit from good individual guidance and support and attain similar standards to others in the year.
7. Pupils attain standards in information and communication technology that meet nationally expected levels. Standards are improving due mainly to improved teachers' subject confidence and increased resources. Standards in art and design are above expected levels throughout the school. The good subject knowledge of an enthusiastic and influential subject co-ordinator encourages pupils' positive attitudes and promotes high standards, especially in drawing and painting. Pupils achieve above expected standards in aspects of some other subjects, for example in dance. This is due mainly to improved teachers' confidence and knowledge, resulting from good training from specialist teachers from a local high school. Pupils make sound progress overall in history and geography, although pupils' mapping skills are above expected levels, particularly in the infants. Pupils make sound progress in religious education, design and technology and music and attain standards expected for their age. Teachers do not assess pupils' key skills in some subjects, for example geography and history. This does not ensure that pupils' skills and knowledge build consistently on prior learning.

## Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Since the previous inspection, the school has successfully tackled the key issue of behaviour management. Behaviour of pupils and their relationships are very good. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their personal development are good. Levels of attendance are very good.
9. Many younger pupils run into school at the start of the day with eagerness. They are smartly dressed and act with maturity and politeness. This creates a positive attitude to their school and learning. Pupils quickly settle into class routines and read or talk quietly before registration. In lessons, pupils are keen to answer questions or to demonstrate their work. In the reception class, children maintain their interest and attention very successfully throughout a busy and active day. There is a small number of pupils who have low levels of concentration or are easily distracted. However, because of consistently good classroom management, lessons are not interrupted. For example; two boys in a physical education lesson became over enthusiastic. This was immediately noticed and dealt with. Pupils with special educational needs have good attitudes to their work, often concentrating well and responding positively to the tasks that are set for them. One older pupil, for example, had completed large amounts of homework that contributed well to his progress in basic English skills
10. Behaviour in and around school is consistently very good. Pupils clearly know what is expected from them both in conduct and manners. This confirms the parents' positive views of behaviour and values. There are no exclusions. There are a few pupils who have behaviour problems and lack self discipline. These pupils are supported well on an individual basis involving the class teachers, the special education needs co-ordinator and teaching assistants. The school is aware that some boys are under achieving in literacy and has devised ways of making some aspects more appealing to them; for example, using such topics as *'Pirates'* or *'Robin Hood'*. In the reception class, pupils play and mix very well. This promotes their social development and the school's friendly and supportive ethos. The older pupils mainly play in gender groups, though girls do play football with the boys. No incidents of anti-social behaviour were noticed during the inspection.
11. Very good relationships exist between the pupils themselves and between pupils and staff. Staff provide very good role models for pupils. The older pupils help the younger ones in the reception class with reading. This raises their self-esteem and promotes their learning. In class, pupils are very sensitive towards each other and work well independently or in shared activities. For example, in a design and technology class, a girl helped a boy to complete a puppet by cutting out the shape for him. The boy was thrilled as he completed his puppet. All members of staff are very sensitive and alert to each child's needs. This caring and sharing approach ensures that pupils are fully integrated in all activities with confidence.
12. Pupils' personal development is good and some aspects are very good. Year 6 pupils act as 'bus buddies' and perform many tasks, such as running errands or organising the overhead projector in assemblies. Pupils are friendly and care for each other. In the playground, a girl asked another to play, because she was on her own. The absence of vandalism, litter or graffiti shows that pupils respect their school and property. They handle resources with consideration. Pupils completed a questionnaire and the answers were analysed. Some views help to shape aspects of the school development plan.
13. Levels of attendance are very good and have been for some years. Punctuality is very good and registration is taken swiftly and without fuss. This creates an efficient start to the day and has a positive influence on the attitudes to learning.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. Teaching is good. It is often very good, especially in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1, 2 and 3, and, on occasion, excellent. There are examples of good teaching in each year. There was no unsatisfactory teaching observed. This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection. The good quality of teaching confirms the positive views of parents and is beginning to raise standards. Teachers have very good relationships with their classes. They manage them well and pupils value their friendly and helpful teachers. An analysis of pupils' work from earlier in the year shows that there were some inconsistencies in teachers' expectations of junior pupils that did not ensure that they always made good progress. Most teachers took on a new year group at the beginning of the school year. As teachers became more aware of the range of ability in their class, they matched work closely to pupils' needs and progress improved. This was particularly evident in English and mathematics where teaching is good, although less evident in some other subjects, for example in science and history. The good teaching in literacy and numeracy enables pupils to develop their basic skills well and apply them effectively in other subjects, for example extended writing in history and gathering and analysing numerical data in geography.
15. Teachers use resources well to grasp pupils' interest and attention. They question pupils effectively to extend their thinking and to involve them fully in class discussions. Teachers work in close partnership with good quality teaching assistants to ensure that all pupils contribute, including lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. For example, in a very good Year 2/3 religious education lesson, the teacher used a story book very well to focus pupils' interest as she read them a parable. She questioned pupils to explain 'What do you think he was feeling?' and extended their vocabulary and use of grammar by challenging them to 'Give me another word!' or 'Put that into the first person'. This improved the quality of their initial answer. Good communication with support staff enabled all pupils to put forward their ideas and contribute to a very successful discussion.
16. Where teachers have good subject knowledge, they use it successfully to raise standards. For example, in a good Year 6 information and communication technology lesson, the teacher's very good subject knowledge and good class management enabled her to provide pupils with effective guidance and support. They made good progress in their skills, knowledge and understanding of how to prepare and make a presentation. Most teachers maintain a brisk pace to lessons. Many share the objective of the lesson with their pupils so that they know what they are trying to achieve. Teachers inform pupils of the time they have to complete the task. They maintain a brisk pace to the activity with regular time reminders, although not all ensure that different pupils know what they are expected to have achieved when the lesson ends. Where teaching is less effective, although still sound overall, teachers do not challenge pupils, especially the more-able, to extend their skills and knowledge in science and geography. They do not use assessment information consistently to plan activities that require pupils to apply their knowledge and give reasons and explanations for their answers. This does not ensure that they achieve the standard of which they are capable.
17. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall, with some very good features. As a result, children receive a flying start to their education at Wheelock School. Teaching and support staff have a very good team approach. They work very well together to create a warm and friendly atmosphere that enables children to settle happily and make good progress. Staff value children's contributions and they grow in confidence and concentrate well. Relationships are excellent. Staff have high expectations. They plan and organise a good range of stimulating learning activities that grasp children's interest and attention. It encourages them to develop an enthusiastic attitude to learning and to make good, and often very good, progress towards their early learning goals.

18. Teachers use homework regularly, especially in the juniors, to support learning. They use worksheets, for example in English and mathematics, to reinforce pupils' literacy and numeracy skills soundly. There were good examples of teachers using homework in other subjects, for example science and geography, especially in Year 6. Some of these activities require pupils to apply their research skills to support work in school, for example by finding information about the range and amount of waste materials collected in their homes. Inspectors found that most teachers use homework soundly to promote and support learning. This does not support the views of some parents. An analysis of pupils' work showed that teachers use marking constructively to praise pupils for good work and inform them how the standard could be improved. Pupils value the guidance given by teachers in their marking, particularly when it informs them about progress towards their improvement targets. It was evident in the work analysis that some teachers make frequent references about pupils' targets, but this is not consistent practice.
19. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. They are supported well and make good progress towards the targets that are set for them in their individual education plans. This is because there is a close match between what teachers plan for these pupils and their needs as set down in their individual education plans. Teaching assistants often make an important contribution to this good learning by for example skilful questioning and helping pupils to develop effective strategies for spelling words correctly. One for instance said 'If you don't know 'ow' think of a word with it in'. They encourage pupils with behaviour difficulties so that they learn to concentrate for increasingly longer periods and play a full role in lessons. Teachers ensure that the resources necessary to foster the good learning of these pupils are used effectively, as in Year 5 when one pupil used a number square to support his learning of number patterns. The teaching of the very few pupils with English as an additional language is good. Teachers provide good individual support and guidance to ensure that they are included fully and know what they are expected to achieve. This helps them to make good progress and to achieve nationally expected standards.

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

20. The school has strengthened its curriculum since the last inspection and it is now good. It has achieved this improvement by making good use of national guidance for its plans in most subjects. It has met the key issue to implement a long-term curriculum plan. This maps out for teachers what pupils will be taught each year. It enables them to build pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills effectively in most subjects, particularly literacy and numeracy. It is not linked closely to assessment procedures in some subjects, especially science and geography, to ensure that teachers build consistently on prior learning. Particular improvements to the long-term plans for information and communication technology have contributed to the improved standards in this subject in Years 3 to 6. The curriculum for children in reception is good because it takes careful regard of all the areas of learning for children of this age, making meaningful links between them. These links foster the children's good progress, notably in their personal and social development, which staff support particularly well.
21. The school teaches all the subjects that it should to pupils from Year 1 to Year 6. There are effective arrangements for teaching pupils' basic numeracy skills, which are beginning to raise standards. The school's effective strategies for teaching literacy skills have sought to address the relative lower attainment of boys compared with that of girls in English. This has included thoughtful consideration of the kind of topics that might appeal to boys, such as '*Robin Hood*', as well as providing more non-fiction books on themes, such as '*Castles*'. While the school has been thorough in its implementation of the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies, a good focus has been kept on the importance of other subjects. This enables pupils to produce some good work, notably in art and dance. All

pupils have full access to the curriculum. There is good support for pupils with special educational needs in all year groups. This is largely because the teachers and support staff who help these pupils provide them with valuable guidance.

