

# INSPECTION REPORT

**MANOR PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL AND  
NURSERY**

Knutsford

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111237

Headteacher: Mrs R Hipkiss

Reporting inspector: Mrs L J Traves  
24039

Dates of inspection: 23<sup>rd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> September 2002

Inspection number: 247096

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Nursery, Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 –11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Manor Park North  
Knutsford  
Cheshire

Postcode: WA16 8DB

Telephone number: 01565 632248

Fax number: 01565 750037

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr C Radley

Date of previous inspection: March 1998

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
24039	Mrs L Traves	Registered inspector	Science Geography History Special educational needs Educational inclusion	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Leadership and management Key Issues for action
13723	Mrs J Overend	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
17907	Mr M Bowers	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Design and technology	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
18370	Mr K Johnson	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Physical education	Teaching and learning
12394	Mrs C May	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Art and design Religious education	

The inspection contractor was:

Primary Associates Limited  
Suite 13  
West Lancashire Technology Management Centre  
Moss Lane View  
Skelmersdale  
WN8 9TN

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33 Kingsway

London WC2B 6SE

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Manor Park Primary School and Nursery is about the same size as most other primary schools, with 220 pupils on roll aged between 3 and 11 years. Of these, 24 attend part-time in the nursery. There are more boys than girls in the school and in some junior classes the boys significantly outnumber the girls. The majority of pupils are white and most speak English as their first language. Pupils are drawn mainly from the local authority and private housing close to the school. Around a third of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs, (19.7 per cent) including those with statements, is broadly average. Most of these pupils have learning difficulties but a significant minority, mostly boys, have emotional and behavioural difficulties. On entry to the nursery, although there is a wide spread of ability, many children demonstrate below average skills, particularly in their language development.

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

Manor Park is a good school with many strengths. Standards have started to rise in English, mathematics and science and the majority of pupils now reach national averages by the time they leave the school. Much of the teaching is good or better and enables most pupils to make good progress. The rich and exciting curriculum fosters positive attitudes to learning. The headteacher leads and manages the school very well towards continuing improvement. She is strongly supported in this by the staff and governors. The school gives good value for money.

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

- The leadership and management of the headteacher are very effective. She is bringing about improvements in standards, with the strong support of staff and governors;
- Children in the nursery and reception classes get off to a very good start;
- Teaching is good and as a result, most pupils achieve well, including those with special educational needs;
- The curriculum is very rich and stimulating;
- The school develops pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness very effectively;
- Relationships within the school and with parents and the local community are very good;
- Standards in design and technology (DT) are much better than those found in most schools.

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

- The achievement of more able pupils at both key stages in writing and in science at Key Stage 1;
- The concentration and independence of a small minority of pupils at Key Stage 2;
- The usefulness of teachers' marking in helping pupils to improve.

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

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

The school was last inspected in March 1998, when it was judged to be a good school. This picture has been sustained and good improvements have been made both in the areas that were identified as key issues last time and in other areas. Systems for checking on and recording pupils' progress have improved, particularly in English, mathematics and science and standards are rising as a result. More rigorous checking of teachers' work has led to improvements in the quality and consistency of teaching throughout the school. This has ensured that pupils can now build more effectively on their knowledge and skills from year-to-year. Standards have risen in information and communication technology (ICT) at Key Stage 2 and pupils have greater access to computers. Daily acts of worship now take place and these are of good quality. In addition, the school has improved provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development. The learning environment has been improved both indoors and out, as a result of the move to one 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	D	D	D	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	E	E	C	B	
Science	E	C	C	B	

Inspection findings show that standards overall are improving, even though results in the 2002 tests remained below average in English when compared to all schools. More pupils are now reaching average standards by the time they leave the school. The numbers reaching the higher level (Level 5) are also increasing. When compared to schools in similar circumstances, the picture is better, with standards being average in English and above average in mathematics and science. Results for 2002 show that the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level has improved again in all three subjects and in mathematics, the percentage of pupils reaching the higher level has improved significantly. Results in English were very close to the average, when compared to schools nationally. However, the 2002 Year 6 class contained some pupils with significant special needs in the subject and this has depressed the school's overall score. Inspection findings judge standards to be average in all three subjects. An analysis of pupils' progress in other classes shows that most pupils are now achieving at a faster rate and these improvements are set to continue.

When children join the nursery, although there is a wide spread of ability, many have attainments which are below average, particularly in language development. By the end of the reception year, they have made good and sometimes very good progress to achieve the expected standards in their language and mathematical development and their knowledge and understanding of the world. In physical, creative and personal and social development, most have exceeded the expected standards. However, language development remains a weaker area for some.

In Key Stage 1, pupils build well on these early experiences. Inspection findings show that by the end of Year 2, the majority reach standards that are above average in reading and mathematics, and average in writing and science. However, there is scope for some more able pupils to make better progress in writing at the end of both key stages and in science at Key Stage 1. At both key stages, standards are much better than those found in most schools in design and technology and are better than in most schools in physical education and art and design. Standards are also better than in most schools in history and religious education at Key Stage 1 and in geography at Key Stage 2. In all other subjects, standards are broadly in line with the expectations for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements make good progress in relation to their abilities because they are supported well in achieving their targets. The school sets itself appropriately challenging annual targets in English and mathematics and works diligently towards achieving these.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Overall and very good in the Foundation Stage. Most children are keen to learn and enjoy coming to school.

Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Overall and very good in the Foundation Stage. Most children behave well in classrooms, on the playground and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Good personal development and very good relationships. There are many opportunities provided for pupils to show initiative, take responsibility and work co-operatively.
Attendance	Above average.

Very good teaching of personal and social skills ensures pupils in the Foundation Stage settle quickly. A small, but significant minority of pupils, mostly boys, find it hard to concentrate and work independently. In some lessons, this affects their behaviour and their pace of learning slows.

## 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.*

Inspectors judged eight out of ten lessons to be good or better. Of these, around three out of ten were very good or excellent. One lesson was judged to be unsatisfactory. Teaching meets the needs of most pupils well and enables them to make good progress. Teaching of special educational needs pupils is good. This is because teachers take good account of the individual plans setting out their needs and teaching assistants give good support in lessons and small groups.

Teaching in the nursery and reception classes is very good overall, and as a result, children learn at a fast rate. All staff understand the needs of young children very well. They create an environment in which they feel happy and secure and provide an exciting range of experiences to interest and involve them in learning.

In the majority of lessons, teachers build well on previous learning, make their pupils think hard and give them exciting tasks that interest and challenge them. Most pupils respond by working hard and at a good pace. Resources are carefully chosen and used well to back up teachers' explanations. Literacy and numeracy are taught effectively in all classes. Pupils use the skills learned in these lessons to support their work in other subjects, such as science and geography. However, more able pupils throughout the school are challenged more effectively in reading than they are in writing. Relationships are very strong and this creates a good atmosphere for learning. In most lessons pupils are managed very well. However, a small group of pupils in the junior classes lose concentration and find it hard to work independently when activities do not engage them practically. Their pace of learning dips as a result. Marking is a weaker aspect of teaching. Throughout the school, there are inconsistencies and teachers do not use marking effectively enough to help pupils improve.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. It is rich, stimulating and meets the needs of most pupils very well. Very good use is made of the outdoor environment, visits, visitors and activities outside of lessons, to enrich pupils' learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Work is well planned for these pupils to match their needs and they receive good quality teaching and support in class.



Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good, overall. Good opportunities for spiritual development are provided through assemblies. The school is very good at teaching children how to relate to others and respect their beliefs and feelings. It is very good at helping children to understand the right thing to do.
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How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Staff know the pupils very well. Procedures for child protection are secure and health and safety arrangements are very good. There are effective procedures in place for promoting racial harmony and eliminating oppressive behaviour.
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The school's partnership with parents is very strong. Parents hold the school in very high regard.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher and key staff work closely together to bring about improvements in standards. The leadership and management of the headteacher are very good. She sets a very clear direction for the work of the school and has built a strong and committed team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. They make a strong contribution, which is helping the school to improve. They support the work of the headteacher and key staff well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher, key staff and governors have a clear understanding of what the school does well and what needs to be improved.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Funds are managed very efficiently and effectively to support the school's priorities and raise standards. Grants are used effectively, for example to bring about improvements in ICT.

The school has good levels of staffing and resources to support its work. The accommodation and grounds are attractive, well maintained and used effectively to support children's learning. Better provision could be made for outdoor play in the nursery and reception classes. There are sound arrangements for ensuring the school gets good value for the money it spends. It compares its performance with other schools and obtains the best prices for goods and services.

### 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>Leadership and management is good;</li> <li>They feel comfortable approaching the school;</li> <li>Teaching is good;</li> <li>The school expects children to work hard;</li> <li>The school is helping their children to achieve well.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents are unsure about the amount of work their children are given to do at home.</li> </ul>

Inspection findings endorse parents' strongly positive views. The amount of homework given to children is similar to that found in most primary schools.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The school's results show improvement over the last three years and more pupils are now leaving the school having attained the average for their age than they were in 2000. In the 2002 tests for 11-year-olds, a sharp rise in the number of pupils attaining both the average and higher levels in mathematics has brought standards from well below average to average. This is because more pupils have reached expected levels and significantly more pupils have reached the higher level (Level 5). In science, the rise in standards in the 2001 tests has been sustained this year. Although results in English have remained persistently below average, more pupils are reaching both the expected and higher levels. This improvement is keeping pace with schools nationally and in 2002, results were very close to the national average. There were several pupils in this year group who had significant special educational needs in English and this depressed the overall score. Inspection evidence based on an analysis of pupils' work from the last school year endorses these results. An analysis of records of pupils' progress throughout the school indicates that these improvements are set to continue.
2. In the tests for 7-year-olds, results have also risen since 1999 in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2001, these were above average in reading, average in writing and well above average in mathematics, when compared to all schools nationally. Teacher assessments for science were also above average. Inspection findings, based on pupils' work from last year and this term, support the test results in English, but find standards to be closer to the average in science and above average in mathematics.
3. At Key Stage 1 in 2001, when compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, Manor Park's results were well above average in all three subjects. At Key Stage 2, they were average in English, below average in mathematics and above average in science.
4. Improvements have been brought about faster at Key Stage 1 than at Key Stage 2 for two main reasons. Firstly, improved assessment arrangements are ensuring that the majority of pupils now build on their achievements from year-to-year at a faster rate than previously. Secondly, at Key Stage 2, an inconsistent teaching picture in the past meant that some pupils in the junior classes have achieved less over time than they could have. However, better teaching is now leading to better progress.
5. On entry to the nursery, although pupils demonstrate a wide spread of ability, many have below average skills, particularly in language and communication. With good and often better quality teaching, they make good gains in the nursery and reception classes. By the end of the reception year, most have at least reached the standards expected in all areas of learning and exceed these in creative, physical and personal and social development. However, language skills remain a weaker area for a significant number of pupils.
6. Standards in English are average at both key stages. However, they are better in reading than they are in writing throughout the school. Far fewer pupils achieve the higher levels in writing at the end of both key stages than they do in reading. Although good opportunities are provided for pupils to write for different purposes, the challenge needs to be higher for some more able pupils, particularly in their story writing.

Despite the best efforts of the school in providing extra support and specially devised programmes of work, some less able pupils fail to reach average standards by the time they leave. They have too much ground to make up in the time available. However, these pupils make good progress in relation to their abilities.

7. Standards in mathematics are above average at the end of Year 2 and average at the end of Year 6. Better mathematics teaching is now enabling most pupils to make good progress as they move through the school. However, previous inconsistencies in teaching at Key Stage 2 have meant that some pupils in the older junior classes have made steady, rather than sharp progress, through the key stage. A comprehensive assessment programme is ensuring that gaps in pupils' learning are quickly identified and remedied. Good use of national 'catch up' programmes is boosting the attainment of those children on the borderlines between national curriculum levels. Good attention to teaching basic skills, such as number facts and multiplication tables and plenty of opportunities for problem solving are also accelerating learning.
8. Standards in science are rising and pupils' attainment is broadly average at both key stages. Throughout the school, pupils now increase their knowledge and understanding of scientific facts at a good rate. As in mathematics, they are given good opportunities for practical, investigative work and this supports their learning well. However, at Key Stage 1, although most pupils achieve the expected level, not enough pupils reach the higher level (Level 3). More able pupils are not always stretched to the limit to push their understanding further.
9. Pupils with special educational needs including those with statements achieve well. This is because appropriate targets are set for them and good support is provided to ensure they can meet these. Teachers and support staff ensure that key learning is reinforced, both in small groups and in class lessons.
10. In design and technology, pupils at both key stages achieve standards which are well above those found in most schools. This is due to very good teaching and strong subject leadership. In physical education, art and design and geography at age 11 and history and religious education at age 7, standards are above those found in most schools. In all other subjects, standards are in line with expectations at ages 7 and 11.
11. From its analysis of pupils' progress, the school is able to set realistic targets for what pupils are expected to achieve by the end of Year 6. The school is making good progress towards achieving these.

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

12. Pupils have good, positive attitudes towards school. Almost all parents are in agreement that their children like school and they are eager to talk about the work that they do. This enjoyment of school stems from the very good relationships that exist between pupils and staff and the value the school places on every individual. In the Foundation Stage, the children have very good attitudes to their work and play and to other people. They settle very quickly into the school because of the well-established routines and the high levels of care from all adults who work with them. The children who have been in the nursery only a few weeks are very eager to join in the exciting activities on offer such as playing in the 'Orange Cafe' which was seen in the inspection week. Their behaviour towards each other is very good and they make very good progress in the development of their personal and social skills.

