

# INSPECTION REPORT

**WILLIAM STOCKTON COMMUNITY PRIMARY  
SCHOOL**

Ellesmere Port

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111085

Head teacher: Mr B L Schmack

Reporting inspector: Mr A M Scott  
27545

Dates of inspection: 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> June 2003

Inspection number: 247078

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary plus Nursery Unit

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 – 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Heathfield Road  
Ellesmere Port  
Cheshire

Postcode: CH65 8DH

Telephone number: 0151 355 1650

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr John Livens

Date of previous inspection: 12<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> January 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Registered Inspector Mr Andrew Scott 27545	Information and communication technology Geography Music	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Lay Inspector Mrs Maureen Roscoe 9884	Education inclusion	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Team Inspector Mr John Collins 27541	Mathematics Design and technology Physical education Special educational needs	
Team Inspector Mrs Lyn Field 33103	Science Art and design History	How good are the curricular and the other opportunities offered to pupils?
Team Inspector Ms Beryl Rimmer 20655	English Religious education The Foundation Stage curriculum English as an additional language	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This is a larger than average community primary school, situated close to the centre of Ellesmere Port. There are 330 boys and girls, of which 44 attend the nursery. The school lies in an area of significant social and economic deprivation, and there is little movement of population in or out of the area. The school falls within the local Education Action Zone. The vast majority of the pupils are white. There are three Bangladeshi pupils, three Chinese pupils and five Turkish pupils. These 11 pupils do not speak English as their first language. Approximately 36 per cent of pupils claim free school meals and this is above the national average. Almost 30 per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is above average. Most of these needs include communication and behavioural problems, as well as learning difficulties, like dyslexia. 1.4 per cent of pupils have statements of special educational needs, which is average. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery is well below average.

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

This is a very effective school. Children enter the school with low standards and benefit from a very good start in the nursery and reception classes. Good teaching ensures that they make good progress through the school. Although, by the time they leave, standards in English and mathematics are below average, pupils' achievements are good. In most other subjects standards are average and in art, design and technology, physical education and religious education they are above average. Standards in English and mathematics are not as high as they should be but they are becoming much better and the school is closing the gap on the average in most other schools. All staff work hard to provide all pupils with a full and rich curriculum, and there is a warm, caring and very supportive atmosphere. The head teacher, ably supported by key staff and governors, has succeeded in developing the school significantly. This has produced a great spirit of community both within and outside the school. The school provides good value for money.

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

- the excellent leadership by the head teacher which has ensured a swift and effective improvement to the school, and which provides clear and purposeful direction for the future.
- the good teaching, sometimes very good or excellent, throughout the school which gives pupils a very good start and promotes good achievement over time.
- the standards in art and design and religious education.
- the high quality of care and strong relationships which promote very good attitudes and good behaviour in pupils, and raise their self-esteem.
- the rich and varied curriculum which motivates pupils and broadens their horizons.
- the high esteem in which parents and the community hold the school.

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

- the standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- the level of attendance.

*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 developed appreciably over recent years. The leadership and management have become much more structured and robust, promoting major improvements. The curriculum has become fuller and more inclusive, and teachers are now using assessment better to check pupils' progress. Teaching has improved because of clearer objectives and higher expectations. The school's plans for development are more relevant and challenging, and more closely linked to the school budget. Standards are improving and are particularly strong in art and design and religious education. The school takes greater care of pupils and therefore, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are much better. Parents are much happier with the school. The school is about to move into a brand new, custom-built school building.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	E	E	E	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	E	E	E	C	
Science	E*	D	E*	D	

Standards in English and mathematics were well below average in 2002. Pupils performed better in English than pupils from similar schools but their attainment in mathematics was similar. Standards in science were very low which placed them in the lowest five per cent of pupils nationally. These standards were below those of similar schools. Nevertheless, pupils make good progress by the end of Year 6 compared to their attainment when they were in Year 2. The attainment of pupils in the present Year 6 is below average in English and mathematics, but average in science. This underlines the good progress pupils are continuing to make. Indeed, pupils are likely to achieve the school's higher targets in English and mathematics this year. In science, there has been rapid progress due to a much better curriculum and very well focused teaching. The standards of pupils' work by the end of Year 2 are also below average. Pupils are below average in reading, writing and mathematics, but only just and are likely to meet expected levels before long. Pupils' attainment in science is average. These results all show good progress over recent years. Children's attainment by the end of the reception class is below that expected for children of their age in all areas of learning. However, this represents good achievement from when they first enter the school, because of the very good teaching. Pupils who do not speak English as their first language progress as well as other pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because of the special support they receive when withdrawn from lessons. Standards by the end of Year 6 are at the levels expected in information and communication technology (ICT), geography, history, music and physical education. However, standards in art and design, design and technology and religious education are above average, because of especially good teaching and a strong curriculum.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	<b>Very good.</b> Pupils are very keen to come to school and are eager to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	<b>Good.</b> Pupils are well behaved and respectful in lessons and around the school. Occasionally, play at break times can be unsociable.
Personal development and relationships	<b>Very good.</b> The positive relationships between the staff and pupils ensure a happy and purposeful atmosphere in the school.
Attendance	<b>Unsatisfactory.</b> Attendance is below average and does not show enough sign of improving.

The very positive attitudes and behaviour from pupils are a direct result of a much improved school. Pupils feel valued and trusted, and so they respect the school and all members of staff. They are courteous in corridors and considerate in lessons, as when helping a less confident pupil. They work productively in pairs or groups to solve problems in science investigations, for example. They are not always as kind as they might be at break times. However, the incidences of exclusion have all but vanished. Attendance remains a problem, despite concerted efforts by the school to improve it.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very 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 very good in the nursery and reception classes. This gives children a real boost when they start school and provides a solid foundation for future learning. Teaching is particularly good because teachers know how to motivate children through fascinating and well-structured lessons. Teachers have high expectations of both effort and behaviour, yet make learning a pleasure. As a result, children soak up the learning. Teaching is good throughout the rest of the school because teachers generate lively classroom atmospheres and establish a good rapport with pupils. Teachers plan lessons carefully so pupils build on their learning step by step. They make good use of resources to reinforce learning, such as photographs of overseas locations or historical artefacts. The teaching of the basic skills in literacy and numeracy is good and is raising pupils' standards. This also helps pupils to learn other subjects more easily, such as using graphs to show scientific results or discussing ideas for a project in design and technology. However, teachers do not match work enough in all subjects to meet the needs of all pupils, especially more able pupils. Often, the work is too similar and does not provide enough challenge. This is less common in upper infant and junior classes, because teachers adapt their plans more often to cater for pupils' different abilities, and they expect better work from the pupils. The teaching of pupils with English as their second language and those with special educational needs is good, and particularly good when pupils are withdrawn for extra help in small, well-focused groups.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	<b>Good.</b> The school gives ample time to all subjects and enriches the curriculum very well through extra activities and links with the community and other schools.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	<b>Very good.</b> Teachers ensure that the level of work is suitable and that pupils benefit from close adult support, notably when withdrawn in groups.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	<b>Good.</b> Teachers have good strategies to help pupils understand in lessons, including extra adult support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	<b>Good.</b> The school places great emphasis on encouraging good behaviour and consideration for others. Spirituality and cultural aspects are good, but the school misses opportunities to develop them fully.
How well the school cares for its pupils	<b>Good.</b> There are good systems for protecting and supporting pupils, and monitoring how well pupils progress over time.

The school has a full curriculum and promotes all subjects. There is a strong emphasis on English, mathematics and science, as well as art and design and religious education. Subjects are often taught within other subjects, which strengthens basic skills. The curriculum is enriched by many extra activities and links with the outside world. The school works very hard to encourage pupils to be responsible and caring members of the school community. Staff provide a safe and supportive environment, in which pupils feel secure and believe in their own potential. The school works well with parents. Staff are very accessible to parents and parents value this. Parents support pupils' work well at home and at school, but the school could do more to improve the quality of information it sends to parents.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	<b>Very good.</b> The excellent leadership by the head teacher has spearheaded a rapid development in the school. All staff are increasingly involved in developing subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	<b>Good.</b> The governors are very supportive of the school's development and increasingly knowledgeable about what goes on within the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	<b>Very good.</b> The school has a clear view of where it is going and keeps a close check on its own progress.
The strategic use of resources	<b>Excellent.</b> The school is extremely able at finding and channelling funds to support all areas of school development.

The head teacher has used considerable vision, drive and commitment to move the school forward. He is a shrewd and robust leader, who understands the need to involve all members of all the school in its development. Senior and other staff support him very well and many, but not all, subjects are improving apace. The governors now play a full part in the school, and have improved their skills through regular training. The school is very aware of its own strengths and weaknesses, through constant monitoring by all staff and especially the head teacher. In some subjects, such as English and science, the monitoring is very good and has a positive impact on standards. This is not always the case, and some co-ordinators do not yet have a clear view of how well their subject is progressing. The school is exemplary in using its budget to maximise opportunities for pupils, staff and parents. The school has a very good match of teachers and support staff to the needs of the curriculum. The accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

## 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.</li> <li>• The good teaching helps their children make good progress and behave responsibly.</li> <li>• The school has high expectations of their children.</li> <li>• Parents feel at ease when contacting the school.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The quality of homework.</li> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