22. There is a good range of activities outside normal lessons. The school provides opportunities for pupils to be involved in various sports, art and musical activities as well as a French club and a computer club. This effectively boosts pupils' skills in subjects, such as music, art and physical education. The school makes good use of educational visits, including residential visits, to broaden pupils' ideas about the world beyond the confines of the school. Pupils as young as Year 2 have the opportunity to attend a visit when they spend a night away from home. Older pupils attend residential visits and there are day visits that contribute to pupils' learning in subjects, including history and religious education. These experiences contribute well to the school's arrangements for fostering pupils' personal development.
23. The school's successful arrangements for introducing the youngest children to the reception class involve parents fully and include positive liaison with some of the local pre-school organisations, such as the local play-group. Liaison with the secondary schools is good and Year 6 pupils benefit from many opportunities to develop their learning in a range of subjects as a result. Teachers from the secondary schools extend the Year 6 pupils' skill, knowledge and understanding in dance and hockey, for example, as well as in science, mathematics and English. A range of visitors to the school enriches the pupils' learning. These include, for example, musicians who extend pupils' awareness of musical traditions, such as those of Africa and a male poet as part of the school's drive to capture boys' full interest in writing.
24. Sound arrangements ensure that pupils are taught about health issues, sex education and the dangers of drugs. These are mainly addressed through science. There is strong support for pupils' personal and social development and they receive much encouragement, often through positive experiences, such as the '*Praise assemblies*' when pupils' efforts are celebrated and rewarded. As a result most behave sensibly and responsibly in all year groups and they develop an early sense of good citizenship.
25. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted through the school's aims and an ethos of care and respect for others. The provision for pupils' spiritual development has improved since the last inspection and it is now good. In lessons and assemblies, pupils of all ages have frequent opportunities and guidance to explore their inner feelings and reflect upon events that affect their lives and those of others, now and in the past. An example of this was seen in pupils' writing as they responded to how they would have felt to be a workhouse child in Victorian times. In an assembly, pupils were sensitively helped to think about suffering and sadness in sickness and death. This was linked well to the Christian belief of resurrection. In '*Praise*' assemblies, pupils have good opportunities to celebrate the achievements of others and to value, respect and promote the ethos in which pupils grow and flourish. In religious education, pupils explore the values and beliefs of Judaism, Hinduism and Christianity. Teachers often create a wondrous atmosphere in which pupils willingly respond to the work of artists, stories and excerpts from well-chosen literature and poetry and the natural world.
26. The school continues to make good provision for pupils' moral development. Teachers encourage pupils to consider the principles of good behaviour and to draw up a list of class rules, together with associated rewards and sanctions. These blend well with the overall school behaviour policy, which is enforced consistently. All adults in the school are good role models and quickly correct the rare examples of inappropriate behaviour. Pupils have a clear understanding of what is right and what is wrong. Pupils discuss different moral issues sensibly in personal, social, health and citizenship education. For example, in a

Year 4 lesson the teacher used a story about a giant and a good questioning technique to stimulate discussion about what is wrong with bullying and what pupils would do if it happened to them. Many assemblies have a moral theme that allows pupils to explore the feelings of those who are wronged and the possible guilt of the perpetrator. The school aims to develop the pupils' spirit of co-operation with positive reinforcement. This is effectively achieved through the recognition and celebration of success in the award assembly. Pupils are tolerant of their peers' views and respect their feelings and values. For example, in a Year 6 discussion of persuasive argument, pupils listened quietly to the views of others and willingly accepted that other views might be different from their own.

27. The provision for social education has improved since the last inspection and it is now very good. Throughout the school, relationships are very good. Staff and pupils enjoy one another's company. All adults contribute to the caring ethos that is a feature of the school. The success is seen by the enthusiastic way pupils come into school and in the pupils' willingness to contribute to lessons and give answers, even if not totally sure they are correct. Pupils work well together. Residential visits, for example in Year 2, provide chances to live, work and play together and play an important part in pupils' social development. The school encourages pupils of different ages and abilities to mix and work together. This works particularly well when pupils in Year 6 become reading partners for younger pupils during shared reading time and they help at playtime with children when they first start school. Pupils are given responsibilities in all classes, but most particularly in Year 6. All pupils are consulted on a wide range of issues, for example school lunches, so that they understand that their opinions matter. The formation of a school council is now being considered. The Year 2 pupils have very good links with the David Lewis Centre for Epilepsy. Pupils from this school visit twice a year and pupils from Year 2 visit their school to see the Christmas performance and to use the swimming pool. The good extra-curricular activities help to develop pupils' co-operation and team spirit as well as their skills and abilities. Pupils have participated in community events and have contributed to various charitable activities, such as 'shoe-boxes for Romania'.
28. Overall the provision for pupils' cultural development has improved since the last inspection. It is now good and is effectively promoted during lessons and through various visits and visitors. These include visiting musicians, poets, artists and theatre groups. Trips to local theatres and museums are used well to stimulate pupils' interests and to enrich the curriculum. Pupils have a rich experience of their inherited culture through studies of historical eras. For example, pupils in the Year 2/3 class became completely immersed in the life of the Tudors when visiting historians came for a school day. The study of the work of a wide range of famous artists is a strong feature of the school. Pupils have discussed the work of such artists as Henri Rousseau, Paul Klee and Henry Moore. In English, pupils read a variety of poetry and some classical literature. For example, in Year 5 pupils studied a section of Shakespeare's *King Lear* to stimulate their own writing. The school has taken positive steps to promote pupils' understanding of other cultures. For example, in history young pupils listen to stories of famous people, such as Mary Secole and junior pupils study the Ancient Greeks and Ancient Egyptians. Geography studies include a focus upon villages in Kenya and India and junior pupils study world faiths. The school has good artefacts of African art and these, along with stories from other cultures provide stimuli for pupils' artwork. In the past, pupils have had visitors from India and Ghana to discuss their customs, dance and dress but this is not a regular feature of the curriculum.



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

29. The quality of care has improved since the previous inspection. It is now very good and a strength of the school. Staff know their pupils and families very well. The school's caring ethos creates a calm, supportive and safe learning environment that is much valued by parents.
30. The school has very good procedures to monitor and promote the welfare of every pupil. A reassuring word or a friendly gesture by staff was often seen during the inspection. Both the headteacher and deputy headteacher are fully trained in aspects of child protection. The school has adopted procedures agreed locally with social services. There is a governor with a specific role in the aspect. All members of staff have received good training and are fully aware of action to be taken. First aid provision is also very good and accident books properly completed. All aspects of health and safety, including risk assessments are in place. Health and safety is regularly observed in lessons, for example in art, pupils wore aprons and were told to wash their hands after handling substances.
31. Procedures to monitor and promote attendance are very good. Registers are consistently well marked and regularly monitored by the secretary and headteacher. The education welfare officer visits to ensure compliance and accuracy. Collating attendance data is currently done manually but soon this will be done electronically. The secretary has been trained and software installed in the computer system. This will make monitoring more effective. Both the prospectus and 'governors' annual report to parents' highlights the importance of regular attendance.
32. Procedures to monitor and promote behaviour are very good. Following the last inspection report all members of staff consistently enforce high standards of behaviour. Bullying, racism or other forms of anti-social behaviour are viewed seriously and eliminated as far as possible. This is confirmed from positive comments made by parents. Midday supervisors are involved in ensuring that every pupil is supported and integrated in all the activities. Midday supervisors meet weekly with the headteacher so any suggestions or concerns are dealt with promptly.
33. Procedures to monitor and promote the pupils' personal development are good. Being a small school, some of the monitoring is informal but it is none the less effective. Stickers or an 'award teddy' are presented for good work. There are celebration assemblies to recognise special work or deeds. In one assembly, the theme of mortality was taught with incredible impact and sensitivity. However in some lessons teachers do not allow enough time for reflection on the moral impact. The special educational needs co-ordinator has regular contact with outside agencies to ensure each pupil has appropriate help. Pupils' annual reports contain details of the pupils' personal development. Although there is a sound policy, there is no co-ordinator for personal, social and health education to monitor and evaluate its impact.
34. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress have improved since the last inspection. They are now good. Foundation Stage children are assessed frequently against the steps that lead to them achieving their early learning goals. In Years 2 and 6 pupils carry out the statutory end-of-phase tests and in Years 3, 4 and 5 pupils are tested in mathematics and English using the national non-statutory tests. The school also uses another standardised reading test. The senior management team has improved their role in the analysis of test results and track pupils' attainment as they move through the school. Teachers predict future levels of attainment from this information. From their analysis, the senior management team has highlighted that boys appear to underachieving in reading and writing and have begun put strategies in place to improve boys' performance. Analysis of pupils' attainment is used well to identify pupils with special educational needs and those who need additional support.