13. Most pupils in the rest of the school have good attitudes to their work and to all the experiences that the school provides. This is seen in their enthusiastic take up and participation in the after school activities, such as aerobics for the infant classes. In the majority of lessons, children work hard and try to please their teachers. They generally also show consideration for their peers.
14. Behaviour is mostly good in classrooms and around school. It is of a particularly high standard in the playground and in the lunch hall. Clear expectations are set and a high quality outdoor play area has been created, which encourages children to play and socialize together well. Pupils take good care of resources and the environment, as seen in their careful treatment of the play equipment. Most are polite and friendly and follow the very good examples set for them by the staff and older children, particularly those who act as the play leaders. They show respect for conventions by being quiet and respectful in assemblies, while joining in the prayers and singing enthusiastically. There is however, a small but significant minority of pupils in the junior classes who have difficulty concentrating on their work and have less well developed independent learning skills. When lessons do not involve them in practical activity or when they are expected to sit too long without participation, they become bored and restless. They are usually managed skillfully by their teachers and support staff to minimise disruption to their work and the work of others. However, in some lessons, the pace of their learning dips and they do not cover the ground that they could. On a few occasions, their restlessness is transferred to other pupils. There have been four exclusions in the last twelve months, including one permanent exclusion. This reflects the school's determination to allow all pupils to work in a calm purposeful environment.
15. Pupils undertake responsibilities very willingly, such as becoming play leaders and house captains and they fulfil these duties well. The older pupils clearly enjoy working with and looking after their younger reading partners. Relationships between all members of the school community are very good so that staff and pupils work together in a caring environment and this improves the quality of learning and of life in school. Pupils are sensitive to the needs of others and treat younger or less able children with patience and understanding. They can work together productively in teams. A good example of this was seen in a Year 3 science lesson, where each member of a team had a different job to do. Groups had to choose, sort, predict, test and record how different materials responded to a magnet. The children made good progress in their understanding of magnetism and of the responsibility of each member of a team to their overall success. Pupils are also given the opportunity to take responsibility for setting their own targets and assessing their progress towards meeting these.
16. Attendance is good and the school has good systems in place to monitor attendance and punctuality. There are a significant number of parents who take their children on holiday in term time, some of whom do not fully appreciate the importance of regular attendance. However, the attendance rate is above the national average and most pupils' attendance does support their attainment and progress.

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

17. Teaching overall is good. There is now a higher proportion of very good teaching than indicated at the last inspection. Much of the strongest teaching is seen in the Foundation Stage, where eight out of ten lessons taught were judged to be very good or better. Throughout the rest of the school, eight out of ten lessons were good or better with pockets of satisfactory teaching in some subjects.

18. A significant strength in teaching throughout the school is the quality of relationships that teachers develop with their pupils. Praise and encouragement, linked to clearly defined expectations, fosters respect and a positive working atmosphere in classrooms. In most lessons, teachers challenge and motivate pupils to learn and in return pupils work with enthusiasm and achieve well. One Year 6 pupil said, 'The teachers always help us and are fair, so we do things for them. It's co-operation.'
19. Very good teaching in the Foundation Stage ensures that children get off to a very strong start. Lessons are thoughtfully planned with an interesting and varied range of activities to stimulate children and help them to learn. Exciting 'counting expeditions' in the Spinney, for example, provide a practical and meaningful way to teach number to reception children. In the nursery, teachers are very good at engaging children in role-play activities, for example in the 'Orange Café', helping them to improve vocabulary and communication skills. This is developed further and built on well in the reception classes, where children take on different roles serving, cooking food and working at the cash desk in the 'fast food restaurant'. In nursery and reception classes, teachers have high expectations of children and place a strong emphasis on developing their social skills. After only a few weeks in school, nursery and reception children are very clear about class routines and rules. Consequently children are very well behaved, enjoy their learning and make very good progress.
20. In the infant and junior classes, the best lessons are characterised by sharp pace, exciting activities and good levels of challenge. Throughout the school, lessons begin promptly and pupils are quickly engaged in learning. Teachers question pupils skilfully to probe their understanding and clarify their thinking. Questions are carefully targeted to suit different ability levels. A good example of this was in a geography lesson when Year 6 pupils were questioned rigorously about what they had learned from studying a contrasting location to Knutsford. The pace of questioning was sharp, so pupils were kept alert and were keen to respond. They quickly identified the sort of information they might need to find about a contrasting locality. Teachers use learning resources effectively to help pupils understand new ideas. This practical approach is enjoyable so they are better motivated to learn. Practical investigative work features strongly in mathematics and science lessons, for example. Good science resources were prepared for pupils in Year 3 to enable them to investigate magnets. As a result, all pupils were fully involved in the activity and made good progress in discovering which materials were magnetic and which were not. The range of resources used in mathematics lessons helps pupils to a better understanding of number, money and measure. Teachers used such things as individual whiteboards, coins, computers and counting apparatus effectively to create 'real life' practical approaches to problem solving. In other subjects the outside environment is used very well when visits to places of interest, and visitors to school add richness to pupils' learning.
21. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge in most areas. This enables them to plan effectively and challenge pupils at the most appropriate level. Different tasks or different levels of support for various ability groups are a feature of most lessons. Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively together in order to provide support where it is most needed. In one lesson while most of the class learned about measure two pupils worked on a programme specially designed to boost number skills because it was most relevant to their needs. Where teachers have specialist subject knowledge or particular skills such as in music or physical education they are used effectively to bring extra challenge to those lessons. However, on a very few occasions, when teachers are not as secure about a subject, learning is not as sharp.

22. Teaching of numeracy and literacy is consistently good. In numeracy lessons there is a good emphasis on understanding number patterns and on the application of knowledge to solve problems. Mental and oral work is good and pupils respond well to the whole school challenge to 'learn your tables'. Literacy skills are also taught well and there is an expectation that pupils will practise writing in all subjects. However, more challenge could be provided for more able pupils in narrative writing throughout the school, to enable them to attain higher levels. Younger pupils are taught letter sounds and early reading skills effectively so that they become confident independent readers in the junior classes.
23. Pupils are taught ICT skills well. There are good opportunities for pupils to apply what they have learned in other lessons, particularly in mathematics where pupils regularly use computers to help consolidate number skills.
24. Pupils on the school's register for special educational needs and those with statements receive good teaching and support for their specific difficulties. Teachers and teaching support staff deal sensitively with particular problems, and ensure that work set for pupils clearly reflects their needs. Good strategies, such as giving more 'thinking time', or providing well focused support to a small group, do much to build up pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
25. Although there are many strengths in teaching, some areas for development are also evident, particularly where teachers have less experience. For example, teachers do not always choose the best learning styles for all pupils in their class, especially where there are a dominant number of boys. In some lessons in Key Stage 2 classes, pupils are expected to sit and listen to the teacher for too long without direct involvement, or to carry out learning tasks independently for long periods. In these lessons, a small, but significant minority become easily distracted because they are not sufficiently active or engaged in learning. As a result, the pace of their learning dips and they do not make as much progress as they could. On a few occasions, they distract others in the class. Marking is not used as effectively as it might be and does not always follow the marking policy laid down. Although most teachers mark work regularly, it often consists of just a tick, with sometimes a positive comment. It is rarely used to suggest to pupils how they might improve their work or how they can take learning further.

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

26. The curriculum is a strength of the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Learning opportunities are very well planned in all key stages to ensure that children can build progressively on their skills from year-to-year. National initiatives, such as the literacy and numeracy strategies have been fully implemented and new national guidelines for subjects have been adapted well to meet the needs of the school. All national curriculum requirements and those of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education are fully met. However, the real strength of the curriculum at Manor Park lies in its relevance to the lives of the pupils in the school and the enrichment of learning in all subject areas, for example through practical activities, visits and the use of the outdoor environment.
27. Careful planning has identified very good links between subjects. This enables pupils to make effective connections in their learning and gives them ample opportunities to practise the skills they have learned. For example, pupils use ICT in literacy lessons, to practise their word processing skills and in mathematics and science to manipulate the data they collect. Good use is made of the Internet to enable pupils to search for

knowledge and present their findings through multi media presentations, for example, in geography and history. Pupils are given very good opportunities to apply their mathematical, geographical and scientific skills to investigate their local environment. For example, they study the River Bollin, checking and recording water measurements and carefully observing and sketching the riverbank. Very good links are made between art and design and technology and other subjects, as pupils make pencil sketches of artefacts in history and design and make moving toys using principles learned in science. Pupils gain insights into the advances made by other cultures, for example the Ancient Egyptians, and apply the knowledge and skills they have assimilated in other subjects to the construction of their model shadufs. Many of these activities are practical and 'hands on' in nature and this stimulates the pupils and fires their imaginations.