Parents hold the school in high regard and are very happy with the way in which the school has improved in recent years. The views of parents in the questionnaires and at other times have been nearly all very supportive. The inspection team agrees with the positive views of parents and does not agree with the concerns of a small minority. The team found that homework is regular and well organised, and that there is a very good range of activities outside lessons.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Children enter the nursery with very poor language, communication and personal and social skills. Their mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical and creative abilities are all well below average. They make very good progress in the nursery and reception classes because of very good teaching. By the time children reach the end of the Foundation Stage, they have improved these basic skills considerably. However, given the very low attainment in their basic skills when they enter the school, children still do not reach the expected levels in any of their areas of learning.
2. In the national tests in 2002, pupils at the end of Year 2 achieved standards that were below average in reading and mathematics. However, these results were above the standards of similar schools. Although most pupils achieved the expected levels, not enough pupils achieved the higher levels. Standards in writing were well below average yet on a par with similar schools. This was because too many pupils just managed to achieve the lowest level of the expected grades and no pupils achieved the higher level. Teachers' assessments showed that pupils were well below average in science, even though a high proportion of pupils achieved the higher level. These results show a steady upward trend in reading and writing and a strong improvement in mathematics. In the past, girls have tended to do better than boys in all subjects, but boys' underachievement is much less of a problem now.
3. In the current Year 2, pupils continue to make upward progress, because of good teaching. Pupils' attainment is still below average in English and mathematics but only just. Pupils make good progress through Years 1 and 2 but not quite enough pupils achieve the expected level in writing. In reading, not enough of the more able pupils gain the skills expected of them. In mathematics, pupils are competent in number work and in handling shapes and measures. They are not fully confident in mental calculation but these skills are improving. Pupils are making especially good progress in science and their attainment is now average. This is largely due to the improved skills of pupils in carrying out simple investigations.
4. Pupils' attainment in ICT, geography, history and music is as expected for the end of Year 2. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection, but ICT has improved significantly. This is because teachers' skills and expectations have developed well and the school has created a computer room. However, progress in other subjects is even better. Pupils' attainment in design and technology, physical education and religious education is now above average. This is for a variety of reasons. In design and technology, pupils are clear about not only the design process but also how to evaluate their work in order to make it better. In physical education, teachers' expectations of precision are very high, and in religious education pupils learn well because the subject is skilfully linked to their own life experiences.
5. In the national tests of 2002, pupils in Year 6 achieved standards in English and mathematics that were well below average. In science, pupils' standards were very low. In English, too many pupils did not achieve the expected level and too few achieved the higher level. Nevertheless, this put them above similar schools. Although there has been a gradual improvement over time, standards have remained constant in the most recent years. In mathematics, the picture is very similar with far too many pupils below the expected level, although pupils achieved the same standards as other similar schools. The improvement over time has been steady, like English, but has faltered a little recently. In science, far too many pupils did not achieve the expected level, while very few achieved the higher level. This is below the standards of similar schools. Recent progress has been positive but has remained well below national expectations. In the past, girls have tended to do better than boys, but the gap is steadily narrowing.

6. The pupils in the current Year 6 have also made good progress. Standards in English and mathematics are below average but reflect a healthy upward trend from last year. The school has set suitably challenging targets in English and mathematics and pupils are likely to achieve them. In English, pupils enjoy reading and have reasonable expression but do not read fluently enough. Pupils write in a range of styles, yet do not structure their work carefully. Spelling and grammar are not as good as they should be. Not enough higher attaining pupils are achieving as well as they should. Pupils' attainment in mathematics is becoming closer to average, because pupils are increasingly competent in mental agility when working out strategies to solve problems. In science, a richer curriculum, which includes good, technical vocabulary, has helped pupils to achieve standards expected of pupils of their age. Pupils' skills have also benefited from more opportunity to carry out their own experiments and draw conclusions from their findings.
7. There has been a good improvement in pupils' attainment in ICT, geography and history. This has been achieved through better teaching and a stronger curriculum. Pupils now reach the attainment expected of them by the age of eleven. Pupils' achievements are in line with what is expected in music and physical education, which is the same as at the last inspection. However, pupils have made even better progress in art and design, design and technology and religious education and their attainment is now above expected levels.
8. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. They achieve well in relation to their prior knowledge in the core subjects of English and mathematics. When taught in small groups with the close support of learning assistants, progress is very good because they are able to make the small steps in their learning more quickly. This is because the targets in their individual learning programmes are specific, attainable, clear and measurable. There are currently a few gifted and talented pupils identified by the school and their needs are met through appropriate work that challenges them well.
9. The progress of bilingual learners is similar to other pupils. The level of their command of the English language does not hamper their progress much because the level of support in class is good. Teaching assistants work hard to help develop vocabulary and improve pupils' skills in literacy.

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

10. Pupils of all ages have very good attitudes. This helps them to apply themselves well in lessons, to behave well in and out of class and to show consideration for others. This improved picture compared to the last inspection is marred by unsatisfactory attendance levels and many instances of unauthorised absences caused by the failure of some parents to notify the school of the reason for their child's absence. However, parents are very positive that their children enjoy their time in this friendly school because they know that children are expected to work hard and achieve their best.
11. Pupils are very interested in what each day brings. They scurry into classrooms following well-established routines, ready and alert for registration. This reflects very good provision for social development. Some pupils, however, fidget or become distracted by others when teaching is not holding their attention. Usually pupils respond enthusiastically across a range of subjects, because of good opportunities presented for decision-making and participation in group work. Good examples of this were seen in a geography lesson, where strong interest was shown in the conditions experienced by those climbing Everest. Most pupils with special educational needs show positive attitudes to learning. They listen and respond well in lessons and take pride in their performance.
12. Behaviour overall is good and ranges from unsatisfactory to excellent. Exclusions are rare but do occur when necessary. These have fallen dramatically from the very high number reported in 1998. Most pupils understand what is expected from them in most situations, especially

when teaching is strong. Then staff deal effectively with challenging behaviour by making clear just what the rules are before lessons begin. There is little evidence of unpleasantness. Pupils say that there is some name-calling and, despite the efforts of staff, it hurtfully persists. Many parents acknowledge that the school helps their children become more mature and responsible. Some pupils with special educational needs who have difficulty controlling their behaviour receive additional help from support staff. This is developing their self-discipline and confidence. On the rare occasions behaviour in lessons is unsatisfactory, it is because tempers flare up quickly and then teachers need to intervene between pupils.

13. Teaching staff promote pupils' understanding of moral issues well. As a result, the majority of pupils are considerate and respect other's needs, feelings and property. They work well in co-operation with others, put their hands up to answer questions in class and speak politely to adults. Most pupils obey the rules that are in place and think they are fair. However, members of the school council explained that pupils in some classes are not expected to help in the drawing up of class or school rules. They think this reduces in some instances children's capability to understand what is expected of them out of lessons, especially when they are not under an adult's direct supervision. Playtimes are generally harmonious times when girls and boys play well in pairs and small groups. Pupils use space well, sensibly ensuring that their games do not spoil others' enjoyment.
14. Pupils' personal development is very good, as are relationships in this lively school. This mirrors the very good social and moral provision, which ensures pupils are 'included' rather than 'excluded'. Pupils enjoy each other's company and are eager to recognise and share each other's successes. The majority of pupils work and behave in socially acceptable ways, such as looking out for younger children and anticipating their needs. A Year 6 pupil was overheard, for example, skilfully guiding a younger pupil towards unfamiliar toilets, saying, "I wouldn't want you to get lost." Pupils are relaxed and confident enough to be friendly and kind to others. Mostly they get on well regardless of gender or background. This is, in part, a direct result of the good quality educational visits and club activities that take place throughout the year.
15. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibility and exercising initiative. Many have jobs to do as monitors; these are privileged positions and are carried out with pride. Pupils organise many aspects of their own work such as putting out and tidying away resources, operating equipment in lessons and helping others to succeed. A child in a reception class, for example, volunteered to help another child. "She was struggling wrapping up a wedding present," he said. Pupils are encouraged to work responsibly towards completing targets for improvements in their class work and this is encouraging self-belief.
16. The school's strenuous and continued efforts to improve attendance from a low base last year have so far not been effective. Attendance and unauthorised absence levels are unsatisfactory and well below the national figures. Registration practice is good and conforms to the latest guidance. Those pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern are monitored closely. Pupils' punctuality is a problem at times but effective systems ensure late arrivals are logged in by parents or carers, and welcomed into lessons.

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

17. The quality of teaching is good. It is very good for children under five because teaching is very purposeful, well planned and dynamic. This gives pupils a real boost to the start of their life at school. Pupils continue to build on this because there is not only good teaching throughout the school, but also some very good and excellent practice. This tends to be found mainly in the older classes of the infants and juniors, and helps to explain why standards have been rising in recent years. This means that teaching has distinctly improved since the last inspection. There is now increasing consistency across the school, teachers are more knowledgeable and their expectations of pupils are appreciably higher. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good. Teachers use the national strategies well for both subjects to strengthen skills in

reading and mental mathematics, for example. Teaching assistants are well used to support lower attaining pupils.