35. Teachers have comprehensive pupil assessment sheets, which they fill in each term for literacy and numeracy, and relate to the National Curriculum levels of attainment. Similarly, there are skill sheets for art and physical education. Assessment records are completed for science, but at present these relate particularly to the scheme of work and are not focused sufficiently on individuals' skills and knowledge and National Curriculum levels. In other subjects the records are less consistent. There is no common format and although lesson plans show key learning outcomes, these are not used well for recording assessment in all classes. Some teachers keep good records of the skills acquired by pupils over the course of a topic. The senior management team scrutinises examples of pupils' work each term to ensure that there is sufficient progression in skills and understanding. Some work has been carried out within school to share expertise in the assessment of pupils' work and reaching common agreement on pupils' attainment. However, some assessments of finer grades within the higher National Curriculum levels are not secure in all classes. The information from teacher assessment is used satisfactorily to group pupils according to their ability in literacy and numeracy and to set individual targets for pupils to improve their work. However, the information is not consistently used to plan appropriate tasks for all pupils and sometimes the most able are not challenged sufficiently.

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

36. The school has improved its links with parents since the last inspection. These links are good, with some aspects very good and are developing strongly. The views of the parents confirm this and they regard this is an improving school. This partnership is a strength of the school and it makes a significant contribution to the pupils' learning.
37. Many parents praised the warm welcome and induction process they received as prospective parents of pupils to be enrolled. This process is particularly strong in the Foundation Stage and as a result, pupils start confidently on the first stage of their education. A home visit is used effectively to support an assessment of children's skills on entry to the school. Parent views are gathered in a number of ways and parents' state that the school and staff are very approachable to discuss concerns.
38. Routine information is of good quality and curriculum information is provided each term. The special educational needs co-ordinator involves parents whose children require special educational support. There are established links with the outside agencies, such as translation service, traveller education service or refugee services. Part of the school development plan is to improve the facilities for the disabled. However, these improvements are not clearly stated in the governors' annual report to parents. The annual pupils' reports give parents a clear picture of the progress their child is making. It is obvious from the reports that staff know the pupils extremely well. However, they do not contain consistent information. A few have clear targets for improvement and some contain attainment levels. A few parents stated that they would like more feedback on homework and more challenge for older pupils. Inspection evidence shows that homework is satisfactory for the infants and good for the juniors. Scrutiny of the homework reading logs shows few parents make comments, whereas all teachers do. Parents have good access to teachers, for example at the start of the school day, and can easily follow how often their child reads.
39. A number of parents help in the life of the school, such as shared reading, to help raise the levels of literacy. Others help with school trips, cooking or making things. A very active 'Friends of Wheelock' organise a wide range of fund-raising activities. Profits from such events purchase valuable resources to help improve the quality of education. Recent additions include playground resources, gymnasium equipment and books for the library.

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

40. The headteacher provides good leadership to the school. This has improved since the last inspection. She has focused very successfully on improving pupils' attitudes and behaviour, promoting a supportive and caring ethos and improving the accommodation and working environment. The headteacher, supported well by her governors, has brought in new staff as pupil numbers have increased and established a good team approach with a good capacity to succeed. All staff and governors clearly share the aims of the school, set out clearly in the prospectus. These aims give a clear direction to its work, especially in relation to a happy, caring family atmosphere and pupils' personal development. Parents and pupils value the leadership of the headteacher. The management of the school has been maintained at the overall sound level reported previously. The school has improved its procedures for assessing, targeting and tracking pupils' achievements. The headteacher uses assessment information well to agree class attainment targets with each class teacher. Some are evaluated mid-year to assess progress towards them, although a focused, on-going scrutiny of how successful teachers are in meeting these targets is not established.
41. The school has enhanced the role of subject co-ordinators since the last inspection, particularly those for literacy and numeracy, in monitoring aspects of teaching and learning. The senior management team, and support staff from the local education authority, monitor and evaluate teaching and learning regularly. These procedures have improved teaching considerably since the last inspection. The opportunities for other curriculum co-ordinators to observe teaching are not established. Subject co-ordinators maintain subject management files, monitor teaching plans and look at samples of pupils' work. They identify areas for improvement, for example problem solving in mathematics, and draw up action plans to show how these areas will be improved. However, they do not consistently and systematically evaluate progress of their action plans to focus on key improvement strategies. These procedures are not sufficiently rigorous throughout the school to ensure that they raise standards. For example, assessments are not analysed rigorously to show why standards in each area of learning in the Foundation Stage and in some subjects are as they are. Some co-ordinators do not then identify strategies for taking action consistently to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning. The special educational needs co-ordinator manages this aspect of the school's provision well so that these pupils receive support that is well matched to their needs. She has a clear overview of pupils' individual education plans and liaises effectively with parents and with outside agencies so that pupils benefit from any specialist support that they need.
42. The role and contribution of the governing body have improved since the last inspection. Governors are very effective in working with the headteacher and her staff to shape the direction of the work of the school. They have specific subject responsibilities. Many come into school regularly to work closely with subject co-ordinators, for example to observe and, on occasions, to participate in such lessons as physical education. They keep themselves well informed about the strengths and areas for improvement. Governors are involved in agreeing and implementing the school development plan and linking it to finances. They monitor progress on the various issues, for example by discussing priorities with the headteacher and subject co-ordinators, although this is not always focused closely on standards of attainment. Governors fulfil their statutory duties efficiently and responsibly. They have a positive influence in promoting school improvement, and have been particularly effective in working with the headteacher to improve the accommodation considerably.
43. The school has established good procedures to ensure that finances are monitored closely and targeted on improvement priorities. Governors work in partnership with the headteacher, school secretary and the school's finance officer to monitor spending levels. They have used specific funds well, for example the Standards Fund, to maintain staffing levels and provide additional teaching support for targeted groups of pupils, especially in

literacy and numeracy. Governors have good financial knowledge and understanding and use them effectively to apply the best value principles and to check cost effectiveness. These procedures enable funds to be used efficiently, although they are not always used to evaluate rigorously against standards of attainment, for example by evaluating the impact of additional support staff. The governors and the headteacher benefit from the efficient financial management and office administration of the school secretary who contributes significantly to the smooth running of the school.

44. The school is well staffed with a sufficient number of teachers, sharing an appropriate range of skills and experiences. Staffing levels have been maintained. There is a good level of support for any newly qualified or new member of staff. Strategies for performance management are good and targets and personal professional development are linked closely to the school improvement priorities. There is a good level of support from dedicated teaching assistants. They attend a variety of training courses to support teaching and learning. A very conscientious caretaker ensures that the school is maintained in a very clean and hygienic condition.
45. Issues from the previous report have been fully addressed and the accommodation is now very good. The refurbishment has been done sensitively and has improved the learning environment significantly, for example by creating areas for small groups to receive more focussed support. However, the main library is uninspiring and pupils seldom use its facilities. Most classrooms are spacious and attractive. Teachers easily supervise and give each pupil individual attention. There are some very good displays of the pupils' work that are 'eye-catching', especially in art and design. The foyer has a welcoming display that reflects the ethos effectively. The reception class play area is safe and there is sufficient space for creative and physical activities, such as wheeled toys. Recent additions to the playground are stimulating. The environmental pond is secure and a small herb garden adds interest. The 'cave' and statues similar to those on Easter Island are very popular with the pupils.
46. The overall quality and quantity of resources are good. There have been improvements in art, information and communication technology, science and fiction books. Governors recognise that there are shortages in aspects of geography and in some aspects of physical education equipment, although subject co-ordinators are working hard to improve them. There is a shortage of non-fiction books in the library, especially multi-cultural. However, the school buys into the Cheshire Schools library service. As a result, the school can easily borrow large numbers of reference books to support curriculum topics. Pupils visit the mobile schools library van to enhance the range of reading books.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

In order to continue to raise pupils' attainment and the quality of education, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- a) ensure that teachers use assessment information consistently to:
  - build pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in history, geography and religious education;
  - challenge more-able pupils more in science;  
(paragraphs 5, 7, 16, 20, 35, 61, 68, 69, 73, 86, 90 and 107)
- b) systematically and rigorously evaluate the impact of the school's action plans.  
(paragraphs 40, 41 and 43)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

52

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

31

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	1	13	20	18	0	0	0
Percentage	2	25	38	35	0	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 nearly two percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	208
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	11
<b>Special educational needs</b>	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	18
<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1
<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	2.7
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	11	15	26

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	9	11
	Girls	13	14	14
	Total	22	23	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (86)	88 (80)	96 (94)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	11	11
	Girls	13	14	12
	Total	22	25	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (86)	96 (94)	88 (100)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	17	12	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	13	16
	Girls	10	9	11
	Total	25	22	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (72)	76 (69)	93 (97)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	14	16
	Girls	10	10	11
	Total	24	24	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (78)	83 (78)	93 (91)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>	<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
White – British	177	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	26	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)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Average class size	30

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	77

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2002 / 03
	£
Total income	504,846
Total expenditure	499,114
Expenditure per pupil	2,279
Balance brought forward from previous year	19,465
Balance carried forward to next year	25,197

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1.5
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 42%

Number of questionnaires sent out	208
Number of questionnaires returned	88

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	34	2	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	47	2	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	56	6	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	50	19	1	4
The teaching is good.	55	43	2	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	50	9	5	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	30	4	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	51	48	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	43	43	10	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	50	44	2	2	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	46	8	1	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	40	15	5	12

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

**AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

**Personal, social and emotional development**

47. Teaching and learning are very good and so children in the reception class make very good progress. Most are likely to exceed the expectations for their age by the time they start Year 1. The staff in the reception class take great care to create a warm and inviting atmosphere in which children feel secure and valued. Well known routines underpin the calm atmosphere. The teacher clearly explains how they are expected to behave and children move about the school quietly, showing consideration for older pupils who are working. Discussion about the creatures in the school pond effectively develops children's sensitivity to other living things. Staff show the children that they value what they have to say and this encourages them to offer their ideas and suggestions in discussions. As a result, most children develop good levels of confidence and most concentrate well for sustained periods. Resulting relationships between children and staff and between the children themselves are excellent. There is a strong sense of teamwork between the children as when they try to join in with new songs.