28. The curriculum is effectively planned to develop pupils' literacy skills. Good provision is made for the teaching of early reading and writing skills and the majority of pupils build on these well as they move through the school. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their writing skills in many subjects. Pupils who do not make the progress expected receive good quality extra support, often through national 'catch up' programmes. Very well planned literacy projects in Year 6, which include a visit by a poet, also help most pupils to make good progress in their writing. However, some more able pupils at both key stages do not always make the progress of which they are capable in writing. This is because they are not always challenged effectively enough to reach higher levels of the national curriculum, particularly in their story writing.
29. Very well planned use of the national numeracy strategy has contributed to the raising of standards in mathematics. Daily numeracy lessons are enriched by the opportunities provided for pupils to carry out practical, problem solving activities related to their daily lives, such as counting up house points in house assembly sessions. Pupils enjoy teasing out the complexities of the mathematical investigations they undertake.
30. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is also very well planned to meet the needs of young children. Very good account has been taken of the new guidelines for this area and the strengths identified at the last inspection have been maintained. All staff have a very good understanding of how young children learn. As a result, children are given a wide range of exciting opportunities in all areas of learning. Strong emphasis is placed on developing personal and social and language skills. The school is aware that the outdoor play facilities need further development and has recently won a bid to provide funds for this area. However, staff make best use of the equipment available and also use the school grounds, for example to devise exciting mathematical activities for reception children.
31. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. Their particular needs are met effectively, both in class and small groups. For example, teachers and teaching assistants often produce specially adapted sheets for children, to ensure that the reading and writing demands are within their capabilities. This enables these pupils to be included in learning with the rest of the class, but at their own level. Good quality individual plans are produced for them. Teachers and teaching assistants use these effectively to help pupils to work towards the targets identified for them. For example, a child who has difficulty learning new vocabulary had the required geographical terms reinforced by the teacher and teaching assistant. A 'nurture' group has recently been set up to provide support for those pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.



32. The curriculum is enhanced and enriched by a very broad range of visits, visitors and many first hand experiences. For example, there is a generous programme of residential activities, open to all pupils, to promote pupils' personal development and which link to topics of study. The very good quality of provision of clubs for both infant and junior pupils that take place outside lessons broadens pupils' range of interests and enhances their learning opportunities. For example, infant pupils take part in aerobics sessions, which add to their physical development and in science club, in which they experience a very good range of practical, investigative activities. Members of school staff lead most of these but outside experts also contribute to the high quality of coaching. In response, the take up of the clubs is very high and they are very much appreciated. These activities have a good impact on pupils' skills development.
33. The provision for pupils personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) is very good. The school has provided programmes to ensure every aspect is covered and the children develop their skills as they progress through the school. Pupils are now involved in choosing and assessing their own targets which helps them in making choices for their own lives in and out of school. The school grounds have been effectively developed and are used well to encourage pupils' social skills and environmental awareness. Health education, including sex education and drugs awareness, is covered by the science programme and outside experts involved appropriately. The PSHCE co-ordinator is looking over other parts of the curriculum to ensure a strong focus on the teaching of safety and of healthy choices. The school has achieved the healthy school award and has progressed to an advanced stage of this award scheme. Citizenship is covered by the work the pupils do related to the code of conduct and through links with the local community. The school has a clear and effective anti racial policy and very good procedures to eliminate any oppressive behaviour.
34. There are very good links with the community, which impact on learning in a variety of ways. There are links to local sports clubs which raise the profile of sports and healthy activities within the school. There are links to local churches and first hand experiences are gained from regular entries into contests, such as the 'Britain in Bloom' competition in which the school has been so successful. The school performs for local residential homes and benefits from donated items from commercial businesses. Links with industry include a locally based national chemical company and the local building firm. These have increased children's understanding of health and safety, for example.
35. The school has very good links with partner institutions and these include taking part with other schools in sporting tournaments. Liaison with Knutsford High School is very effective due to the careful induction programme which starts in Year 5 and ends in Year 7 with an evaluation of how well the children from Manor Park have settled in. Work experience students are taken from the high school every year, on carefully organised placements. The school has very good links with Manchester Metropolitan University through the services of a governor to the school. The university places their students in teacher training at the school, which is mutually beneficial to the students, and the school.
36. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school and underpins all of its work. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
37. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Good quality assemblies are provided, which create an appropriate setting for the act of worship. Pupils are

encouraged to reflect on their own and others beliefs in the religious education (RE) lessons. For example, in a Year 6 lesson pupils were encouraged to voice their opinions on what it must feel like to be a teenager taking part in a Barmitzva ceremony. In art lessons year 3 children created a 'map of me ' after studying Aboriginal art and designing secret symbols for people and things they valued. The children are encouraged further to understand themselves and reflect on their own progress through their involvement in setting their own targets.

38. The provision for moral development is very good with clear guidance on right and wrong being explained carefully from the earliest stages. The school's code of conduct is communicated effectively to all, displayed around the school and referred to often. The older children, in particular, can explain this clearly. Teachers have very high expectations of behaviour and they and the older children act as very good role models to all. Pupils have the opportunity to consider moral issues such as the work done on children's' rights and the school's involvement in the Citizenship Education Monitoring Project. There are regular opportunities to consider the needs of those less fortunate than they are and to raise money to help them, as when the school supports the NSPCC.
39. The school's provision for social development of its pupils is also very good. This includes the very good provision for clubs outside of lessons, the good use of the school grounds, the residential programme of activities and the PSHCE lessons. The reading partnerships, where older children support younger children, help to build the very good relationships between all pupils, as do the other responsibilities the children receive. In lessons, children are given many opportunities to work together in small groups, teams and pairs. For example, in a geography lesson in Year 6, pupils devised questionnaires together, making decisions sensibly and amicably. The playground has been effectively developed to encourage different types of social interaction, particularly for those in the infant and junior classes. For example, there are areas for ball games, quiet seating areas with shade and markings for games such as 'hop-scotch'. The pupils have been involved in developing a 'zoning' system, so that all know, for example, where ball games can and cannot be played. This enables children to play together in harmony.
40. The school has worked hard to improve its provision for multicultural education so that the provision for cultural development overall, is now very good. Non-European art is studied and in music the African drums are a popular resource. This enables the pupils to develop a good understanding of musical and artistic traditions that are different from our own. The school makes good use of a loans service to increase its stock of multicultural artefacts. These have included Chinese and Indian cultural artefacts, which have given pupils valuable first-hand experience. In design and technology, pitta bread has been analysed and other foods studied, which not only widens the pupils' experience, but also engages their interest. The school has held a very successful multicultural theme week and plans to repeat and extend some of this work. In religious education, two different religions are studied alongside Christianity. In geography as well as studying other countries, 'Barnaby Bear' encourages younger children to consider cultural life in other countries. The school also helps children learn more of their own local culture through history lessons and visits to nearby historical houses and a textile mill. They take part in maypole dancing and professionals from the performing arts visit regularly, such as The Young Shakespeare Company, puppeteers and musicians.