18. Teaching is strong because of the very positive relationships between teachers and pupils. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and value the contributions they make to lessons. As a result, pupils want to learn and do their best for the teachers. Teachers plan lessons well. They check what pupils have remembered from before, explain the aims of the lessons very clearly and provide guidelines for any tasks. In this way, pupils acquire learning systematically. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, for example, pupils made rapid progress in mental calculation, because they were so well focused. Teachers explain new learning effectively. In a Year 4 art and design lesson, pupils quickly understood how to mix paints experimentally to produce silver and bronze colours. Teachers' knowledge of subjects is secure so that they are confident when demonstrating techniques. In a Year 1 ICT lesson, pupils swiftly appreciated how to select and rotate objects on the computer screen because the teacher had used the smart board skilfully.
19. Teachers make very good use of resources to enliven and reinforce their teaching. The texts of three poems about springtime helped pupils in Year 6 to compare writing styles of major poets, such as Wordsworth and Housman. Pupils in a Year 2 lesson fully understood how plants grow, at the sight of real tomato plants at different stages of maturity. Just as importantly, teachers are keen for all pupils to contribute to lessons. They ask questions that are suitable for pupils of all abilities. In a Year 6 geography lesson, the teacher asked a range of questions asking pupils to explain temperature change on mountains and to describe what crops are grown in the foothills. Consequently, all pupils could offer an answer, whether a simple fact or a knowledgeable guess. Teachers are fulsome with their praise for pupils' efforts but not extravagant. This helps pupils to know that genuine effort and hard work are rewarded and appreciated.
20. Teachers have good expectations of pupils. Inspiring pupils to carry out a 'Mission Impossible', one teacher expected pupils in a Year 5 science lesson to be rigorous when evaluating alarms. In the best lessons, expectations are very high. In a Year 1/2 dance lesson, the teacher insisted that all pupils move very expressively to music with their eyes closed, with the result that many pupils became utterly absorbed in self-expression. Teachers ensure that many lessons are tailored to meet the needs of all pupils. They ensure that tasks are graded in difficulty to make the work more achievable for lower attaining pupils. Often, there are opportunities for higher attaining pupils to tackle more challenging work. Pupils in Year 1/2 had to put suitable captions in speech bubbles on old photographs of beach holidays in a history lesson.
21. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. It is very good in the small groups taught by well-trained teaching assistants. These are improvements since the last inspection. All staff have a clear understanding of how to support and challenge such pupils so that they make very good progress in reaching the targets in their individual learning plans. Early identification of their needs enables support to be quickly given. The teachers make good use of well-trained teaching assistants in lessons. By asking key questions and giving useful clues, the assistants give good support not just to pupils with special educational needs but also to other lower attaining pupils.
22. Pupils with English as an additional language are well taught throughout the school. They are sufficiently challenged to reach their full potential. Teachers and support assistants have worked hard to acquaint themselves with the language and culture of different groups of pupils. They take good account of their particular needs when planning and delivering lessons, taking every opportunity to include pupils. Specialist help supports the good practice in classrooms. The school involves parents of pupils with English as an additional language well to support their learning. In the nursery, for example, a Bangladeshi mother read to the children using both English and Bengali, developing confidence and self-esteem for the Bangladeshi children and broadening the cultural experience and awareness of other children.

23. Teachers develop subjects well through other subjects. Pupils are encouraged, for example, to improve their speaking and listening in discussions. In a Year 5 mathematics lesson, pupils had a lively debate about equivalent fractions and percentages. In a music lesson, some pupils in Year 6 linked geography, music and ICT to select a suitable backing track on a computer to enliven a video of mountain sports. In an art and design lesson, pupils in Year 4 had to design a Roman belt, which would ultimately be made as part of a design and technology project. Sometimes, though, teachers do not take full advantage of opportunities. Pupils do not write enough in subjects like geography and history and so strengthen their literacy skills.
24. Similarly, teachers do not always expect enough from their pupils. Often, throughout the year, teachers give very similar work to all pupils in several subjects and this does little to help pupils develop at their own pace. This is certainly true of ICT. Pupils have very different skills on the computer and yet pupils in each class are set very similar work. Sometimes, pupils are paired so that a higher attaining pupil supports a lower attaining pupil. This can be very helpful for less secure pupils but does not allow more able pupils to progress swiftly. In subjects like history, geography and religious education, pupils all do very similar work. In singing practices, not all pupils are expected to sing, especially the older boys; so they do not bother to try. At times, too, teachers expect too little from pupils in the presentation of work. This leads to untidy writing and casual illustrations. Teachers do not consistently signal high expectations through their marking of pupils' work and so pupils are not clear what they have to do to improve.

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

25. The school provides a good curriculum for its pupils. All subjects are well represented in the timetable, religious education has a high profile and art is a strength of the school. Many subjects are enriched through a wide range of additional activities and many of these take place outside normal lesson time. This breadth in the curriculum is deeply embedded and lies at the heart of the school's aims to enable everyone in the school community to develop as an 'educated person'. The interior of the school is a stimulating environment where every corner of wall and air space is used to communicate the ethos of the school. High quality displays tell the story of what is taught, how pupils learn, what is valued and how the curriculum is enhanced.
26. The quality and range of learning opportunities for children in nursery and reception are very good, and give them a good start to their education. The school's curriculum fully includes all groups of pupils. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and an improvement since the last inspection. They are given good, well-tailored support to reach the targets of their individual learning plans in class and when withdrawn in small groups. These groups, taught by well-trained teaching assistants, benefit from very well-focused work, mainly in specific areas of literacy. There is good provision for pupils with English as an additional language and this contributes significantly to the inclusive nature of the school.
27. The curriculum for each subject is now based on national frameworks. These have ensured that learning takes place systematically. The most effective plans, as in art, go beyond this to include workshops from visiting groups and involvement in community initiatives. In science, for example, pupils recognise the advantages of working with experts in electricity and chemistry workshops. Teachers often teach subjects through other subjects, and this reinforces pupils' learning. In Year 2, a textile design of the biblical creation story illustrated pupils' knowledge of religious education through art and design. The provision for teaching literacy and numeracy is good. Teachers and assistants know their pupils well and work is sharply focused to meet the needs of individual children so that they make good progress.

28. The provision for activities before and after school is very good. Sport clubs cover short tennis, netball, rounders, badminton, football and cricket; clubs meet regularly for craft, dance and board games. A display explaining craft club activities to potential members states, "We all encourage each other's efforts." This emphasis on self-esteem is apparent in the activities of the Easter Club and the residential visit to Beeston Castle. The school ensures that no pupil is prevented from taking part in any activity through lack of funds.
29. The provision for personal, social and health education is good. Each class has a well-planned discussion session every week. These short lessons are tightly structured but allow for reflection and sharing. Pupils feel secure and confident about contributing ideas and feelings. The programme involves the school health service, a fireman, a lollipop lady, faith leaders and visits to the library and council offices, as well as a drugs education programme. In the nursery and reception classes, a healthy eating initiative offers children fruit and milk each day. The children know this combination is important for their growth.
30. The head teacher has worked very hard to establish good relations with parents and the local community. It is very evident at the beginning of every school day that a good level of trust exists. There are good links with an elderly folks' home and there are regular visits from artists and drama groups. The school participates in local arts festivals such as the Chester Pageants and community carol service and is currently contributing to an Education Action Zone project which will culminate in a procession of music and dance. The kitchen staff arrange themed meals for special occasions such as Chinese New Year. The school raises the pupils' awareness of community need on a world-wide scale and the school contributes to Operation Christmas Child in aid of Romanian orphans. As they move through the school, the children develop a sense of being part of a larger community.
31. There are very good links with other institutions such as Hope University and Chester College. One exceptional provision is the foundation degree course that the school is offering to local adults. The response has been very positive. Short tennis courses are supported by the Lorna Fogerty Trust, and the local playgroup meets on the school site. Good liaison exists with neighbouring schools and local secondary schools where pupils can join a boys dance group and sporting events. The Education Action Zone funds a number of projects and music groups in the school.
32. The school makes good provision for the spiritual development of pupils. Through the teaching of religious education, teachers make pupils very well aware of values and beliefs in different faiths and in their own perception of the world. Teachers often encourage pupils to reflect on what they have done or on issues in the world about them. In lessons, teachers create opportunities for pupils to marvel at the wonders of life. In a Year 1/2 lesson, pupils gasped in amazement when they saw the root pattern of a plant withdrawn from a plant pot. The displays around the school are inspirational. However, the school does not exploit all such opportunities. In many lessons, learning can be unexciting and assemblies are sometimes not thought-provoking or uplifting enough.
33. The pupils' moral and social development is very good. All teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and have clear guidelines in classrooms. Teachers weave issues of right and wrong into their lessons. Pupils in Year 2, for instance, drew self-portraits in art and design with captions such as "Do not lie" and "Always tidy up". Pupils are encouraged to submit ideas for the school council to discuss. They are also expected to socialise happily over lunch and play together peacefully outside. The school involves pupils in fundraising for charities and provides jobs in classrooms to develop their sense of responsibility. One particularly good feature is the open access to school that parents have at the start and end of the day. This enables parents, pupils and teachers to mix and communicate freely.
34. The cultural development of pupils is good. The promotion of art and design gives pupils a wide range of experiences and encourages them to be creative. Pupils benefit from a variety of visitors to the school, such as the local secondary school orchestra and a willow sculptor.



There is a choir which performs regularly in and out of school. Teachers give pupils a good insight into other cultures. They learn African lullabies in music and read Japanese tales in English. However, the school does not maximise all opportunities to promote culture. Pupils do not sing or hear music in all assemblies, and some pupils are allowed to opt out of singing, especially older boys.

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

35. Staff care well for pupils and the steps taken to promote and ensure pupils welfare, health and safety are good. Parents are confident that their children are safe, happy and learning well in a secure environment, and inspectors agree. First aid cover is good and supports pastoral care well because well-trained staff sensitively comfort those needing treatment. Overall, this picture has improved since the previous inspection because of the way in which behaviour incidents are now handled. Staff are familiar with child protection procedures, and these procedures are good. Routine checks are made on fire equipment, alarms and areas which could pose a hazard to pupils, and accurate records are kept.
36. Procedures for monitoring and promoting behaviour are good. Most teachers are helping to lay the foundations for orderly behaviour, maintaining high expectations of pupil behaviour and explaining tasks clearly so pupils know what to do next in lessons. Rewards and treats are plentiful. Pupils look forward eagerly to the weekly assemblies where achievement and endeavour are publicly acknowledged. The majority of staff use the school's discipline procedures effectively to manage pupils' behaviour, both in and out of lessons.
37. The school is determined to eliminate oppressive behaviour by challenging any talk or behaviour which 'put other people down'. Procedures are therefore good and include, pupils say, strong messages relayed in assemblies by the head teacher on these matters. Pupils are encouraged to relate well to adults and peers and to voice their concerns if they are feeling anxious. The school has a strong anti-bullying code, which is known to pupils and their parents. Not all pupils are convinced of its effectiveness, however. Some pupils are upset by name-calling which they say sometimes occurs during the lunchtime period. Most pupils enjoy easy relationships with the friendly midday staff who involve pupils in group activities such as skipping. Some pupils, however, would like more help from them in "sorting out" those who do not follow the playground or dining hall rules, because they feel that their concerns are too easily dismissed.
38. Whilst the procedures for monitoring attendance are generally satisfactory, they are not yet effective as levels are worse than last year. The school has worked hard and long on this issue, and rewards for attendance are good. However, the action the school takes to promote attendance is not rigorous or timely enough and attendance levels are too low. This is partly because there is too long a time gap between most absences occurring and the action which follows about three days later. It is therefore difficult to target efforts effectively to address the problem of low attendance. Careful checks are made on particular groups, such as those in care of the local authority, whose absences are over-represented in registers. The school liaises frequently with the educational welfare services whose staff follow up unsatisfactory patterns of attendance.
39. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. Pastoral care is effective for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language. Merit points and verbal praise help pupils to improve their own performance, encourage teamwork, and appreciate the achievement of others. There is a very effective induction programme operating in the nursery. Staff there make initial home visits to ensure children settle well, including those with a limited command of English. Classroom assistants guide children well, building self-esteem as well as supporting their learning very effectively.