**Communication, language and literacy**

48. Teaching and learning are good overall, with some very good features though there are missed opportunities to develop some skills. Most children are likely to reach the goals set for the end of reception, and some are on target to exceed them. The adults are particularly effective at fostering the children's love of books. For example, the teacher reads stories in a magical way so that the children are totally engrossed, as in a story about baby owls who wanted their mummy. Regular shared reading in the classroom with older pupils, parents, grandparents and other adults further extends the children's enjoyment of books as well as supporting the very good links with parents. Well-planned activities enable children to talk together. For example, after walking around the school grounds, they were encouraged to talk in pairs about what they liked and did not like. This worked well for most children, but was less successful for the few who were reluctant to speak without adult support. Clear expectations mean that all children understand the need to listen when others are talking. Teaching effectively helps children to build up new words by using the sounds of the letters. When they read, for example, they routinely open their hands and nod as they make the sound of each letter. More-able children blend sounds together to help them to read new words. The teacher's handwriting is exemplary both in children's books and on the board. There is an important emphasis on children having a go at writing what they want to say and this builds their confidence well. Some children are unsure about how to form their letters correctly. Staff keep copious records of what children can do. They use these to inform future teaching, although staff do not always use opportunities, for example in small group activities, to reinforce correct letter formation. This does not ensure that some children acquire correct habits, such as for joining letters in the future. Reading records are a useful link between home and school and are used well to monitor reading progress. Sometimes teaching staff miss opportunities to indicate what each child needs to do next to best develop reading skills.

**Mathematical development**

49. Most children are likely to reach the goals set for their age by the time they start Year 1, with a good number exceeding these expectations. Teaching and learning are very good. As in other areas of learning, written plans give the support assistants a very clear view of what they are expected to do to help the children to learn. This thorough planning enables them to have a strong positive impact on children's progress. Teaching makes good use

of songs, such as *'One, two, buckle my shoe'* to develop children's knowledge and it gives them useful strategies for adding, such as *'Keep 5 in your head and count on 2'*. Teaching successfully extends children's understanding by enabling them to share with others how they arrived at an answer. For example, one child said *'I counted 6 then 7'* while another explained *'I chose the larger one'*. Most children confidently count to 20 and they are acquiring a good understanding of various processes including *'doubling'*. Teaching moves along at a brisk pace and because the children are very keen to please, they concentrate very well. It makes good use of estimating to help children to extend their skills and understanding when using coins, before actually counting. In this area of learning, teaching focuses particularly well on supporting those children who need further help in order to move on to the next stage in their learning. For example the teacher spotted two children within a group of four who had not understood counting and matching up to 5 coins and gave them further support until they securely grasped the skill. Very good support by teaching assistants and voluntary helpers enhances children's very good learning, for example through timely questions, such as *'How many?'* and *'Which is the bigger one?'* Lesson summaries are used very successfully, for example to reinforce the idea of doubling. However, they do not always challenge the brighter children with sufficiently demanding questions to extend their learning further. Teaching makes this area of learning exciting.

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

50. Teaching and learning are very good and children make good progress. Most are likely to exceed the expectations for their age by the time they start in Year 1. A real strength in teaching is the extent to which staff plan activities that bring topics to life through visitors and first-hand observations. They are careful to build children's vocabulary so that they can talk about topics. There are plenty of opportunities in which children put the language they have learned into practice. This was well demonstrated when the teacher led a discussion about the caterpillars that were being kept in the classroom. The children were developing good knowledge of words such as *'pupa'* and *'chrysalis'* and several of the more-able children used such terms when talking about how the caterpillars would change into butterflies. A visitor from the RSPCA enhanced the children's good understanding of the physical needs of animals, as well as the care that they required. By drawing plans of the school grounds and walking around them with a specific focus, they learn to look with a critical eye at their immediate environment. Children use computers competently, for example to produce pictures and they learn about other aspects of technology including digital cameras and how to program a floor robot.

### **Physical development**

51. An improvement since the school's last inspection is the addition of an outside-play area for reception children. This includes space for wheeled toys and other activities, such as when children plant herbs to enhance the school environment. Although the school has not purchased equipment to develop specific skills, such as climbing and jumping, the children share other areas of the school grounds. Here, they can adequately explore by climbing and moving under and through different shapes. Teaching and learning are good. Most children are likely to exceed the expectations for their age by the time they start in Year 1. There are good opportunities for children to develop fine control for example through gluing, observational art work and making patterns on textiles. Children move with confidence, imagination and safety as when skipping, hopping and jumping to the song *'What shall we do on a frosty morning?'*

### **Creative development**

52. Teaching and learning are good because there is a good range of opportunities and media for children to use, including observational drawings and mixing paint to make different

colours. Most children make good progress and are likely to exceed the goals for their age by the end of reception. The staff take great care to value the children's accurate painting, drawing and pattern work. This is seen in the hard-backed books of children's work and in the well-displayed sari patterns, for example, that the children make on textiles. Children show their enjoyment of singing with laughter and squeals of delight. They were keen to learn a new song '*Don't drop litter*' about looking after their environment. Children co-operate well in their play activities such as in the 'garden centre'.

## ENGLISH

53. Inspection findings show that overall standards are currently average at the end of Years 2 and 6. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. However, despite some yearly variation in infant reading and writing due to the ability range of the pupils, the proportion of pupils who attain the nationally expected or higher levels has risen in line with national trends. The successful introduction of the National Literacy Strategy accounts mainly for this rise, together with the good teaching in infant and junior classes. There has been good improvement in junior pupils' speaking and listening skills and handwriting and presentation skills throughout the school. Pupils make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their personal programmes, because they have effective additional adult support to help them to succeed. The school has identified that overall, boys are less successful than girls in the achievement of the expected or higher levels of attainment in reading and writing. Teachers have purchased additional non-fiction readers for classrooms throughout the school and promote strategies to encourage boys to enjoy writing within other subjects and following role-play situations. Although these initiatives are at an early stage of development, they are already having some success.
54. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are average in the infant classes and above average by the end of Year 6. In infant classes, teachers plan times for pupils to listen carefully, such as in stories and to each other when talking about their work. They use effective open-ended questions to stimulate well-considered answers in full sentences and make good use of role-play in lessons, particularly in Year 1. Some pupils find it difficult to wait their turn to speak, but through careful guidance most pupils respect the contribution of others. Some pupils in Year 2 need active encouragement to join in with class discussion. Older pupils are articulate and talk confidently, using increasingly complex vocabulary on a wide range of subjects. For example, three Year 5 pupils in the roles of Robin Hood, King John and Maid Marian confidently and spontaneously answered questions posed by the class, drawing upon their own knowledge and understanding. In a science lesson, a Year 6 pupil spoke of, 'upthrust of the water counterbalancing the gravity'. Teachers provide good role models and extend pupils' language understanding across the curriculum. For instance, in a Year 4 class, the teacher used and explained the term 'figurative language'.
55. Attainment overall in reading is average at the end of Year 2 and pupils achieve soundly. Reading is taught effectively in Years 1 and 2. There is a strong emphasis in lessons on the reinforcement and use of letter sounds to build up words. For example in a Year 1 lesson, pupils made satisfactory attempts to identify initial, ending and medial sounds in the words 'feed', 'bread' and 'wheat' and to write them on their individual whiteboards to share with the class. Pupils continue to use this strategy of building words satisfactorily in their own reading. Most pupils discuss the key events in the stories they are currently reading and make simple predictions about what will happen next in the story. Not all pupils have a clear understanding of the difference between fiction and non-fiction books. Above-average pupils read with much expression, easily coping with words, such as 'transparent' and 'coloured'. The school uses a good variety of books that are levelled by ability within the school for personal reading. Reading homework is well supported by most parents, as is the weekly shared-reading session for parents and carers to come into school at the beginning of a school day. Pupils read regularly to teachers and other adults

in literacy sessions and in guided group-reading, when books suited to the pupils' ability levels are read and discussed satisfactorily.