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

41. The school takes very good care of its pupils. Staff take a keen and caring interest in all pupils and their families and help them to get the best out of their time in school. Parents are very happy with the care their children receive and there was high praise for this aspect of the school's work from the parents who attended the meeting with inspectors. The very good relationships give pupils the confidence to seek the help they need. Problems are dealt with quickly and efficiently when they arise. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support from adults and other pupils so they can play a full part in school life. Pupils in the nursery and in the reception classes are enabled to settle very quickly and happily into the school.
42. Procedures for child protection are secure and all staff are familiar with the policy. All concerns are recorded and the records regularly monitored. The co-ordinator is awaiting further training so that she can keep staff awareness levels high for this important aspect.
43. The procedures for ensuring pupils' health, safety and welfare are very good. The premises are kept up to a very high standard, which helps to minimise risks. The site manager is very keen to improve site maintenance and safety procedures, such as fire drills and reducing fire hazards. His expertise ensures the swimming pool, for example, is safely maintained and does not become a hazard to the children or others on the school site. The headteacher has produced very good quality risk assessments for many important activities. A strong feature of the provision is the work done to teach the children how to keep themselves safe including sun safety, dangers of building sites and the provision of a drama production in school called 'Gripping Yarns ' concerning when and when not to keep secrets.
44. The personal development of pupils is monitored well through the personal and social education programme. This also allows pupils to assess themselves and to choose and monitor their own targets. This is an improvement since the last inspection and is helping the pupils make informed decisions about their lives both in and out of school.
45. There are good procedures for monitoring pupils' attendance and punctuality. The school follows up all absences and lateness carefully and sensitively.
46. The school has very good procedures in place to promote good behaviour and to monitor and deal with any lapses. All staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and they maintain a highly consistent approach throughout the day. Midday staff have had training in positive play and the school behaviour policy. Good quality play equipment is provided and used well. The school works very hard to ensure all children know and understand the code of conduct and the rewards and sanctions system. The school has recently set up a nurture group to help children with emotional and behavioural difficulties, aiming to help them get more out of their time in school. The group was set up too recently to have been fully evaluated at the time of the inspection.
47. Evidence from tests and teacher assessments is carefully considered and analysed for each year group and used as a basis for predicting individual pupils' progress and ensuring that the correct levels of support are given. The subject tracking system in English and mathematics includes accurate interim targets for each level of attainment. This enables teachers to accurately pinpoint the next steps in learning for pupils and set appropriate targets for them at the beginning of each term. The system for recording pupils' progress in mathematics is very good and is fully computerised. This enables teachers to spot inconsistencies and respond quickly to individual pupils'

changing rates of learning. Although there is careful analysis of pupils' progress in English, it does not go far enough in helping staff to identify the next learning steps for the more able pupils in Year 6 and is not yet used to best effect in all classes. The school has recognised this and is currently preparing activities to give these pupils extra support. Assessment procedures in ICT have been clarified through the development of 'I can do' lists that enable pupils to be involved in checking on their own skill development and setting future targets for themselves, in conjunction with staff. However, this is not yet fully implemented. In other subjects, systems for recording pupils' progress are more informal and form the part of most subject leaders' action plans as an area for future development.

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

48. Since the last inspection the school has continued to enjoy very good relationships with its parents. This is a strength of the school, and reflects the headteacher and governors' awareness of how vital the parents' loyalty and support are to the school. The mutual respect, trust and open lines of communication, praised in the last inspection, are still very much in evidence. Parents appreciate the headteacher making herself available to them at key times of the day. The overwhelming support from the parents is seen in their responses to the inspection questionnaire, which show no clear areas of disagreement or dissatisfaction.
49. The school provides very good information for parents through day-to-day contact, newsletters, parents' evenings and home / school diaries. There are two parents evenings each year at which parents feel they receive good information. They find the home / school diaries useful for regular contact with the class teacher. Topic information is sent home termly so parents can help their child appropriately throughout the year. The parents who attended the mathematics evening found it very interesting and helpful. The end-of-year reports are of very good quality, indicating clearly the progress made during the year. They include areas in which the child can improve as well as their strengths and attainment. The school works hard to keep parents of children with special educational needs up to date with their progress. The parents of children under five are very happy with the induction process into the school.
50. The school seeks the views of parents and as a result, they feel they are listened to and can approach the school with any concerns. They are welcomed into assemblies and performances and the school appreciates their help in classrooms and on trips out. The parents help from early years upwards with their children's reading and with other homework and this has a positive impact on their learning. The Parents and Friends organisation is very successful in raising large sums of money. This helps the school's year-to-year financial stability as well as buying equipment for the children.

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

51. The quality of leadership and management are good. The headteacher leads and manages the school very well. She has a very clear idea of how she wants the school to be and communicates this expertly to staff, governors and parents, who all give strong support. The deputy headteacher is effective and hard working in his role. He works closely in partnership with the head to bring about improvements in key areas, for example in developing behaviour systems.
52. Good improvements have been made in addressing the key issues identified in the last report. The head and deputy have taken a strong lead in improving the systems

for recording assessments of pupils' progress and using the information gathered to assist teachers in planning the next steps in learning. As a result, good systems are now in place in English, mathematics and science, which enable teachers to more accurately pinpoint what pupils have achieved and what they need to do next. These are a key factor in improving standards because they are helping the school to set accurate targets for future performance. The good quality information now available is assisting the school in making key decisions about where to target resources and deploy support. Both the head and deputy are involved in closely monitoring progress in this area and identifying how systems can be further improved. For example, they have recently recognised the need to refine the assessment steps for more able pupils in writing.

53. Teaching and learning are now monitored more effectively than they were judged to be at the last inspection. The headteacher and key staff observe teachers at work in the classroom to an agreed focus and identify areas for improvement. As a result, a higher percentage of teaching is judged to be good or better than it was last time. There was also a higher percentage of very good and excellent teaching observed this time. Effective systems for checking pupils' work and teachers' planning are ensuring that the most pupils make good progress in the majority of subjects during their time in the school. All subject co-ordinators regularly undertake this work, although only those with senior management positions check on teaching.
54. The school has made good use of government grants and initiatives to improve the resources for teaching ICT and to ensure staff are fully trained. As a result, standards are higher at Key Stage 2 than they were last time. The school has been successful in bidding for funds to improve provision further in the near future.
55. At the last inspection, the school was not fulfilling its statutory duties in relation to the appraisal of staff. The headteacher and governors have worked hard since then to ensure that effective performance management and staff development systems are in place to ensure continuous professional development for all. The new performance management arrangements for teachers are enabling whole school and individual targets to be met. Although targets have been mainly related to improving standards in literacy and numeracy, other areas are not neglected. For example, last year, a whole school target related to improving the use of the outdoor environment as a teaching resource. This has been very successfully accomplished at Key Stages 1 and 2, in particular. Staff development systems also cover non-teaching staff, including teaching assistants and midday supervisors. This has been instrumental, for example, in ensuring lunchtime behaviour is of a high standard.
56. The headteacher is very successful in creating a strong team of people who are committed to working together to raise standards and provide well for all pupils. She encourages and supports her staff to enable them to do their best. For example, newly qualified teachers are well supported through programmes designed to help them improve their skills. After their induction year, this support continues and is tailored to meet individual needs. More established staff are encouraged and enabled to widen their experience, for example through having the opportunity to team teach and to teach in other age groups and key stages. The headteacher works alongside newly appointed subject co-ordinators until they are familiar with the school's systems and confident in their roles.