40. Healthy snack times are provided. Younger pupils really enjoy their milk and fruit each day. Pupils are helped to realise their actions have consequences by teachers inviting discussion and reflection on classroom behaviour. Pupils in Year 1, for example, decided they had not been 'as quiet as they needed to be' during their mathematics lesson.
41. Since the last inspection, the school has considerably improved its procedures for monitoring how well pupils achieve. These are now good. Class teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils very well and have a good understanding of their individual personal needs. The head teacher and assessment co-ordinator now keep careful track of the progress of individual pupils and year groups by analysing test and assessment data to determine the priorities for school improvement. Teachers use assessment information well to guide their planning and to set targets for groups of pupils, particularly in English, mathematics and science, but not in all subjects. Nevertheless, this is also an improvement since the last inspection.
42. All class teachers maintain comprehensive assessment records to a consistent format. Teachers keep group and individual records, for example, on reading, writing, mathematics and science. They are well supported in this by the classroom assistants who assess the children they support and regularly feed back information to the class teacher. The procedures for checking the progress of pupils with special educational needs are good. Their individual learning plans are good and the targets set for them are soon changed as pupils improve. All reviews of these plans are carried out as appropriate and the support of outside agencies such as the Speech and Hearing Support Units is involved as necessary.

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

43. The school has improved on its previously satisfactory links with parents. Now they are very good. In questionnaire returns and in spoken and written comments, parents made it clear that they hold very positive views of the school. They are pleased with the care it provides and agree this is helping their children to be more self-disciplined and responsible. Parents feel very comfortable approaching the school to share concerns or family views, or to seek support with problems facing them. They like the "brilliant open door policy", keenly practised and encouraged by the head teacher who devotes a specific part of his time to meeting and greeting parents and carers at various places in the school at the start and end of each school day.
44. The quality of information that the school provides for parents and carers is satisfactory. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents provide some basic information, but both leave out many important items. For example, not enough details are provided about the school's National Curriculum assessment results by the end of Years 2 and 6. The provision for identifying and assessing pupils with special educational needs is not included. These and other omissions mean that both documents cannot fully comply with latest requirements.
45. Pupils' annual reports contain a wealth of information and are satisfactory. They meet requirements in that they report on each subject taught, but they are inconsistent in how they describe areas where progress has been made, or where it has slowed. Some describe clearly what has been achieved and include pointers for further development, while others do not. Not all include targets for improvement or how parents could help their children achieve them. However, pupils' targets are shared with those parents who attend the parents' evenings at school. Some reports are not easy to understand because not all teachers' handwriting is clear.
46. Partnership with parents is developing well, however, because of the many other opportunities taken to engage parents in school life. Parents appreciate the information recently provided about what is taught and when. The prospectus gives a useful overview of each subject taught and a booklet about the curriculum for the youngest pupils has been well received.

47. Face-to-face communications are afforded the highest priority. This starts in the nursery with pre-school home visits. The genuine open door policy is well used and many parents take advantage of this to keep in touch with teachers and events taking place in school. Parents say they are listened to, and their concerns are acted upon. Written communications are straightforward in tone and newsletters are regular and keep parents informed of general school news. Parents are included in the frequent reviews of progress for those pupils with special educational needs.
48. Parents' involvement in the school is growing. They attend the meetings to hear of children's progress and work hard raising money for the school. Some are investing time and effort in preparations for a summer fair. A good number also help out voluntarily in classes where they see at first hand the good teaching that so many parents referred to in their questionnaire returns. Parents make a good contribution to their children's learning. They support homework activities such as reading, and many share in the playing of board games, which are available on loan from the school. Teachers are confident to ask parents for help with special events such as 'the wedding' and provide resources wherever necessary. The school relies on its good links with parents.

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

49. The excellent vision, drive and commitment by the head teacher have had a major impact on the school. The school has improved dramatically over the past three years. The head teacher, together with the support of senior staff and governors, has managed to overturn a severe budget deficit, raise staff morale and raise pupils' attainment, as well as overseeing the development of a new school building.
50. The head teacher has brought a real structure to the school. The clear and efficient systems within the curriculum, and the much improved methods of assessing pupils' progress, have helped teachers and pupils to improve the quality of learning. Consistently high expectations of attitudes and behaviour from the pupils have resulted in a marked improvement. The incidences of exclusion have all but disappeared. Furthermore, the head teacher has raised the profile of the school in the area and the parents rate it highly. There have been some key changes to staffing and the head teacher has made some excellent appointments. The new teachers have brought considerable enthusiasm and expertise to the school and help, with other staff, to promote the high aspirations of the school.
51. All the major issues from the last inspection have been successfully dealt with. There is now a very strong management structure, which fully involves the deputy head teacher and, much more recently, another senior teacher. The management team have regular meetings, but major decisions are discussed fully with all members of staff. Subject co-ordinators are now far more involved in developing their own subject and this is driving standards up in many subjects. They check how well pupils are progressing and work hard to improve the quality of teaching through advice and training. However, it has only been possible for a very few senior teachers to observe colleagues' lessons on a regular basis. This means that many co-ordinators do not gain a clear enough view of the quality of teaching and learning. The head teacher is mainly responsible for observing teaching and provides good quality feedback, highlighting strengths and areas for development. This is very helpful, although it has not yet managed to make all teaching consistently good or better. The school has not yet been able to share the really good teaching that exists in parts of the school.
52. Another school improvement is the strengthening of its curriculum in recent years. All subjects are now based on standard, national schemes of work and this gives a real backbone to learning. Pupils' improvements in literacy and numeracy are due to a large extent to the introduction of the literacy and numeracy hours, and also to the energy and commitment of the English and mathematics co-ordinators. Co-ordinators adapt the schemes of work to meet the needs of the school and this is especially vital for classes with mixed year groups.

53. The school now takes considerable care in analysing its own progress. Staff regularly review the results of standard tests to see where pupils are doing well and what needs to be improved. The whole school drive to improve writing stemmed from this. Subject co-ordinators use other data to contribute to the school improvement plan and submit detailed and very relevant plans, linked to specific costings. For example, funding was earmarked for assessment tests to support the school's system for tracking pupils' progress more efficiently year on year. Another priority was the acquisition of materials to help pupils with special educational needs in Year 2 achieve an average grade in the national tests. These kinds of initiative form a major part of the school improvement plan. The plan is very broad, encompassing every part of school life, and is very effective. This is because the expectations on all staff are demanding yet reasonable, and so staff respond positively. The head teacher, key staff and the governors regularly check to see how successful the school's plans are.
54. The head teacher forms good relationships with parents of pupils for whom English is an additional language. He values their contribution to the school and takes every opportunity to strengthen the links and develop communications. The leadership and management of special educational needs are very good. The co-ordinator knows the pupils and their parents well and discusses needs, support and progress regularly with staff. Records are well maintained and updated regularly so that there is a good overview of pupils' achievements and progress. The governing body gives good support to the provision of pupils with special educational needs through its finances. There is a governor with special responsibility for special educational needs, who is taking a strong interest in their progress.
55. The governors play an important role in shaping the direction of the school. The number of governors has increased and is now stable. They undertake training on a regular basis to keep them abreast of educational initiatives. Subject co-ordinators present details of their work at every governors' meeting and governors often visit the school. For example, the chairman has kept a close eye on the progress of the new building and governors sometimes sit in lessons to observe the quality of teaching and learning. This gives them a good idea of how the school is doing. They have been proactive in generating and supporting changes to the school, not the least of which was to appoint a new head teacher.
56. The school controls its finances excellently. The head teacher and the governors have reversed the fortunes of the school by shrewdly checking all unnecessary expenditure and making cuts when appropriate, but not at the expense of the school improvement. In fact, standards have risen as the belt has tightened. The school made a healthy surplus last year, which it will use to fund a shortfall in income for the current year. The school uses the money it receives from the Education Action Zone very astutely. It has funded extra literacy support for pupils who would not normally receive it. It has provided science workshops, incentive schemes for attendance, ICT technical support and family education programmes, among others.
57. Staff development is good. The head teacher regularly appraises the work of all members of staff and sets them targets for self-improvement. There is a very good programme of formal and informal training. Each weekly staff meeting has an element of training led by subject co-ordinators. The quality of the support staff is very good because of their training and also because they work very closely with teachers. Lunchtime supervisors are very attentive, yet not always firm enough with any unpleasant behaviour. Staff who are new to the school are enthusiastic about the level of support from colleagues and the strong team spirit that pervades the school. All staff are wholly committed to the school's lofty ideals and work very effectively together.
58. The accommodation is satisfactory at present yet good in some ways. Some classrooms are of a good size, there are two large halls, two libraries, a computer room and extra rooms for the teaching of small groups. However, some classrooms are too small for the numbers of pupils and this makes teaching very difficult, especially of practical subjects like art and

design. The new building overcomes this problem and will provide a bright and positive environment for staff and pupils.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59. The head teacher, staff and governors should now:

1. raise standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 by:
  - a) ensuring that the very good teaching and high expectations of some teachers is extended throughout the school; (paragraphs 17, 19, 20, 23, 24)
  - b) ensuring that all teachers know more clearly what pupils know and can do, and use this information better to match work more skilfully to meet the needs of all pupils. (paragraphs 20, 24, 41)
2. continue to explore all possible means to improve the level of attendance by pupils. (paragraphs 16,38)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

63

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

35

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	18	20	20	0	0	0
Percentage	8	29	32	32	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 more than one percentage point.