56. Standards of reading in the current Year 6 are average, although in Years 4 and 5 there is evidence of a higher proportion of pupils attaining the expected or higher levels. By Year 4, pupils read a satisfactory range of modern and classic fiction, poetry and non-fiction texts. In a lesson, Year 4 pupils made good comparisons of the descriptive style of two excerpts about lions, one from fiction and one from an information book. They were able to discuss the differences well and showed an understanding of why emotive words are used in fiction and poetry. By Year 6, pupils have developed distinct preferences for the type of books they read. They write thoughtful book reviews. They use non-fiction books, magazines or the Internet soundly for research and use contents, index and glossaries well. As resources in the school's library are limited and books that relate to the current class topic are kept in classrooms, pupils' library skills are below average.
57. Pupils attain average standards in writing in Year 2. Pupils practise a printed style of handwriting and mainly it is of an even size. The more able pupils are beginning to join their letters and those in the mixed Year 2/3 class use this consistently in their own writing. The school continues to raise standards in writing and within literacy lessons has created many opportunities for pupils to work on extended pieces of prose. Most pupils write stories with their ideas organised into sentences, most of which start with a capital letter and end with a full stop. More-able pupils try to use punctuation within sentences, such as speed marks, but do not use this consistently. Most pupils spell simple words correctly and more complex words are phonetically correct. Average and more-able pupils are beginning to use interesting first sentences to their stories, a sound story structure and a variety of vocabulary. For example, a more-able pupil used the words 'scrambled', 'misty forest' and 'sprouting' in a story.
58. By the end of Year 6, pupils demonstrate average standards in writing, grammar and spelling. Junior pupils extend their writing skills soundly in a wide range of styles, including stories, letters and various forms of poetry. Pupils are taught well how to plan stories and other writing, to edit them, to extend sentences using a variety of connectives and to include punctuation, such as speech marks accurately. Pupils have good opportunities to plan their work, either in books or on individual whiteboards, which they use to structure their work soundly. Most pupils improve their sentence structure, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation for a final draft. In Year 4, pupils begin to use imagery to create interest in their writing, for example a pupil wrote, 'revealing roof timbers like skeletons under the human flesh'. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils were guided effectively to write a persuasive text on the theme, 'Should dogs be banned from the park'. Most pupils wrote sound arguments, set out the pros and cons of the subject, used paragraphs satisfactorily and provided an informed summary at the end. Pupils use a neatly joined script. Other curriculum areas provide an appropriate focus for extended writing. For example, in history pupils write empathetic pieces of writing as though they are evacuees, in London during the World War II bombing. They write up reports and accounts from scientific investigations and from historical and geographical information. Word-processing is used to edit and present written information in all classes.
59. The quality of teaching is good and enables pupils to develop their literacy skills effectively. It reflects the careful attention teachers have paid to the National Literacy Strategy, and to planning their interesting lessons. They manage classes well. Good learning occurs where teachers use targeted and open questions to ensure that all pupils take part in the lesson at the appropriate level and extend their learning. For example in a Year 1 lesson, the teacher stated, 'I want Polar Bears group to answer this one.' Where teachers ask more general questions of the whole class, and do not use more challenging ones for higher ability pupils, learning opportunities are missed. Usually the pace of the lesson is brisk with a variety of activities following on from each other, so that pupil

concentration and interest levels remain high. It is in those lessons where the pace slackens or where time runs out, that learning is not so effective. The best teachers ensure that there are regular reminders about time and how much pupils should have achieved at a given point. This leads to sharply focused activities. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and often use pointers for pupils to improve future work. This, alongside individual pupil targets for improvement, gives pupils a good understanding of what they need to do in the future. In the best practice, teachers remind pupils to check their work with their own target in mind. Support staff make an important contribution to the quality of pupils' learning, particularly those pupils with special educational needs. These adults are fully involved in the 'whole class' sessions as well as when working with groups of pupils. For their part, pupils bring good learning attitudes to their lessons and work well together.

60. The co-ordinator has monitored the subject satisfactorily. She has looked at teachers' planning, at pupils' writing from all classes and has had the opportunity to observe some teaching. The assessment of pupils' attainment is good, with a range of formal tests and checklists of key areas for teacher assessment. There has been some analysis of test results and pupils' test results are tracked across year groups and targeted for improvement. Assessment information is used well to group pupils by ability and to provide additional literacy support where necessary, but not all teachers consistently plan lessons for different ability groups to raise standards of attainment.

## **MATHEMATICS**

61. Pupils attain average standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. These standards are similar to those reported at the last inspection for those year groups, although inspectors found that standards are rising in some other year groups, for example Years 3 and 4. Pupils in the current Year 6 are attaining standards that reflect those attained in the national tests over the last three years. The proportion of pupils achieving the nationally expected Level 4 is above average. The proportion achieving above this expected level is below average. Inspection evidence shows that the proportion of the current Year 2 pupils attaining the nationally expected Level 2 is average. The proportion attaining above expected levels is just below average. This is below the standards attained in the 2002 tests for seven-year-olds. Assessment information shows that the current Year 2 and Year 6 have a higher than usual number of lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs.
62. Pupils make sound progress overall in their learning. It is often good in lessons, although an analysis of pupils' work shows that pupils do not always extend their skills, knowledge and understanding consistently in each year group. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from good teaching and support and make good progress towards their learning targets. The more-able Year 2 pupils in the mixed Year 2/3 class have been challenged very well and are achieving above expected levels for their age. Some uncertainties in pupils' number knowledge and understanding, for example in Year 5, limit their progress. Teaching and support staff work very well together to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are included fully, and supported well, in all learning activities. The good quality support helps them make good progress and they achieve standards that are close to those expected for their age. The quality of teaching is good overall and has improved since the last inspection. Teachers have implemented the National Numeracy Strategy successfully and are using it well to improve the quality of their planning and teaching. It is beginning to raise standards, for example, with a higher proportion of pupils attaining above average levels in Years 1, 3 and 4. Most pupils enjoy mathematics and their positive attitudes encourage them to work hard and try to improve their standards. The school analyses assessment information closely to identify weaknesses in pupils' learning. They use this information to set numeracy improvement targets for pupils and these are raising the standard of work in some year groups. The school used these improved assessment procedures to identify a weakness in pupils' problem solving skills.

Teachers have focused effectively on improving pupils' knowledge and use of different strategies. However, some weaknesses in older junior pupils' knowledge and understanding of number, for example place value, limit the accuracy of their work and restrict the number achieving above average standards.

63. Most Year 2 pupils have sound number skills, knowledge and understanding. They are confident in counting up to 100. Many accurately recall addition and subtraction facts to 10 and use them successfully to work out sums involving numbers up to 100, for example when totalling coins up to £1. More-able Year 2 pupils extend their knowledge well, for example by recognising the value of three digit numbers and putting them correctly in order of size. Some average and below average pupils have above expected knowledge and understanding of the properties of different two- and three-dimensional shapes, for example reflective symmetry. Uncertainties in aspects of their number knowledge, for example their speed of mental recall in adding odd numbers, and inconsistencies in presenting their work, for example by often reversing their numbers, limit the amount achieved and its accuracy.
64. Most Year 3 and 4 pupils extend their number knowledge and understanding successfully, for example using number lines and partitioning strategies to work out addition and subtraction sums involving numbers to 1000. Most have a secure understanding of multiplying and dividing by a single figure, with more-able extending and applying this knowledge well to work out more challenging multiplication sums, for example '19 x 31'. They use their literacy and numeracy skills well when challenged to write out and solve their own number problems. For example, one more-able pupil worked out how class sizes would increase if a large number of foreign exchange pupils came to stay! Teachers use resources well to provide good coverage of all required aspects of mathematics and most build successfully on prior learning, for example in shape work and handling data. The progress of some older junior pupils was limited by some uncertainties in their number understanding. For example, for some Year 5 pupils the accuracy and speed of developing and using their multiplication strategies were restricted by weaknesses in mental recall of four and five times table. They did not achieve as well as they could when the activity was too challenging for them to be able to apply their multiplication knowledge successfully.
65. Most Year 6 pupils develop their mathematical skills soundly, for example their knowledge and use of fractions, decimals and percentages. They know and understand strategies, for example to multiply decimals to two decimal places, although do not always apply them accurately, for example when working out the perimeter and area of regular shapes. Some uncertainties in their understanding of place value limit the accuracy of their work when using larger numbers. Pupils are challenged well to apply their knowledge to solve a good range of mathematical problems. They achieve a considerable amount of work, although they do not always set down their working out clearly to show how they attained their answer. This does not ensure that pupils, especially the more-able, achieve above expected levels.
66. Teaching was good in most lessons observed and was never less than sound. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. Common features of most lessons are detailed planning, teachers' good knowledge and use of the Numeracy Strategy, and the very good management of behaviour through positive relationships. As a result, pupils are interested in their work, behave very well and sustain their interest and their efforts. Standards are improving in some year groups. Teachers maintain a brisk pace to lessons. They establish a good balance between direct teaching and independent learning. For example, in a very challenging and brisk start to a Year 2/3 lesson, the teacher's excellent management of the class ensured that all pupils stayed focused and were desperately keen to answer. The teacher used prompt cards to extend pupils' counting skills and their understanding of the values of the individual digits in three-figure then four-figure numbers.

She then challenged some of the more able to extend their knowledge further by requiring them to adding 10 then 100 to 18,345. This helped them achieve above expected levels. Lively and stimulating starts to lessons were evident in all years and grasp pupils' attention. They benefit from regular practice of mental recall skills and teachers use questions very effectively to ensure that all pupils are involved.