57. The headteacher's strong commitment to providing for the needs of all pupils is evident in the way in which she deals with children and their families. The 'open door' policy ensures that issues are dealt with swiftly and sensitively. As a result, parents find her approachable and have great confidence in her leadership, as the responses to questionnaires and comments at the parents' meeting demonstrated. The headteacher, staff and governors know the context of the school very well. This has enabled them, for example, to respond positively to changes in the school's pupil intake, which has resulted in a higher number of children with emotional and behavioural problems entering the school. The deputy head has worked hard to identify behaviour patterns and pinpoint children who need extra support in this area. A 'nurture group' has recently been set up in response to this.
58. Subject leadership is good overall. However, there are some areas in which it is particularly effective. For example, strong leadership in ICT, mathematics, PE and science has led to standards being raised. The very good leadership of the Foundation Stage has ensured a high degree of teamwork and maintenance of the high standards noted at the last inspection. Design and technology is managed particularly effectively and results in standards being significantly higher than are found in most schools.
59. The management of special educational needs is good. The recently appointed co-ordinator has already improved the good quality systems in existence and has ensured that the recommendations of the new Code of Practice have been put into place. She has recently trained staff in writing individual education plans and has worked with teachers to ensure that targets for those pupils with plans are sharper and more manageable and achievable.
60. The school development plan is a useful document which underpins the work of the school. The most recent plan sets out a carefully costed three-year cycle of development. Good quality action plans set down in detail how improvements will be brought about and how the success of initiatives will be evaluated. This enables staff and governors to check on progress and judge how effective initiatives have been. Most importantly, all plans are firmly linked to raising standards for the benefit of the pupils.
61. The governing body gives good support to the school. Governors work effectively together as a team and are strongly committed to raising standards and providing the best for the pupils. Individual expertise is used well. For example, marketing of the school within the local community is supported by the expertise of a governor who is a professional in this area. The headteacher and key staff provide governors with good quality, up to date information and this, coupled with the recently introduced system of school monitoring visits for governors ensures they have a thorough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. As a result of this, they are increasing the range of evidence by which they can judge improvement. Sub-committees ensure that all statutory requirements are fully met. The budget is managed very well to support educational priorities. For example, funds are set aside to ensure that staffing levels can be maintained and any surplus funds are used to provide extra support for groups and individuals. Fluctuations in pupil numbers over recent years have caused difficulties with budgeting and strategic planning, but these have been handled skilfully to minimise the impact on the education of the pupils. The school has satisfactory arrangements for ensuring it gets good value for the money it spends. For example, it compares prices of the goods and services it purchases, compares its results with those of other schools and informally seeks the views of parents.

62. Teaching support staff are managed well in order to ensure they make a strong contribution to pupils' progress throughout the school. They are committed and hard working and the more experienced are highly skilled. The head teacher ensures that all support staff have access to appropriate training. The team of mid-day supervisors carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively. They have made good use of the training they have received and handle pupils well. As a result, lunchtimes are a pleasant social occasion for all. Site management and office staff carry out their duties very effectively and efficiently. As a result, teachers are able to get on with their work without distractions.
63. The accommodation is attractive, pleasant and well maintained. The school has benefited greatly from the recent move into one building and the associated refurbishment. The school grounds are also attractive and well maintained and have been developed effectively to provide a very good environment for play and learning for most pupils. However, outdoor play facilities for children in the Foundation Stage could be further improved. Currently, reception children have no dedicated play area and fewer opportunities to play with wheeled toys and climbing equipment than those in the nursery. The school has recognised this and is setting aside funds for the purpose. Resources are generally good in most subjects and support learning well. However, the library area in the school entrance could be made more accessible for pupils. It is rather cramped as the space is also used for a reception area.
64. The school receives similar funding per pupil to most schools, including grants. Attainment is below average on entry to the nursery, but average in English, mathematics and science by the time pupils leave the school. Standards are rising as a result of good teaching and strong leadership and management. The school is therefore judged to give good value for money.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

65. To continue to raise standards, the headteacher, staff and governors should now:

a) Improve the achievement of more able pupils in writing throughout the school and in science at Key Stage 1 by:

- identifying more clearly the next steps in learning for these pupils;
- providing work that challenges them more effectively;
- ensuring more specific teaching of the skills needed to achieve the higher levels of the national curriculum.

(paragraphs: 5, 9, 10, 15, 29, 31, 34, 35)

b) Improving the concentration and independence of a minority of pupils at Key Stage 2 by:

- ensuring these pupils take a more active part in all lessons through employing a wider range of teaching and learning styles;
- breaking learning tasks into more manageable 'chunks' that pupils can achieve independently.

(paragraphs: 7, 9, 31, 34, 35, 37)

c) Improving the quality of teachers' marking so that it is more consistent, follows agreed policy and guidelines and indicates to pupils how they might improve their work.

(paragraphs: 9, 31, 36, 39)

The headteacher, staff and governors may also wish to include the following minor issues in the Action Plan:

- Improving provision for outdoor play in the Foundation Stage, as outlined in part in the school development plan

(paragraphs: 17, 28)

- Improving the accessibility of the non-fiction library for pupils.

(paragraphs: 17, 30)



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	44
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	29

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	12	21	7	1	0	0
Percentage	7	27	48	16	2	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	24	196
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	56

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	36

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.2
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	21	11	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	18	19
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	29	29	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (89)	91 (85)	94 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	19	19
	Girls	9	11	11
	Total	27	30	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (92)	94 (96)	94 (96)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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	16	13	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	12	15
	Girls	10	10	12
	Total	22	22	27
Percentage of pupils	School	76 (66)	76 (59)	93 (86)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	12	14
	Girls	11	7	12
	Total	23	19	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (68)	66 (67)	90 (85)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

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

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

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>	<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
White – British	176	4	1
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	27

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

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	74

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	24
Number of pupils per FTE adult	7:1

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	521,927
Total expenditure	490,881
Expenditure per pupil	2283
Balance brought forward from previous year	17,600
Balance carried forward to next year	48,646

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	168
Number of questionnaires returned	23

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	76	19	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	86	14	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	67	29	5	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	57	0	5	0
The teaching is good.	90	10	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	86	10	5	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	95	0	5	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	90	10	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	81	14	5	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	90	5	5	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	90	10	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	71	29	0	0	0