### Information about the school's pupils

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	22	286
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	8	109

FTE means full-time equivalent.

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	74

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	11

<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	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

### Attendance

<b>Authorised absence</b>	%
School data	5.2
National comparative data	5.4

<b>Unauthorised absence</b>	%
School data	1.5
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	22	11	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	19	19
	Girls	8	8	11
	Total	25	27	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (60)	82 (60)	91 (84)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	18	18
	Girls	9	9	10
	Total	26	27	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (56)	82 (69)	85 (78)
	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	19	19	38

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	10	12
	Girls	11	7	12
	Total	22	17	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	58 (57)	45 (51)	63 (86)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	11	12
	Girls	12	8	10
	Total	22	19	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	58 (59)	50 (51)	58 (70)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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





### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

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

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

<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
273	0	1
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.5
Average class size	26

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

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	261

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2002-3
	£
Total income	748059
Total expenditure	697353
Expenditure per pupil	2139
Balance brought forward from previous year	49744
Balance carried forward to next year	50706

Number of pupils per FTE adult	11
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	302
Number of questionnaires returned	114

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	72	25	3	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	68	29	0	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	60	30	4	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	39	9	0	15
The teaching is good.	69	30	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	43	7	1	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	25	2	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	73	26	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	56	39	3	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	61	36	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	60	36	4	1	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	50	35	4	2	10

## **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**

60. Since the last inspection, there has been a good improvement in the Foundation Stage of learning. The school has successfully created a very good curriculum. Through a stimulating, rich and exciting programme of work and purposeful play, combined with very good quality teaching, it gives its children an encouraging start to their learning throughout the school. Building on the good practice already established in the nursery, the reception classes prepare children effectively for the more formal activities of the National Curriculum.
61. Children enter the nursery with very poor language, communication and personal and social skills. This naturally has an impact upon all the areas of learning. Although they make rapid progress in the nursery because of very good teaching, their levels of attainment in these basic skills are still well below those expected when they reach the youngest class in reception. Both teaching and learning in this particular class are exceptional and at times inspiring, and children achieve at a very high rate. Good teamwork between the two classes in reception ensures that, overall, very good quality teaching is sustained and children make very good progress. By the time children reach the end of the Foundation Stage, they have improved these basic skills considerably. However, given the very low attainment in their basic skills when they enter the school, children still do not reach the expected levels in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development.

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

62. Children are keen to come to the nursery and soon settle because of well-planned and organised routines. Excellent relationships between the staff and parents help to develop children's confidence and encourage a sense of belonging. Children show increasing independence as they are expected and encouraged to put on their own coats, wash their hands and put straws and cartons in the bin after milk. There is a gentle, calm and friendly insistence on rules and therefore, children learn good manners, by saying "Please" and "Thank you" and respond obediently to directions. Only a small minority have the confidence to initiate ideas and activities when they are given free choice. The curriculum is enriched by opportunities like listening to bilingual stories from nursery parents. Children learn to greet one another in both Bengali and Turkish, and develop an awareness and respect for other cultures.
63. In reception, children increasingly learn to take turns and share because of frequent reminders and high expectations of behaviour. They know they must put up their hands before they speak, although this is often difficult for them because of their eagerness to contribute. In response to one teacher's fine example, children showed an amazing degree of care and respect when they looked at photographs from the teacher's album. They learn to appreciate why some things are very precious. Children were unable to contain their excitement when they learned that they were going to celebrate a 'wedding' on a later day. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children have still not attained the degree of independence and self-control necessary to reach the expected levels for their age. At times, children wait too long for teachers' instructions and have not developed the skills to use their initiative sufficiently.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

64. Children are shy and reluctant talkers in the nursery, with very limited levels of vocabulary. Speech is often inaudible and most children use nods and gestures in order to communicate. Adults lead the way well and frequently attempt to engage children in conversation, extending their vocabulary well. They develop their listening skills well by high expectations and planned strategies. The use of 'Lola' a soft, cuddly leopard, for example, is most effective in holding the

attention of small groups of children, including those with English as an additional language. Children begin to recognise their names when they self-register and enjoy books and stories, such as *The Enormous Turnip*. They make marks, beginning to understand the purpose of writing.

65. Very good teaching of speaking and listening is continued effectively in reception. Children listen intently to interesting lessons and make very good progress in developing their reading and writing skills. The youngest children are inspired towards a love of books and greet the teacher's dynamic introduction of new books, such as those about owls, with shining eyes and squeals of delight. The most able reach a high standard, understanding that these are 'finding out' books. Very good teaching ensures that children of all levels of ability achieve very well given their prior attainment. Teachers draw children's attention to key words and introduce new vocabulary effectively. They stress initial and final sounds effectively in spoken words. Consequently, children make very good gains in building up their knowledge of sounds. Children enjoy creating rhyming strings of words, such as those that sound like 'ring', in Edward Lear's *The Owl and the Pussycat*. The teaching of writing is good. Children learn to form letter shapes and write out the letters of the alphabet. Only the most able are able to write their names legibly and independently, and can put short sentences in order, such as instructions on how to make a gingerbread man. Where work sheets are used, they are not always of a high enough quality in the reception class for the older children, to ensure good progress.

### **Mathematical development**

66. Teachers plan frequent opportunities in both nursery and reception to use numbers and solve mathematical problems for real purposes, such as using money for shopping. They use mathematical language and vocabulary during many daily activities. In spite of this, children rarely use it independently and this is a weakness in their attainment by the end of the Foundation Stage. In the nursery, children use a wide variety of toys and games to begin to learn number names and match them to symbols and to recognise simple shapes. They count the number of children who are absent, representing numbers on their fingers and enjoy joining in number rhymes, such as *Five Speckled Frogs*. They measure and compare sizes, such as when they thread a string of beads and find out if it is longer or shorter than a toy snake.
67. In the reception class, children begin to understand the meaning of 'one more', through the skilful use of a number line activity. Following the wedding theme at the time of the inspection, children in reception enjoyed wrapping and decorating parcels extending their knowledge of shapes and sizes. The more able are challenged to count in multiples of ten, add on and take away, during activities with a programmable toy. The children make very good progress through the nursery and reception classes because of very good teaching.

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

68. Children show a growing curiosity and interest in things around them, although they lack language skills and confidence to comment or question. In the nursery, most identify primary colours accurately. The very good teaching means that children experience a wide variety of materials, textures and tools, specifically planned to enlarge their vocabulary and awareness. Children observe changes in trees and plants and enjoy playing with toy animals, learning their names and those of their young. In an improvement since the last inspection, they carry out simple functions on the computer as they find out more information about a chosen topic. In one reception class, children were highly motivated to make predictions about how long it would take a programmable toy, cunningly disguised as a wedding car, to reach a model church, complete with the sound of pealing bells.

69. Children learn about special celebrations, such as weddings and christenings. They also learn about Hindu weddings and find out about food and clothes from other cultures and countries. Exceptional teaching ensures very high levels of involvement and effort. Carefully framed questions develop vocabulary and number skills effectively. By the end of reception, children create a gingerbread man using the *Draw* program on the computer, in response to a story, for example, and print it off for themselves. They show increasing competence in technological skills.

### **Physical development**

70. The quality of teaching is very good in both the nursery and reception. Teachers plan challenging activities with good levels of awareness of children's safety. The youngest children move freely with pleasure and confidence during activities in the large hall and on a wide range of equipment during their outdoor play. They run, jump and balance and climb with agility up slopes, steps and obstacles. In activities that also develop children's personal and social skills, children ride, pedal, push and pull a variety of bikes, scooters, cars and prams. They learn to adjust speed and direction as they negotiate people, bends and obstacles. In lessons on movement, however, they find it difficult to hold a shape or position for long and have limited control or awareness of their bodies.
71. In reception, children learn to use large apparatus with confidence and increasing awareness of safety because of good reminders. They kick and roll large balls with appropriate levels of control and play team games with a good understanding of the rules. In this aspect of their physical development, children reach the expectations for their age. Children are less skilful in the finer movements of manipulating small tools such as pencils and scissors or picking up small objects.

### **Creative development**

72. The very good teaching creates an environment that really stimulates children's imaginations in the nursery. Children are encouraged to use their senses to explore and enjoy painting, printing, drawing and gluing, as well as exploring sand, water and dough. They paint stripes, spots and patterns in response to the jungle theme and enjoy sticking feathers on outlines of birds. Children experiment with musical instruments and move like elephants, kangaroos and crocodiles after listening to music.
73. Teaching is very good in reception. Children experience a wide range of media and materials to create pictures and patterns, including those using computer programmes. They are building a repertoire of songs and rhymes, and experiment with sounds. They match a sound to an instrument and further explore how sounds can change. Children build effectively on prior learning, which leads to very good levels of achievement for the youngest children in the school. They are encouraged to participate in role-play based on first-hand experiences, to develop their imaginations and creativity. Teachers check children's progress very thoroughly. They see how well children learn in lessons so that they can adjust the next lessons.

### **ENGLISH**

74. Pupils' attainment is below average by the end of Years 2 and 6. However, through effective leadership and good teaching, pupils now achieve well. Standards in speaking, listening, reading and writing by the end of both the infants and juniors are better than they were at the time of the last inspection. Pupils are close to reaching national expectations by the end of Year 2, with more pupils reaching the higher levels. This is because of a determined drive by the head teacher and staff to improve writing throughout the school. Other initiatives on language development have led to good progress by junior pupils, but not enough reach expected levels by the age of eleven.