67. Most teachers use a good range of resources to require pupils of different abilities to apply their knowledge and understanding. For example, in a good Year 6 lesson, the teacher provided different worksheets to enable pupils to apply their knowledge of fractions, decimals and percentages to calculate percentage discounts. She then challenged more-able pupils to extend this knowledge to calculate VAT increases of 17.5 per cent. This ensured that all pupils make good progress in the lesson. An analysis of pupils' work since the start of the school year, and observations in some lessons, show that most teachers use different activities to meet the range of abilities, for example with lower attainers covering similar work but using small numbers. However, this was not consistent in all classes and some teachers do not always ensure that they match the learning activities closely to pupils' abilities. This does not help pupils, especially lower attainers and the more-able, to achieve as well as they should.
68. All aspects of mathematics are taught well and teachers use the improved resources for information and communication technology successfully to extend pupils' knowledge, especially in number work and handling data. Teachers require pupils to apply their mathematical skills and knowledge in a sound range of other subjects, for example to record and analyse the information from a survey of waste materials in geography. Teachers mark pupils' work constructively to help them improve its quality. Good use is made of prompts and questions both to extend pupils' thinking and to clarify pupils' uncertainties. For example, a Year 6 pupil wrote the request 'Can you show me how to work out this division?' and the teacher clearly set down the strategy to be used. The subject continues to be soundly managed. The co-ordinator has worked closely with the headteacher and advisory staff from the local education authority to monitor standards of teaching and learning. They have identified areas for development, for example problem solving, although they have not evaluated rigorously the impact of their actions.

## SCIENCE

69. As in the previous report, standards seen during the inspection are average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The school has established a consistent approach to the teaching of science across the school and has recently adopted the national guidance in its scheme of work. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve soundly compared to their prior attainment and make satisfactory progress in all aspects of science. Since the last inspection, the school has focused on pupils' presentation of their work and this is now satisfactory. Pupils are also expected to complete all recording within the lesson, which was not the case previously. The school continues to provide good opportunities for pupils to learn through investigation and practical activities.
70. By the end of Year 2 pupils have undertaken a range of investigations that cover the required aspects of the subject well and show their attainment to be average. The small proportion of pupils who are in the Year 2/3 mixed-age class have carried out more detailed investigational work than others in Year 2. Most pupils know the differences between man-made and natural materials and classify foods accurately for a healthy diet. Pupils are becoming increasingly confident about making predictions about the outcome of investigations. They record outcomes clearly, within the structures and support provided by their teachers to help them organise their findings. In a Year 2 lesson to create an electrical circuit, pupils showed great enthusiasm for their work. With guidance from the teacher and good support by teaching assistants, most pupils knew that there needed to be a complete circuit to light the bulb.



71. By Year 6 pupils are beginning to form scientific questions that they would like answered and to design appropriate investigations to answer them. However, although they are confident in their explanation of what makes a test fair, they are not always clear about which variables should be kept the same. Pupils demonstrate a sound understanding of different types of forces, such as gravity, friction and air-resistance. Well presented tabular information and written recording in the books of pupils in Year 4 show that they use investigations well to gain a satisfactory understanding of the effect of heat, for example which materials are the best insulators. This understanding is soundly built upon in Year 5, as pupils investigate the effect of heat on the rate of evaporation. The most-able pupils understand that experiments need to be repeated to see if the outcome is valid. There are strong links between the work on health and a healthy lifestyle in Year 5 and pupils' personal, social and health education. There is evidence that pupils use mathematical skills well in their measurement for scientific investigation, for example with force-meters, although there are few instances in which pupils use graphs to record or interpret results. For research purposes, pupils use the Internet. They also use the computer to create databases and to link to the Intel microscope, as a group of Year 4 pupils did in their study of mini-beasts.
72. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Lesson planning relates well to the scheme of work, with appropriate plans for the teaching assistant to support lower attaining pupils or for the class teacher to carry out this role. However, teachers rarely show in their lesson plans how they challenge more able pupils and help them to achieve higher standards. This is an important factor in raising standards within the school. Lessons are usually lively with pupils eager to participate in discussion and in activities. Most teachers have good subject knowledge and clearly target pupils' mistakes in terminology or lack of understanding. The management of lessons is mainly satisfactory. Teachers often make good use of the lesson ending to review with the pupils what has been learnt. Where lessons are less successful, teachers do not make sure that all pupils are fully involved in this session and other discussion.
73. Teachers make satisfactory assessments of pupils' attainment. However, at present, the school has recording sheets that are not linked effectively to the levels of the National Curriculum. An enthusiastic new co-ordinator has plans to develop appropriate assessment records. She has already audited resources and purchased additional items to ensure that the school has sufficient to deliver the scheme of work. She has not had the opportunity to monitor classroom practice.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

74. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and are above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress in their art skills. It is good in Year 3. A strong subject leader has continued to develop the subject in the school. She has provided in-service training for teachers and teaching assistants on the development of art and design skills and the use of pupils' sketch-books. This has increased teachers' confidence and subject knowledge. Although pupils carry out some three-dimensional work in clay and other modelling material, the school has identified that this is an area for future development. Already, the school has made contact with another local school, which is renowned for the good three-dimensional work that it does. A teacher visits Wheelock School to give advice and to work with pupils. An artist has worked with the Year 5 class, students from an art college sometimes work in school and pupils go to Woodford Lodge to see examples of the work of students. The subject leader has good links with local secondary and primary schools. Pupils make good use of a computer program to add to their range of media in their picture making.

75. The school has a considerable emphasis on using the work of painters, craftspeople and sculptors to guide pupils well to use similar styles in their own work. Year 1 pupils formed a large picture of *'The Golden Fish'* in the style of Paul Klee in pastels, with good patterning detail. Pupils are encouraged to look very carefully at objects and produce good observational drawings using a variety of media, for example pictures of a spinning wheel in pastel, charcoal and graphite. Large, joint ensembles are produced in both infant classes. Year 1 pupils used press-prints of arctic wildlife on to fabric to create a good wall-hanging. Pupils in Year 2 use watercolour and acrylic paints to good effect. Examples of these were seen in paintings of daffodils, large paintings in the style of Lee Crew's *'Sea of Tranquillity'* and flowers in the style of Georgia O'Keefe. A wall-hanging produced by the class effectively used batik to simulate waves.
76. Pupils in junior classes use their sketch books well to try out different ideas, to modify them and to improve the final products. They are taught well to compare ideas and methods in their own and other's work and to say what they think and feel about them. There are good links with literacy and pupils' spiritual and cultural education as pupils are introduced to African art. For example, from the story of *'Osa's Pride'* by Ann Grifalconi and studies of models by Giacometti, pupils from the Year 2/3 class produced models of people in a similar style. This class developed a good painting in complementary colours and has mixed natural colours well to paint in the style of Turner. Pupils then used their research skills to find out some facts about this artist's life. Teachers plan effective links with other topics, such as those in history and geography. Year 4 produced very colourful and patterned life-sized sarcophaguses of Egyptian mummies with a relevant style of decoration. In a study of L. S. Lowry, these pupils painted well-proportioned buildings in tones of grey. Year 6 extended this work to include figures, larger compositions and further work on colour and tone. Year 5 pupils refined their drawing skills, using pastel and chalk in the style of Henry Moore.
77. Teaching is good in both infant and junior classes. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and an informed choice of resources. They give pupils sufficient time to explore and evaluate ideas and techniques and plan for pupils to apply the skills learnt previously. Teachers record assessment satisfactorily. Although the subject leader monitors plans and displays of pupils' work around the school, she has not had the opportunity to monitor classroom practice.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

78. Pupils attain nationally expected standards by the end of Years 2 and 6, and reflect those at the time of the last inspection. These standards represent satisfactory achievement. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. More-able pupils produce examples of work that satisfactorily reflect their higher abilities. These are seen, for example, in some imaginative instruments in Year 5 that are finished aesthetically.
79. Pupils in Year 1 benefit from the teaching of the co-ordinator who has good levels of expertise in the subject. They learn to design and build model houses from a range of materials. Some make imaginative products by, for example, using metal foil, plastic cups and acrylic paint. Their evaluations indicate the changes that they would make if they repeated the task. Year 2 pupils make sock puppets. By the end of Year 2, all pupils use pictures and words to explain their designs. Year 3 pupils effectively make moccasins by sewing felt that they decorate, for example with beads. Year 5 pupils use materials including card and elastic bands to make a good range of musical instruments that can be played in various ways. By the end of Year 6, pupils routinely draw plans of what they will make. They give good consideration to the intended user of the end product. One pupil, for instance, spoke about why the book that she had made for Year 1 pupils needed to be colourful, fun, and not have too much writing. Year 6 pupils learn effectively to evaluate

what they have made in terms of how well it met the design specifications. So, for example, in the case of the books for Year 1, the pupils measured the reactions of these young pupils. Of the costumes that they made for a dance performance one perceptively wrote, 'Under the red lights our T-shirts stood out effectively'. Their experience and skills in dealing with some materials, such as textiles for sewing costumes, does not extend as effectively to other materials, including wood.