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

## **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**

66. The good quality of provision reported in the last inspection has been maintained and standards in some areas of learning have improved. The very good teaching and high quality, very well planned learning experiences ensure the children achieve well and often very well. A strong feature of the Foundation Stage is the high quality teamwork in evidence. All staff work together very effectively and are strongly committed to providing the best for the children in their care. Nursery records show that the children's attainment on entry to the nursery is generally below that expected for their age especially in speech and language development. All make good progress in reading, writing and number and, when they move into Year 1; most children are reaching the standard that is expected for their age in communication, language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. All children make very good progress in personal and social, creative and physical development and most exceed the expected standards, known as the 'Early Learning Goals', in these areas by the end of the reception class.
67. Two part-time teachers and a full-time teaching assistant staff the nursery. One teacher works in the mornings and the other in the afternoons. At the time of the inspection, 39 children were in the Foundation Stage. Twenty-four children attend the nursery part-time and a further 15 attend the two reception / Year 1 classes in the mornings only. These two teachers share the services of a full-time teaching assistant. The reception children were due to attend full-time in the week following the inspection.
68. Appropriately, all members of staff place the highest emphasis on personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development. The children's different ages and stages of development are recognised in the way they are grouped for short sessions in literacy and numeracy. The activities provided for all six areas of learning are carefully planned to challenge the children and extend the children's learning. Detailed records of children's progress are kept and the knowledge that the teachers gain from assessing the achievements of the pupils is used very well to plan the next steps in their learning. As a result, the children make at least good and often very good progress.
69. Parents are kept very well informed about the curriculum in the Foundation Stage and advised of ways in which they can help their children at home. The space inside the school is used very well indeed and the school is aware that further improvements need to be made to the outdoor curriculum in order to provide more opportunities for reception children, for example, to play with wheeled toys and climbing equipment.
70. The Foundation Stage is led and managed very well. The co-ordinator is highly skilled and has recently been identified by the local education authority as a leading teacher in this area. She continually seeks to develop her expertise, for example through undertaking training on a long-term project to develop understanding of the curriculum for children of this age. She has communicated this training well to other staff and as a result, the new Foundation Stage curriculum has been very effectively implemented. Regular checking of planning and teaching ensures that consistently high standards are maintained.

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

71. By the end of the Foundation Stage, most children have exceeded the early learning goals in this area of learning. They make very good progress in developing self-confidence and self-esteem because of very good teaching. All staff act as excellent role models. They are very effective in providing for individual needs. Children new to the nursery and reception classes benefit from seeing what the older children do and all rise to staff's high expectations that they will learn to take care of their own needs and join in with what is going on. Children settle in very quickly as they soon gain confidence from knowing the routines and pattern of the sessions.
72. Children come happily into their classes and learn to share and take turns. They respond very well to the staff, sitting quietly and listening when required. They try very hard to follow the teacher's instructions and interact very well both with one another and with adults, taking their cue from the very good role models set by the staff. As a result, they learn to help each other, say please and thank you and are polite and friendly towards one another. Should disagreements arise, the staff help the children to sort things out, and show them how to avoid similar problems in the future. This helps children to make very good progress in understanding and respecting the rights and opinions of others.
73. In the nursery, snack time is an integral part of the teaching day where children are encouraged to take on responsibilities for handing out the plates and passing round the food and it is used very well by the nursery staff to foster good manners and social conversation. However, the organisation of the reception classes does not allow this very good practice to continue throughout the Foundation Stage and an opportunity is lost to engage children in conversation. However, reception children do benefit from having time to play with the older children.
74. In both the nursery and reception year the children are able to concentrate for a long time when engaged in tasks that interest them. In the nursery, children are helped to persist with activities through the sensitive intervention of the adults. For example, when a child was making a plate of 'food' to use in the play café, the nursery nurse helped him engage and sustain his interest and concentration very well by asking questions such as, 'What else are you going to use?', 'Are you going to put some spaghetti on?' and 'Whereabouts on your plate is it going to go?' As a result the child worked on until the plate was full then surveyed his work with pride. Another very good example of pupils' ability to concentrate was observed during a reception class and Year 1 assembly. It was the first time the reception children had attended a class assembly and their behaviour was impeccable. They joined in the singing and listened to what was happening for twenty minutes.

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

75. The quality of teaching is very good in both the nursery and reception classes. The adults pay good attention to developing children's spoken language. They ask the children questions that make them think hard and talk in sentences. They talk to the children as they work and encourage them to comment on their own activities. Through the daily class and group activities the children learn to join in rhymes, songs and familiar stories. All these activities help children to practise speaking and to increase their vocabulary. All the adults understand how young children learn best and provide activities to ensure that each child makes the best progress possible.

76. Reading and writing are taught very well. Adults read stories to the children and encourage them to discuss the pictures and listen to taped stories in the book corners. The older pupils are encouraged to read both their own names and those of others in the class. They are taught to recognise letters and sounds in games played on the playground and in the classroom. Work in the daily literacy lesson helps the children to read words that occur frequently in their reading books and to use sounds and letters to work out new words. Some of the reception class children already know how to write their name and form letters correctly. A significant few are slower to form their letters. The school has developed a very good strategy to help all children to learn to write. A writing table is set up in the play area which all reception children have access to. A qualified nursery nurse oversees the work children do in this area. She observes the children at play and records their progress as they make little books and do writing. For those who have not learned to write by the end of the reception class (often boys), the nursery nurse makes up blank books in interesting shapes such as planes, trains, cars and mobile phones. She then works with small groups encouraging them first to engage in a discussion about things that interest them and then to write them down. As a result of skilled teaching, one boy, in the space of four weeks progressed from writing strings of letters with only one or two recognisable words to:

‘I wud like to go to Blakpyl becos I wat to go on a rluocost (rollercoaster).  
I wud like to go on a gost tran cus I like gosts.’

### **Mathematical development**

77. By the end of the reception year, most children meet the early learning goals because of the very good quality of the teaching and learning experiences. At the start of every session in the nursery, the children engage in counting activities and sing number rhymes. They take turns to point to numbers on the number line to count up to the current day’s date. During the inspection week the children were able to count up to 23 in unison. The teacher then helped the children to learn the mathematical language of shape. The children could recognise that the surface of a cut orange was a circle and that a whole orange is shaped like a ball. In the activities that the children chose to do inside, they copied and made up patterns and played with number games and puzzles. When playing outside, children were helped to learn positional language, such as behind and on top of.
78. The skills the children learn in the nursery are built upon successfully in the reception year, when children take part in a daily mathematics lesson. The teachers make learning numbers fun. They learn to ‘count on’ and ‘count back’ when the teacher holds up a number. They print patterns using different mathematical shapes; they sort toys and fruit into sets and lay tables in the ‘café’ setting out the correct number of places and cutlery. They take the customers’ orders and become familiar with different coins as they give change. The outside is also used to teach number. For example, during the inspection week, the children completed a number trail through the Spinney, ensuring that the most able children worked with numbers sufficiently high to provide them with a challenge. Throughout the lesson observed the children made very good progress because the work was interesting, actively involved the children and was pitched at exactly the right level.

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

79. On entry to nursery, many of the children have limited general knowledge, the very interesting activities provided for them in the nursery and reception classes, coupled with very good teaching ensures the children’s good progress in making sense of the



world. By the end of the reception year, most children achieve the standard expected for their age.