75. Standards in speaking and listening are below average by the end of Year 2. Pupils achieve well because there is an increasing emphasis on the skills of speaking and listening. Pupils often listen carefully as when, for example, one articulate girl explained the meaning of 'earthquake' in a poem. Consequently, pupils gain confidence. They listen hard because of the teachers' high expectations of good behaviour, but their understanding is hampered by a limited vocabulary. Most teachers plan frequent opportunities for pupils to talk to one another in small and large groups. This also helps to develop confidence. In Year 2, for example, pupils enjoy talking with their 'talking partners' about their weekend. However, pupils' speech is sometimes indistinct and fragmentary with missed consonants and word endings.
76. By the end of Year 6, pupils still struggle to express themselves clearly, or convey meanings fluently. Nevertheless, pupils make good progress because teachers have good expectations and have good questioning skills. There are increasing opportunities for discussions and debate, as in Year 4 when pupils learn to present effective arguments for and against keeping pets. Teachers, especially in Years 5 and 6, encourage and value pupils' contributions. Sensitive and purposeful questioning and careful use of praise raise the self-esteem of less able pupils in particular. In this way, pupils produce thoughtful responses and make considerable effort to extend their replies. Occasionally, in some lessons, teachers provide too few opportunities for pupils to speak, sometimes answering their own questions or too readily accepting one word answers. Progress is less evident in these lessons. Pupils for whom English is their second language make very good progress in their language skills and are fully integrated within lessons.
77. Standards in reading are below average by the end of Year 2. However, standards are very close to being average and all pupils make good progress. A small minority of pupils reach standards above those expected and have good levels of understanding. Pupils enjoy reading and use a wide range of reading strategies to make sense of their reading. For example, they recognise silent letters in words such as 'could', explain what a 'magic e' is and identify rhyming words. They read hesitantly but with reasonable accuracy, taking account of simple punctuation and struggling to work out words such as 'almost'. Teaching uses a variety of interesting and stimulating resources and good questioning skills to develop pupils' reading comprehension. The improved provision of both fiction and non-fiction books in the inviting and well-organised libraries effectively contributes to a love of books.
78. Standards in reading are also below average by the end of Year 6. Pupils read with reasonable expression but not always fluently because they still rely on phonic strategies to read accurately. This does not do much to help their understanding. They often find difficulty in recalling details of stories or characters in books they have read, although they know how to use the contents and index of a reference book. The school provides challenging reading material for the most able pupils to reach the higher standards of which they are capable. These pupils have good levels of understanding and extract information by expertly scanning texts. The least able pupils also enjoy reading and talk readily about books that make them laugh, cry or feel afraid. Initiatives such as 'Curiosity Sacks' have been especially successful, motivating individuals to learn and creating interest in books.
79. Standards of writing are below average by the end of Year 2, but only just. There is now regular and systematic teaching of phonics, spelling and handwriting, which has led to good progress. The majority of pupils write simple sentences without help, using their growing knowledge of letter sounds to attempt unfamiliar words. For example, a more able pupil wrote that a "magician praguiced a rabbit from his hat" when writing about a party. Very few pupils use capital letters and full stops accurately and letters are frequently reversed, showing below average standards. Pupils are beginning to develop a cursive style of handwriting but this is not yet expected in their everyday writing.
80. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in writing is below average. They write in a range of styles, including reports, diaries, letters, book reviews and poems. They produce lengthy narrative writing and use increasingly descriptive vocabulary. However, their stories often do



not have a logical enough sequence or structure and the quality of grammar and spelling is not good enough. For example, pupils sometimes mix upper and lower case letters within sentences and confuse verb tenses. Nevertheless, pupils progress well throughout the juniors. In Year 3, pupils write in increasingly complex sentences and, in Year 4, they develop a better structure to their writing.

81. In Years 5 and 6, they achieve at a faster rate because of very good teaching. Teachers have high expectations and make the aims of lessons very clear. Pupils of all abilities make very good progress in these lessons. They build effectively upon previous knowledge when they learn how to produce persuasive texts and make comparisons between the styles of different poets, for example. The most able pupils can sustain ideas effectively to develop lively, interesting stories with expressive vocabulary. This is an improvement since the last inspection. They use a suitable range of punctuation including speech marks, exclamation marks and apostrophes for greater impact for the reader.
82. Teaching is good overall, with some very good teaching in both infant and junior classes. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs and those with lower levels of ability, providing good support and encouragement. Very good planning and close adherence to the National Literacy Strategy result in well-structured lessons with clear objectives. Pupils know what they are learning and have clear targets for improvement, both individually and in their groups. This gives purpose and motivation to lessons, leading to at least good progress. Teachers' marking, however, could do more to develop basic skills and improve pupils' work. Sometimes, pupils are allowed to carry on making the same mistakes and their work does not always build securely on the learning of basic skills.
83. Confident and proactive leadership is having a positive impact on standards in English. The curriculum is well organised and, in an improvement since the last inspection, incorporates poetry, drama and role-play. Teachers use other subjects well to develop literacy. For example, in a Year 4/5 lesson, pupils were encouraged to talk about their thoughts on model burglar alarms they had made. However, teachers do not make the most of all opportunities, such as writing in subjects like geography and history, and using other subjects within English lessons to broaden pupils' vocabulary and put learning in context.

## **MATHEMATICS**

84. Standards in mathematics by the end of Years 2 and 6 are below average. This is better than at the time of the last inspection. The teaching and curriculum have improved in recent years and, as a result, the majority of pupils now make good progress.
85. Pupils have satisfactory skills in number work by the end of Year 2. Pupils in Year 1 can recognise and write numbers correctly and understand patterns in numbers and the place value of tens and units. Pupils with special educational needs often need extra support to do so. Higher attaining pupils can double numbers from one to nine. All pupils can recognise and correctly name basic shapes such as circles, triangles, squares and rectangles. Pupils in Year 2 can recognise patterns of odd and even numbers and make estimates before calculating. Higher attaining pupils are now secure in their knowledge and understanding of hundreds, tens and units, and can recognise all the coin values. They can also identify right angles in shapes. However, not all pupils show sufficient mental agility.
86. Pupils have sound calculation skills by the end of Year 6. They can cancel fractions to their lowest terms and use them to find fractions of simple shapes. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 are able to relate fractions to percentages and decimals, whilst average and lower attaining pupils are secure in using their previous knowledge of tables in their calculations. Number skills are developing better than in other areas of mathematics but all groups of pupils can recognise the lines of symmetry in regular shapes and calculate the perimeters of rectangles. Pupils are developing a reasonable understanding of data handling. They can collect data and

record it in the form of graphs. In a Year 6 lesson, good questioning enabled all groups of pupils to contribute well to a discussion on pie charts and interpret the information.

87. The teaching is good with some very good teaching in the infants and juniors. The better lessons have good planning with clear objectives that are referred to at the start of lessons. This ensures that pupils are aware of the focus for their learning and encourages them to concentrate and work hard. For example, in a Year 2 lesson on recognising the multiples of 3, 4 and 5, this helped the pupils to remember some of their previous work and gave them confidence. Most teachers match work well to the abilities of the pupils. All teachers make good use of resources to stimulate pupils' interest. Particularly good use is made of ICT in junior classes, where interactive whiteboards ensure all pupils are able to focus on the teachers' instructions and demonstrations of ways to tackle problems. Teaching assistants work well with groups of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language within lessons, which enables them to enable them to make good progress. This was well demonstrated in a Year 6 lesson on multiplication, where the previous knowledge of the 2, 5 and 10 times tables and number patterns was effectively built upon.
88. Less successful teaching has too much emphasis on factual knowledge and lessons have a pedestrian pace. This results in lower levels of concentration and less interest in learning. This is not helped when teachers are uncertain about what groups of pupils need to do next in order to improve. For example, higher attaining pupils, though fewer in number, make steady progress but need more consistent challenge if they are to match the rate of improvement of the other children. The school recently identified this need and teachers are beginning to refine their skills by the deeper questioning of individual pupils in order to extend learning. Good practice of this skill was seen in lessons in Years 2, 4 and 6. Pupils have their own targets but the school does not check regularly enough how well pupils are achieving these. A new co-ordinator has been appointed and current management of the subject is good.

## **SCIENCE**

89. Standards in science are in line with the expected levels by the end of Years 2 and 6. This shows good progress since the last inspection, especially for junior pupils. Pupils now make good progress through the school. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as a second language make very good progress. Progress has been particularly good since the national tests of last year. This is because curriculum planning has been strengthened, support for pupils with special educational needs is now very good and a strong focus on investigative work has improved learning in all areas. Teaching has improved considerably, as teachers now match work more effectively to the needs of the pupils.
90. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a satisfactory scientific vocabulary. They know the names of the different parts of a plant, for example, their function and the conditions needed for growth. In Year 1, this is reinforced through good use of a computer programme. More able pupils in Year 2 understand the meaning of a fair test. They confidently explain how they will control the amount of soil and light to investigate the amount of water a plant needs to grow successfully. These pupils have the opportunity to experience more challenging situations because teachers' assessment is very thorough. Sometimes there are too many objectives in lessons and lower attaining pupils in particular find this hard to cope with. For example, Year 1 pupils found it too difficult to think about the stages of an investigation and ways of fair testing at the same time. Pupils learn different ways of recording work according to their ability, and good links are made with data handling in maths. Pupils know, for instance, how to enter information into a chart and they take pride in the presentation. In Year 2, a pupil could confidently describe the cycle of the tomato plant, referring to the seedling, plant and tomato in front of him. This was because the assistant had spent time reinforcing the teacher's introduction to the lesson and identifying the key parts of the plant.