80. Teachers make good use of national subject guidance in their planning of a mostly wide range of experiences for pupils, including regular opportunities for food technology. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, with some notable teaching strengths. These include brisk pace that uses time well, good knowledge of the subject and good management of pupils. As a result, there is often, as in a Year 1 lesson, a hum of activity as pupils are happily engaged on their tasks. Teachers frequently focus pupils' attention well on design features so that they understand the importance of these aspects. In a Year 4 lesson, for example, the teacher used a selection of purses and wallets effectively to get the pupils to look critically at the features. This resulted in useful discussion about the safety of the money and whether the product was suited to a particular age group or gender.
81. At the last inspection subject co-ordinators had no time to monitor teaching. Because this remains the case, the co-ordinator has limited opportunities to find out, first-hand, what is working well in teaching throughout the school, and to share her expertise about how it could develop. Nevertheless, her leadership is satisfactory because her enthusiasm shows itself through effective informal support of staff and in the good example she sets in the standards of her own class.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

82. Pupils attain standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 that meet those expected nationally. They have been maintained at the level reported in the last inspection. Inspection evidence was gained from observing a Year 1 lesson and two lessons for older juniors, analysing pupils' work in books and on display and talking to staff and pupils. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress overall in developing their geographical knowledge and skills. They make good progress in mapping skills. This has improved since the last inspection. Infant and junior pupils have an improved knowledge and understanding of their own locality and how it compares with other places in the United Kingdom, for example Llandudno. Most Year 6 pupils have a sound knowledge of different climates around the world, for example hot desert and tundra, although their understanding of how these weather conditions affects people's lives is not developed enough. Teaching is sound overall, with some examples of very good practice. Teachers use national guidance, supported by other resources, to provide a satisfactory range of learning activities and to meet all required aspects. The school makes good use of residential and day visits, for example to Sandbach, Beeston Castle and Llandudno, to encourage pupils' positive attitudes and to extend their knowledge and skills in fieldwork activities.
83. Infant pupils have above expected levels of mapping skills. Many Year 1 pupils draw a good sketch map of their route to school. They use mapping symbols accurately and make good use of a key to explain what their symbols mean. Year 1 pupils use their skills effectively to draw and label a map of Crewe Road to link in with their traffic survey. Many show a good understanding of how traffic changes, with a more-able pupil explaining that 'rush hour' has more traffic. Many Year 2 pupils show a good understanding of some of the differences between Sandbach and Manchester, for example 'bigger railways because more people travel to Manchester to shop and work'. They use geographical vocabulary well, for example 'hill' and 'farm', when describing the features of the Isle of Struay. Junior pupils extend their mapping skills well, for example when Year 3 pupils complete a

detailed map of their walk around Sandbach. Many Year 4 pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of the water pollution and how it gets into the water cycle. They use specific terms accurately, for example 'meander', when describing a river's course and use their knowledge well to produce a booklet on the river Nile linked to their history topic. Older juniors have a good understanding of the impact of traffic and waste pollution on the environment. Teachers promote pupils' use of mathematical and information and communication technology skills successfully to gather information, such as different methods of recycling waste, and enter it into a database for analysis and to produce graphs. Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of different types of maps, such as relief maps, and their uses. They show an increasing understanding of how to use maps with different scales. Many junior pupils have sound understanding of how people's lives in villages in Kenya and India differ from their own, for example their schools and shops. Some explain how different parts of the world have climates that are very different to our own but are not confident in explaining how these differences affect people's lives.

84. Teaching was good in one lesson observed and satisfactory in the others. Teachers plan in detail to build pupils' skills and knowledge well through a series of lessons, for example in mapwork, although this does not ensure that it builds consistently learning earlier in the school. For example, the mapping skills of some more-able Year 1 pupils were not significantly different from those evident in Year 2 and some junior classes. Teachers control their classes effectively to sustain pupils' interest and concentration. They maintain a good pace to lessons. Most use questions effectively to develop and extend pupils' answers, for example when Year 6 pupils were required to consider ways of improving recycling in their homes and in the local community. The teacher made very good use of homework activities to focus pupils' attention and prepare them for a follow-up recycling activity. Teachers do not always use opportunities to extend pupils' knowledge and improve their understanding of the broader, national and international implications of some issues.
85. The subject is soundly managed. The new co-ordinator has monitored teachers' plans and improved some resources, although the range of resources on some topics is not broad enough to meet the needs of pupils of differing abilities. The co-ordinator has not monitored teaching due largely to the school's focus on literacy and numeracy. Teachers use assessment procedures to note pupils' progress against learning objectives. These mainly record the areas that have been taught rather than the assessment of the key skills that can be used to inform future lesson plans.

## **HISTORY**

86. As in the previous inspection, pupils attain standards that are close to those that are expected nationally at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress in their learning. They enjoy history lessons and talk with enthusiasm about the topics covered. During the inspection no history was taught in Years 1 and 2. Judgements for these years are based on the analysis of earlier work, teachers' planning and from discussion with teachers and pupils. Since the last inspection, long-term planning of the programmes of study has been reviewed and improved, with some aspects of the national guidelines included in the school's scheme of work. There is now a more consistent approach to the teaching of history in all classes.
87. All pupils benefit from the good links made between history and literacy and the educational trips involved. For example, pupils in Year 1 dressed up as Victorian children for their visit to the Heritage Centre and described what they wore as a comparison with the clothes of today. Pupils in Year 2 show an increasing awareness of the passing of time, as they think about the clothes of different eras in British history, for example the

animal skins worn by people in early history and the clothes that Guy Fawkes might have worn. Pupils have good opportunities to find out about the past from a range of sources in their topic on castles. They visited Beeston Castle, used artefacts and published resources to record sound plans, pictures and writing about early castles, knights and armour and other aspects of the era. Year 2 pupils, who are in the mixed class with Year 3, develop a similar understanding of time passing, though Tudor and Viking topics.

88. The school continues this strong and relevant emphasis on first-hand experience into the juniors. For example, pupils in Year 3 spent an enjoyable 'Tudor day' in school with a group of historians to deepen their understanding. These pupils used artwork and model making particularly well to consolidate their learning about the Vikings. Year 4 pupils demonstrate a sound understanding of chronology in their timelines for the Victorian era. Many showed empathy in their letters from soldiers in the Crimean War. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils used the good structure of questions given by the teacher to find out information from historical artefacts. They showed a clear understanding of the use of secondary sources, such as books, video, the computer and talking to other people. Pupils use the Internet regularly to access information about topics, alongside other CD Roms that link with the historical themes. Teachers use other interesting methods to motivate pupils to find out information. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils played a game to 'share' short pieces of information with other groups. Co-operatively, each group tried to find the answers to the teacher's questions first, without telling other groups any untruths! At the end of the lesson, most pupils were able to discuss aspects of democracy in Ancient Greece.
89. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Planning is sound but does not always take into account the extension for more-able pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in lessons. Records of assessment of pupils' ability in key historical skills are well kept by some teachers, but there is no common format for the school and there is inconsistency of practice. The new co-ordinator is keen to develop the subject and has begun to monitor teachers' plans and pupils' work. She has had no opportunity to monitor classroom practice.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

90. Pupils attain standards that meet national expectations in Year 2 and when pupils leave in Year 6. The school has worked effectively to raise pupils' performance in the subject since the last inspection when attainment was below national expectations in Years 3 to 6. The co-ordinator leads the subject well. She has good knowledge and understanding of information and communication technology. This has enabled her to support teachers by devising well-structured planning and giving them useful advice. She has had limited opportunities for first-hand observation of teaching in order to support colleagues further. She fosters pupils' effective use of their skills in information and communication technology across a range of other subjects.
91. Teachers now have the necessary competence in the subject to teach securely most of the required skills to pupils in their class. Following the recommendations of the last inspection, teachers have received training in the subject. This has improved their expertise in most aspects of the subject and contributes well to improving pupils' skills and knowledge. The training that is planned for teachers in the 'control' aspect of the subject is set to improve their abilities and confidence further. Teachers make good use of national guidance when they plan what pupils will learn. The range and quality of resources have improved since the last inspection when they were barely adequate. They now allow teachers to develop pupils' skills across the different required aspects of subject. The school's continued focus on information and communication technology has identified the need for more hardware. This focus and the resulting improvements enable all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to make sound progress over time in

developing their skills and knowledge. Many pupils improve their skills, knowledge and understanding soundly by extending their skills well in other subjects.

92. Infant pupils learn to use information and communication technology for making musical sounds, to increase their knowledge of artists including Paul Klee and to support their work in geography. They develop their abilities to make a floor robot move in a planned way and they improve their word-processing skills to support work in literacy. They find out more about mathematical shapes by using a good research program for finding things out.
93. Junior pupils learn effectively to combine text, pictures and sounds so that in Year 6 they can incorporate sounds, such as breaking glass in their presentations about the disadvantages of drinking alcohol. By the end of Year 6, pupils use spreadsheets, for example for shopping lists. Higher-attaining pupils use correct terms, such as 'cell' when talking about these. They have a sound understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of different aspects of information and communication technology. For example, one pupil said that a spreadsheet is better than a calculator because '*It has words!*'. Some pupils are less familiar with correct terms, such as '*search engine*' despite having used one. From experience, most pupils have learned that it is necessary to spell words correctly when posing questions to find things out so that the right information is found. Most pupils have used information and communication technology to communicate ideas effectively, for example by e-mail. Most talk about the relative advantages of e-mails compared with letters. One pupil said, 'E-mails are quicker than letters' while another argued 'but some people can write quicker than type'. Most pupils program a robot so that it moves on a screen, though they talk less confidently about control technology.
94. Too little teaching was seen during the inspection to judge its overall quality throughout the school. However, there are notable strengths in the teaching of Year 6 pupils where the subject co-ordinator has good levels of expertise. Here, teaching ensured that pupils became well aware of the importance of considering the intended audience of presentations. For example, when they combined pictures and text, they knew that it was vital to make the end product suitable for the user. The teaching observed featured very good management of pupils so that they behaved very well. The teacher used good questioning techniques to develop pupils' understanding, for example of the desirability of planning their presentation well. The pupils co-operated well in the tasks that were set on computers. From this lesson and from talking to pupils, it is clear that they have positive attitudes towards the subject. The school is well placed to improve standards further.