91. By the end of Year 6, standards are in line with national expectations. Pupils can carry out investigations fairly and accurately. They question their own findings to try to discover better results. For example, in a Year 6 lesson on the filtration of pond water, pupils experimented with the thickness of filter paper, and compared filtered water with tap water. Pupils have a competent technical vocabulary, although many of them lack confidence in speaking. Older pupils know what 'prism' and 'neutralise' mean but struggle to give a clear definition. Pupils benefit from science workshops by widening their experiences. They know, for example, how to treat a wasp sting. Pupils in Year 6 benefit especially from extra lessons to help them prepare for the national tests. They talk enthusiastically about the value of this extra science and can recall the experiments in detail. Teachers use effective ways of grouping pupils with special needs and they sometimes work in mixed ability groups. This is designed to provide good examples and also to raise the self-esteem of less confident, able pupils.
92. Teaching is good overall with some very good practice in Year 2. Where teaching is strong, it is based on an accurate assessment of pupils' progress. Teachers are then able to plan work that meets the needs of all pupils. Teachers develop science through other subjects, reinforcing language and relating the subject to real life. All this was evident in an excellent Year 1/2 lesson where pupils fully understood the growth cycle of the tomato. The teacher built on their existing knowledge of parts of a plant and extended this to include seedling, fruit and pollen. There were opportunities to reflect on the huge number of seeds in a tomato and the speed of growth. One pupil with special educational needs described the sun burning the tomato to turn it red. Not all teachers, however, are clear enough about the levels that pupils are achieving and this means that the aims of a lesson can be too broad. The school has already identified the need for more detailed assessment which should enable teachers to track pupils' progress effectively.
93. A significant strength in teaching throughout the school is the focus on the teaching of investigational skills. The co-ordinator has worked with all staff to incorporate this focus into weekly plans. This has been in place for two terms and there is a clear impact on standards and on the use of scientific language. However, the co-ordinator does not yet check to see how well this is being done, in order to ensure a consistent approach throughout the school.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

94. Standards in art and design have improved significantly since the previous inspection. Pupils make very good progress through Years 1 and 2 and standards are well above average by the end of Year 2. Junior pupils make good progress and, by the end of Year 6, standards are above the levels expected for their age. They encounter a very broad range of media and techniques throughout the school, and produce artwork ranging from small icons to large sculptures. Art is now a strength of the school and contributes to pupils' learning in other subjects.
95. Teaching across the school is good with some very good practice in Years 2 and 6. A significant factor is the use of sketchbooks. The co-ordinator has encouraged an experimental approach to art and each unit of work starts with research and an exploration of materials. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils selected paint, charcoal, pastels and a range of brushes to recreate the material textures on a Roman belt. Pupils readily tried out various combinations and techniques, showing that the experimental approach is a key part of teaching. Year 6 pupils could describe how they had used sketchbooks to identify patterns in carvings and isolate a small section as the basis for a collograph print.
96. Where sketchbooks are used effectively, the standard of pupils' work is high. For example, in a Year 6 project on plants, sketches were developed into enlarged drawings and sample wire sculptures were the beginnings of large-scale plant sculptures using withy and modroc. The work of Georgia O'Keeffe was used for inspiration. Pupils explained that they often begin with the work of one artist but are encouraged to explore the same style using different media.

They feel that sketchbooks have given them confidence and many do art work at home “because you don’t need lots of special materials, you can try out with simple things.” In some classes, children are not offered the same wide range of materials to explore and the final pieces of work show less variety and more limited use of media. There can also be too strong a focus on the design element rather than the use of materials.

97. The co-ordinator has had a major impact on the development of art and design in the school. She has a real passion for the subject, inspiring her colleagues through training sessions and her own model of good practice. There is a display of mixed-media collage by the staff alongside pupil art work and this reflects the head teacher’s vision of the school as a whole learning community. All staff have obviously been very receptive to new initiatives and as a result, standards in teaching and display are consistently good. The co-ordinator regularly analyses pupils’ work and is very clear in what contributes to high standards and what needs improving, such as the use of ICT images.
98. The curriculum is enhanced by involvement in community projects and visiting workshops. One of the many examples is an Education Action Zone project, which has brought a willow sculptor and Samba workshop into school. This work will involve pupils in a local arts festival. The links with literature and music from other cultures reflect the school’s commitment to celebrate art and design across the curriculum. There are numerous examples of how art is used to improve pupils’ learning in other subjects. For example, mixed media collage was used to help pupils in Year 2 understand the contrasting landscape of South African villages. Activities show respect for other traditions, appreciation of beauty and the impact of values and beliefs on daily lives. This demonstrates the school’s commitment to developing creative and reflective skills in pupils. One junior pupil, with special educational needs, explained the characteristics of Picasso and Chagall and then compared them to his own favourite artist, Leonardo da Vinci, who “draws bodies as they really are”. He went on to explain that his teacher has helped him close his eyes and see pictures as no one else sees them so that he can then go away and paint.
99. The standard of display is consistently very high in every classroom, corridor and entrance area. It creates interest from pupils across the school and sets high expectations of standards to be achieved as well as raising self-esteem. Staff take great care and effort to provide pupils with a stimulating and constantly changing learning environment that reflects every one of the aims of the school.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

100. Standards are above with those expected nationally by the end of Years 2 and 6. The majority of pupils are making good progress in the development of skills in making things as they move through the school. These are both improvements since the last inspection, which are due to better planning and teaching throughout the school. Appropriate emphasis is given to the design process and the recording of pupils’ initial designs and evaluations.
101. The school now plans more systematically for the subject. Teachers now follow a scheme of work that follows national guidance on what should be taught in each year, so that pupils can build on what they have learned before. For example, infant pupils have used the lever principle to make animals with moving limbs from card, and made a vehicle that moves. Pupils show a very clear understanding of the design, making and evaluation factors involved. “You picture it in your eye, draw it on a piece of card, make sure you have the right equipment and learn how to use it, make the model and then check how well it worked,” declared one pupil from Year 2.
102. Good skills in cutting and shaping materials are evident in the work of junior pupils. For example, pupils in Years 4 and 5 are able to design and make an alarm to protect a valuable object, and make a model clown whose eyes light up, from their knowledge of electrical circuits in their science work. Previous Year 3 work has involved designing and making a

sandwich for a day out. In a Year 6 lesson, a new topic on designing and building a shelter was successfully linked with the real-life experiences of the pupils. Good use is made of opportunities to develop pupils' social skills through working together and operating as a team.

103. Teaching is good and teachers show an appropriate knowledge of the subject. Practical demonstrations are good and teachers have positive discussions with pupils on the design and evaluation of their products. This inevitably helps to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills as well. Good use is made of support staff to help pupils with special educational needs, so that they are able to make effective contributions to discussions.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

104. Pupils' attainment is average by the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils have satisfactory knowledge and reasonable skills in research. For infant pupils, this is a similar picture compared to the last inspection but there has been a clear improvement for pupils by the end of Year 6. The school has made sure that there is enough time to cover a strengthened curriculum, and teaching is more secure.
105. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, and often good. Teachers generate a good learning atmosphere in classrooms so that pupils are motivated and behave well. Pupils are especially interested when teachers use stimulating resources. For example, pupils in a Year 2 lesson quickly responded to photos of themselves on holiday in their younger days and their hands shot up to suggest seaside activities, such as sunbathing, making sandcastles and crab-fishing. Overhead projectors and computers are used well to bring the subjects alive, as when showing, for example, the full glory of Mount Everest. Pupils feel valued in lessons and so are eager to participate, because teachers try to vary their questions to include all pupils. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6, for example, were expected to know the difference between temperate and sub-tropical climates.
106. Pupils are very clear about what they are going to learn, as teachers spell out the aims of the lesson. This helps pupils make a brisk start to their work, needing little extra help. In a Year 6 lesson on mountains, for instance, pupils lost no time in filling in their fact-sheets about the Himalayas. Sometimes, though, lower attaining pupils struggle with the language of such work and benefit from extra support. Although teachers occasionally provide work tailored to meet the needs of all the abilities of pupils, too often the work is the same for all pupils. This does little to motivate higher attaining pupils, in particular, and enable them to do as well as they should. In good lessons, teachers have suitably high expectations of pupils. Older pupils are required to access the Internet to locate facts on, for example, Kenyan farming. Sometimes, expectations can be too high. Pupils in Year 1, for instance, are expected to be able to compare life in the U.K. with life in South Africa, which is a tall order.
107. It is very good that the school ensures that geography has enough time throughout the year. This guarantees that pupils learn about a wide range of topics. Teachers have a sensible system for checking how well pupils learn in each topic but do not use this information enough to influence their planning of lessons. Teachers do not use the subject enough to develop other subjects. Pupils do not improve artistic techniques much because they do not draw maps accurately for themselves, for example. Some use is made of computers but pupils do not often word-process their writing. Sometimes, there are good opportunities. One pupil in Year 5 wrote a reasoned, if somewhat quaint, environmental argument against fly-tipping, which included, "ducks might go through the sewage and have a heart attack."

## **HISTORY**

108. Standards are in line with those expected at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 and show improvement since the last inspection. This is because the curriculum has been revised to

ensure better progression in learning and history is now taught as a separate subject with strong links with other subjects.