## MUSIC

95. There was no evaluation of junior pupils' achievements at the last inspection. From talking to Year 6 pupils and observing their skills, knowledge and understanding in lessons, their achievements meet national expectations. As at the time of the last inspection, the attainment of pupils in Year 2 meets national expectations. Most Year 2 pupils maintain the simple beat in a piece of music and sing with a sense of the song's melody. Some are good at exploring imaginative ways of creating sounds while higher-attaining pupils have a good knowledge of the correct names of instruments.
96. Some inconsistent progress was reported during Years 3 to 6 at the last inspection. The school has addressed this, partly by appointing a teacher with good subject knowledge and understanding to teach all the junior classes. While teaching overall through the school is sound, this teacher brings notable strengths to pupils' learning in Years 3 to 6. Her positive impact on their progress is beginning to have a good effect on improving standards in each year group as pupils move through the school. This means that the school's capacity to raise standards further is good. The co-ordinator has a satisfactory role but, as at the last inspection, she does not observe teaching to share what works well and identify measures to drive up standards.

97. Strengths in teaching include lessons moving along at a good pace and the pupils being told how much time they will have for each task. These strategies effectively foster the pupils' good levels of interest and behaviour. Teachers manage pupils well and encourage good levels of co-operation, as when Year 6 pupils composed jazz-like music in small groups. Teachers ensure that pupils with special educational needs are fully included and make sound progress. They do this by directing questions at them to keep their interest, while support assistants encourage good behaviour, for example with 'thumbs-up' signs when pupils tried to concentrate. Sometimes, teachers miss opportunities for pupils to record their compositions using their own symbols and, at times, they do not enable pupils to talk about how they and others could improve their compositions.
98. The inadequate resources identified at the previous inspection have been improved. Older classes are divided into two groups for music and this gives pupils good access to the satisfactory range of good quality instruments. The curriculum is enriched by after-school recorder clubs and by visiting musicians, some broadening pupils' awareness of musical traditions including African music. A visiting specialist provides violin lessons for some pupils.
99. Pupils sing tunefully and sensitively in assemblies. With the support of the older pupils, they sing in two parts, as in a 'round'. Music plays as they enter the hall, though opportunities are sometimes missed to talk about aspects of the music that pupils hear. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, they have a satisfactory awareness of different styles of music, including jazz. Some talk about the work of Mozart and Grieg, while others are less aware of famous composers or their styles. Some talk about the music they have heard, using correct musical terms, such as 'tempo' and 'dynamics', though others are unclear about their meaning.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

100. Pupils attain standards that meet national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. They have been maintained overall at the standard reported in the last inspection, although inspectors found that standards are improving in some areas of activity. Pupils attain standards in dance that are above expected levels. This aspect has improved since the previous inspection. The positive direction and contribution of an enthusiastic subject co-ordinator, the advice and support from specialist staff from a local high school and improved staff subject knowledge from recent training, all contribute to raising standards. The subject co-ordinator has used national guidance and advice from the local education authority to establish a new and improved scheme of work. This includes all required aspects and is supported by an increasing range of resources, although these are not developed enough in some aspects of games and gymnastics. The good range of activities, enhanced well by extra-curricular sporting teams and clubs, encourages pupils to participate fully and to develop enthusiastic attitudes to physical exercise and sport. Those with physical disabilities are supported well to develop their physical skills. The school has maintained a good time allocation to physical education and makes effective use of its good facilities. Standards are improving and the school is set up well to improve pupils' performance in other areas of activity, for example games and gymnastics.
101. Year 1 and 2 pupils make sound and often good progress in developing and applying their skills and knowledge. They have a good understanding of the effects of exercise on their bodies. Most show a good awareness of the need for space for themselves and for others, for example when Year 1 pupils developed their dance sequences. They benefited from good guidance from the teacher to develop their movements as they imagined themselves to be polar bears or penguins. Most responded well to rhythmic beats and more-able pupils used their facial expressions very well to create a dramatic effect. Good

teaching promotes and extends pupils' ideas and range of movements and improves the quality of their work. Junior pupils show a sound range of athletic skills. Most run, jump and throw with sound techniques, for example using their arms well to help their jumping take-off. They evaluate their performance soundly and those of others in their group, although do not consistently apply their evaluations to improve the standard of their performance. For example, many Year 6 pupils identified that they could use their arms more vigorously to increase their running speed, but few then applied it to improve their standard.

102. Teaching is sound overall, and often good. It is good where teachers have good subject knowledge, for example in dance, and use it well to improve pupils' performance. Teachers have very good relationships with their classes. They manage them very well and encourage pupils to participate enthusiastically. This was clearly evident in all four lessons observed. Teachers plan their lessons in detail to enable pupils to practise then apply their skills, for example in games activities. They maintain a brisk pace to lessons, although on occasions, this does not ensure that all pupils have sufficient time to practise their skills within their groups. For example, in a Year 6 athletics lesson, the teacher organised the activities effectively to ensure that all groups took part in each activity. However, she did not allow enough time at each of the running and jumping activities to ensure that every pupil had enough time to practise and improve their skills.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

103. Pupils attain standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 that meet those outlined in the locally agreed syllabus '*Encounter and Response*'. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress overall in their knowledge and understanding of different beliefs and practices. Many show a good understanding of Christian beliefs and how they shape their own and other people's lives. For example, they recall some of the Bible stories they have read and how such stories as 'the Good Samaritan' and 'the Two Sons' have messages that help them to value people from different backgrounds, races or religions. Teaching is sound overall, and on occasions very good. Many teachers have good subject knowledge and use it well to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding, for example when Year 4 pupils learned how the 'Ten Commandments' shape the lives of Jewish families. Teachers use religious education successfully, linked closely to some assembly themes, to support the caring and supportive ethos of the school and to promote pupils' personal development. They are especially effective in using discussions to improve pupils' understanding of such aspects as the need for rules and the importance of such human qualities as tolerance and respect.
104. Infant pupils have a sound understanding of why and when Christians go to church. They know and describe many of the Christian festivals and celebrations. The school makes good use of visits to St. Mary's Church to extend pupils' knowledge of different parts of the church, for example the font and the altar, and their use in such services as christenings. Teachers encourage Year 1 and 2 pupils to apply their literacy skills successfully to describe their church visits and to describe some well-known Bible stories, for example Joseph's coat of many colours. Junior teachers extend pupils' knowledge of Hinduism and Judaism soundly by linking the topic well to work in other subjects, for example art and food technology. This helps pupils to gain a good insight into aspects of different festivals, such as Divali. Most Year 4 pupils have a sound knowledge of Biblical figures, for example Moses and how he brought the 'Ten Commandments' to the Israelites. Their understanding of how these shaped their lives is satisfactory overall, although not developed fully, for example their understanding of worshipping idols or different gods. Most older junior pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of Hinduism and Judaism, for example, they know the names of the holy books and sacred writings, such as the Vedas and the Torah. Some Year 6 pupils have a good knowledge of the Hindu



beliefs, for example re-incarnation, and practices, such as their worship ritual. Discussions with pupils showed that they were not secure in the reasons behind some of these different practices.

105. Some examples of very good teaching in the lessons observed extended pupils' knowledge and understanding very effectively. In a Year 5 discussion on Hinduism, the teacher used follow-up questions very well, for example, 'Do you think that matters in other religions?' to clarify their understanding of different beliefs. Teachers used some good resources and methods to grasp pupils' interest and attention, for example when Year 1 pupils were dressed up and acted out the parable of 'The Two Sons'. Many used prompts, questions and moments of reflection – 'How would you feel?' to ensure that pupils thought about particular beliefs and how they could influence their known lives. Some teachers did not always use the end of lesson feedback activity effectively to check on pupils' understanding of what they had learned. This did not ensure that all pupils, particularly lower-attainers and those with special educational needs, make sound progress, for example in understanding why religions had different practices or the meaning of particular events.
106. The subject is managed soundly. Good progress has been made since the last inspection in improving resources and developing a range of visits and visitors to extend pupils' knowledge, for example of festivals. The co-ordinator has established more detailed yearly plans to indicate what topics are to be covered, although a detailed scheme of work that identifies key skills and concepts is not established. The co-ordinator has trialled some assessment sheets provided by the local education authority, but they are not used by other teachers. The subject has not been a recent improvement priority and the co-ordinator has not monitored and evaluated the quality of teaching and its impact on learning.