109. By the end of Year 2, pupils can compare the past with the present. They are beginning to distinguish the near past, such as their grandparents' childhood, with the distant past of the Victorians, for example. They can name key historical figures and talk about their lives. Teachers use artefacts and first-hand evidence to inspire pupils. In the Year 1/2 class, pupils made good use of a visitor to learn about her seaside holidays 50 years ago. They ask appropriate questions about clothes, shopping and travel to make general comparisons with the past. More able Year 2 pupils tackle comparison with holidays 100 years ago. There are challenging questions on wall displays, such as "Why do we remember Florence Nightingale?" Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their learning as a natural part of the day and many pupils can offer reasonable answers to this question.
110. By the end of Year 6, pupils can generate their own questions about the past. They are beginning to draw on their own knowledge of different periods of history, and use written sources effectively to extract relevant information. In some instances, pupils have not covered the same topics and this makes it difficult for teachers to plan effectively. Some pupils in Year 6 had not previously studied the ancient Greeks and their questions were initially more basic than other pupils, who already knew that not all Greek children went to school. These pupils were beginning to explore the reason for education. Pupils produce their best work when teachers have high expectations, with questions like, "What was the lasting impact on Britain of Tudor exploration?" Year 6 pupils are most enthusiastic when discussing different viewpoints or conflicting information from source material. History is well represented in displays throughout the school. There are some good links with other subjects and this strengthens pupils' understanding of different cultures. For example, pupils know that Beowulf was a story passed on through storytelling in Saxon times.
111. Pupils make most progress where termly plans identify what pupils of different abilities need to learn. However, many objectives are the same and, in these cases, more able pupils make less progress than other pupils. The co-ordinator has already identified the need to review the curriculum and to build in assessment. This will support teachers in their planning and in particular raise the attainment of more able pupils.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

112. ICT has come a long way since the last inspection. Standards have risen appreciably throughout the school, as a result of much better teaching and higher expectations. At the time of the last inspection, pupils' attainment was below expected levels. Now, pupils are achieving average levels of attainment with the likely prospect of improving on this in the near future.
113. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers create good relationships with the pupils that produce positive attitudes and good behaviour. In the computer room, pupils concentrate hard on their work and rarely misbehave. Regular training has meant that teachers are increasingly confident in ICT. Pupils understand more readily, therefore, because teachers are able to demonstrate new skills clearly. In one lesson, pupils in Years 1 and 2 soon learned how to drag petals, stems and roots across the computer screen to assemble a colourful flower and how to rotate the petals to make them fit. Teachers give pupils ample opportunity to practise their skills. This means that pupils use the mouse deftly, open up programmes and know their way around the keyboard. They word-process competently. Only lower attaining pupils need help at times. Pupils also quickly pick up techniques because teachers ask good questions of all pupils.
114. Pupils achieve well in ICT because teachers put learning in context. Mostly, pupils' work is linked closely to other subjects, like mathematics, art and science. For example, pupils in Year 3 made some colourful symmetrical patterns using two-dimensional shapes and pupils in Year 6 produced a newspaper feature on coastal erosion. Pupils learn systematically because

the teachers' planning is good. Pupils are able to work at their own pace yet this do not always help more able pupils, since they have to start at the same point as other pupils. More able pupils, therefore, do not all achieve as well as they might. Nevertheless, teachers generally have good expectations and set work that is challenging. In a Year 5 lesson, for example, pupils had not only to create their own web page but also make hyperlinks to other pages. Pupils in Year 6 were expected to search the Internet for information on topics, such as their study on ancient Greeks. Teachers provide a good variety of opportunities. For example, pupils produce brightly coloured fish in an aquarium, using a paint package, or compose snatches of electronic music. They use scanners, digital microscopes and sensors and some have produced a multi-media presentation by the end of Year 6. However, pupils have little direct experience of transferring digital photographs to a computer and of using e-mail.

115. The school has worked hard to develop the subject. The computer room has been in place now for three years and is very well used by all classes. Teaching assistants and other adults play a vital role in supporting and advising pupils. When a teacher does not have support, pupils do not progress quite so well. Pupils do learn well, though, when teachers make full use of resources such as smart boards. These help to focus pupils' concentration and clarify what they have to do. Teachers check on pupils' progress during lessons and keep a record of what skills pupils have learned. However, this information is not yet used efficiently by teachers in their planning of lessons so that all pupils receive work suitable for their abilities.

## **MUSIC**

116. The attainment of pupils seen during the inspection is broadly average by the end of Years 2 and 6. Junior pupils are making better progress than they did at the time of the last inspection. The teaching is consistently stronger because it is all done by a specialist and there is a robust curriculum which gives pupils a good range of experiences.
117. The good teaching ensures good learning throughout the school. The teacher is skilled in music and in teaching techniques, and so pupils acquire skills in the right way. When learning a new song, for example, pupils echo each line the teacher sings. In this way, pupils have to concentrate hard to follow and hear the correct version clearly. This is very good for all pupils, including those without English as a first language, two of whom are so keen they are in the choir. Pupils sing with expression and good rhythm because the teacher has high expectations and insists on pupils interpreting the mood and beat of songs. Pupils are expected to have a good knowledge. Pupils in Year 1 and 2, for instance, understand the difference between trumpet and trombones, although not by sound. Lessons are planned carefully so that pupils' skills and knowledge are built upon step by step. The teacher asks good questions to double-check pupils' understanding and strengthen their skills. In so doing, pupils' literacy skills are also improved. Brandishing a box, the teacher asked of pupils in a Year 1/2 class, "What instrument is not likely to be inside?" "It's not a guitar because the box is too small," came one very sensible answer.
118. There is a good atmosphere in classrooms. Lessons go with a swing and pupils are kept busy, so that they actively enjoy singing and trying to compose. Pupils appreciate that music can also have a distinct purpose because the teaching relates it to everyday activities. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils had to compose short pieces of background music for a snowboarding sequence on a video. This really motivated them to be creative, although their skills on percussion were not well developed enough to support their ideas. Sometimes, though, not all pupils are interested enough and this can dilute the impact of some lessons. Some of the junior boys, in particular, show little inclination to take part in lessons or in hymn practices, and are not persuaded enough to join in by all staff present.
119. The school is keen to promote music. There is a choir, which sings in assemblies and outside school at, for example, the local cottage hospital. A good number of boys and girls from Years 3 and 4 are involved although few from Years 5 and 6. Older pupils have attended a BBC concert in Manchester, and bands and orchestras visit the school to help pupils experience a

variety of music from samba to pan pipes. However, the school does not seize every opportunity to celebrate music. Pupils do not sing in every assembly or hear different kinds of music when they enter and leave the hall.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

120. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and most pupils make good progress. The progress of junior pupils is satisfactory and their attainment is in line with expectations by the end of Year 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The school has improved the curriculum in recent years so that pupils now acquire skills progressively and there is real continuity from year to year.
121. During the inspection, only lessons in dance and games were seen. The school makes good use of a nearby grassed playing field and the school hall to enable all groups of pupils to participate in indoor and outdoor team games, athletics and gymnastics and to respond to music through dance and movement. All junior pupils benefit from swimming lessons. Currently, most of the pupils in Years 4 and 5 are able to swim the required distance of 25 metres.
122. Teaching is good. One lesson for infant pupils was excellent. Teachers generate enthusiasm and interest among pupils through their skilful use of praise. They show a satisfactory subject knowledge, which they use well to guide pupils to improve their performance. As a result, pupils grow in confidence and are willing to experiment and improve. Activities are well structured and designed to improve pupils' skills. Pupils respond well to teachers and generally listen well and follow instructions. Teachers are careful to give guidance without it becoming over-directed, so that pupils are encouraged to try out ideas for themselves as well as follow set patterns of movement. All pupils are able to move about the hall safely with good awareness of their space and that of others.
123. Physical education is very well supported by a wide range of extra-curricular clubs. In addition, the school has enjoyed considerable success in local matches and tournaments. The subject is well managed by the co-ordinator, who has realistic plans for the future development of the subject.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

124. By the ages of seven and eleven, pupils' standards are above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. This represents good improvement since the last inspection. It reflects the high profile of the subject within the curriculum, strong leadership and good quality of teaching.
125. By the end of Year 2, pupils know the main Christian festivals and some Bible stories. They gain a sense of what it means to belong to a group. Pupils in Year 1 know the importance to Hindus of welcoming people to their homes. They recognise the Hindu symbols of Brahman and Ganesh in a Toran, recalling the names well. In a very good lesson, pupils listened open-mouthed to the teacher's explanation of the lotus flower and understood that it is a symbol of good coming from bad. As they created their own lotus flowers, they reflected on good things that can come from bad in their own lives. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 consider the importance of family life, visit a synagogue and make thoughtful responses about precious things when they learn about Judaism. During a visit from a speaker from a local university, pupils were fascinated by a range of Jewish artefacts and learnt through first-hand experiences about the symbolism of plaited bread and candles, and the importance of Shabbat. They are familiar with the meaning of terms such as 'Shalom'. Throughout, very good links are established, reinforced and developed between different religions.
126. By the age of eleven, most pupils have a secure knowledge of the major world faiths. Pupils talk about Hinduism and Christianity, for example, with interest and respect. They readily link



the Bible with Christianity, the Qur'an to Islam and the Torah to Judaism and know the significance of Jesus, Brahma and Mohammed to different religions. Pupils gain an increasing awareness of the Christian church as a vital part of a community. During a lesson about Islam, pupils in Year 6 benefited from a Muslim visitor. As a result, pupils can explain that there are no images of Allah and give sound reasons, such as "he is too special" or "we don't know what he looks like". Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make good progress through the school.

127. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers are knowledgeable and present information about religious beliefs in a lively and interesting way. Teaching is firmly rooted in pupils' own experiences and, in most cases, matched well to their levels of understanding. On occasion, teachers tend to direct pupils' learning too much at the expense of discussion and exchange of ideas. Teachers use a stimulating variety of activities and high quality resources to reinforce knowledge and develop understanding. In the best lessons, they use sensitive questioning skills, drawing out pupils' thoughts and ideas. They listen carefully to pupils' responses, judging how well they are understanding.
128. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' literacy. There are many opportunities for reading and writing. Pupils develop their research skills when they search for information about church activities in leaflets in Year 6. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 read the Bible to find information about the personal qualities of Jesus and make notes using the interactive white board, successfully using skills in ICT. There are also good opportunities for speaking and listening.
129. Subject co-ordination is very good. The co-ordinator has produced a very rich and varied programme, systematically planned over two years. Resources are good. Pupils enjoy visits to churches, synagogues and other places of worship. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is reflected in the high quality of displays around the school.