80. Staff ensure that children in the nursery and reception classes make very good use of the school grounds. For example, they provide many good opportunities for them to explore and recognise features of living things and look closely at similarities and differences. The nursery children study the chestnut tree in the school grounds and know what chestnut leaves look like. The reception class children study natural and man made materials and know, for example, that wood is used in building houses, rabbits have fur coats, cars are made out of metal and Mobilo out of plastic. Cooking is a regular feature of the Foundation Stage curriculum. They also learn how substances change when they are cooked. This activity also reinforces and develops the children's understanding of mathematics as they learn to weigh and measure out ingredients.
81. Teachers are skilled at linking work appropriately to a topic that encompasses many areas. This helps children make strong connections between different aspects of their learning. During the inspection, the reception class was studying structures and tested the strength of materials linked to the story of the Three Little Pigs. As a further part of this study they went outside and made bubbles. They discovered that bubbles come in all sizes and that it is possible to float, catch and re-float a bubble several times before it bursts. One child discovered that if he twirled around holding the bubble wand he was encircled with a shower of bubbles. This caused the rest of the children to look in delight and amazement and to try the experiment for themselves.
82. The children are also taught skilfully about events in the past. For example, good use is made of photographs, artefacts and pictures. Visits out of school and visitors to the classroom also help pupils to understand about the purpose of some of the features of the locality in which they live such as the local church. During role play, both nursery and reception class children learn about the work that adults do. At present the children are learning what it means to be a customer or member of staff in a café.
83. Both year groups spend a great deal of time designing and making. They use large and small construction toys, card, paper, paste and glue to learn how to build cut, stick join and fold creating a wide variety of models, cards, and notebooks to use in their play.
84. In both the nursery and reception classes the children learn how to use tape recorders and computers independently. They can use the mouse to click on the icons that operate simple computer programmes, and the reception class children can use a painting programme to create pictures. By the end of the reception year children are beginning to use the computer for writing.

### **Physical development**

85. In this area of learning the children make very good progress because of skilled teaching. By the end of the reception year children exceed the standard expected for their age. From the earliest days in the nursery the children are encouraged to put on their own coats and change their shoes. Because this is expected of them on a daily basis, the children rise to the challenge and succeed. In their play outside, they learn to throw and catch, ride bikes and use climbing apparatus. Some aspects of outdoor play for reception children are, however, limited by lack of appropriate resources and because of the limited amount of time that is given over to it at present. For example, there are no wheeled toys to encourage co-operative play or markings to enable children, for example, to follow a pathway or negotiate an obstacle. However, these

are offset somewhat by very good games and gymnastic lessons which stretch pupils to the limit.

86. In the reception classes the children have formal Physical Education lessons in the school hall. They build well on the early training in the nursery, so that the reception class children are able to change with the minimum of fuss in the lesson observed. The teacher's enthusiasm and knowledge of both subject and the ability of her pupils ensured that the children were very well motivated, worked hard and responded very well to the teacher's clear explanations and instructions. As a result the children made very good progress in improving the control of their movements and in understanding about the changes that happen to their bodies when they exercise. With the teacher's help they are beginning to appreciate and praise the work of others and strive to improve their own performance. The skills taught in lessons are practised in other areas of the curriculum such as mathematics when pupils are asked to hop six times and in literacy where they skip around a circle when recognising the initial letter of their name. All this contributes to the high standards the pupils achieve.
87. In both the nursery and reception classes, the children have plenty of opportunity to practise and refine their manipulative skills by the use of a wide variety of tools and implements and equipment across all areas of learning. They use thick and thin pencils, brushes and felt tips, learn to cut out carefully and use staplers and hole punches. By the end of the reception year they have good hand control which is demonstrated when they form recognisable letters and words.

### **Creative development**

88. This is another area where pupils make very good progress and achieve above average standards. Again this is due to the very high quality teaching and provision in both the nursery and reception classes. Adults in the Foundation Stage plan together to provide a wide range of experiences matched to the children's level of skill and ability. The adults are all very skilled at encouraging children to talk about what they have done and how successful they have been. The teachers take great care to teach the children how to use the equipment and resources effectively. They are shown how to mix colours and this skill gradually develops alongside discussion about colour and shades of colour. As a result, when they come to paint self-portraits, they represent skin tone well.
89. The portfolio of children's work from last year shows that children are given the opportunity to use and experiment with a wide variety of media, tools and textures. They learn about opposites such as black and white; use vegetables for printing, make collage pictures and very brightly coloured paintings of houses. The standards of work are high.
90. Through daily class and group lessons, the children learn to listen to and join in rhymes, and songs and to play percussion instruments. By the end of the reception year children are beginning to understand about using loud and quiet sounds for different effects, and how to make a fast or slow sound. They learn to sit quietly and listen to music for short periods of time, and to interpret what they have heard in creative dance.
91. In both the nursery and reception classes, the children are encouraged to dress up and act out stories heard in the wide variety of role play areas available to them in nursery and reception classes. However, one area that could be improved is the provision for children to engage in role play during their sessions outside.

## ENGLISH

92. Inspection findings judge standards to be average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in English. Although standards are not as high as they were judged to be at the last inspection, the school has worked hard to reverse a 'dip' in test results in 1998. More children are now leaving the school having reached average levels. Although results in the 2002 tests for 11-year-olds remained below average, they show further improvements and standards are closer to it. The picture was better at the end of Key Stage 1, with test results being above average. Throughout the school, standards in reading are stronger than in writing. At both key stages, too few pupils attain the higher levels in the national curriculum tests in writing.
93. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall, because the individual work programmes provided for them usually set out clear, achievable targets. As a result, teachers and support staff are clear about what pupils need to learn and plan well together to ensure most activities meet their needs well.
94. Since the previous inspection the school has improved its assessment procedures. These are being used effectively to highlight gaps in learning. Pupils who are not making the expected progress are quickly identified and given extra support. Good use is being made of national 'catch-up' programmes to this end. However, the system is not yet as effective in identifying the next steps in learning in writing for more able pupils. As a result, pupils at both key stages sometimes 'mark time', rather than moving quickly to the next stage of their development. Consequently fewer pupils attain the higher levels (Level 3 and Level 5) in writing than they do in reading. More specific teaching of the skills needed to achieve these levels is needed.
95. Standards in speaking and listening are average at the end of both key stages. Pupils make good progress throughout the school. A small minority of pupils in Year 1 have poor language skills, despite having had a good start in the Foundation Stage. They respond to questions with one word answers and have difficulty in making themselves understood. Other pupils in Year 1 have good speaking and listening skills and confidently involve themselves in conversations with adults, where they recount such experiences as a visit to the doctor. They use words such as 'thermometer' and 'stethoscope' accurately and in the correct context. Younger pupils listen attentively to stories and are confident in sharing their views or asking questions about what they have heard. In the junior classes, most pupils willingly contribute to class discussions and are confident and assured when reading aloud. Pupils are polite and articulate when talking informally about things that interest them. A particularly good technique employed by the school is the use of puppets to encourage pupils to enter into dialogue. Pupils in Year 5 assembled puppets to represent the characters in the book 'The Sheep Pig'. They entertained the class using the puppets to bring the story to life. There was dialogue with pupils using clear speaking voices as they manipulated the puppets to enact each part of the story. They enjoyed delivering the show and the class listened intently showing very high levels of interest. Many pupils take their turn to speak confidently to the whole school during assemblies. However, in some classes, pupils occasionally are not encouraged to answer questions using full sentences, which limits the pace of their progress.
96. Standards in reading are above average at both key stages. Most pupils achieve the level expected for their age. A better than average number of pupils also reach the higher levels throughout the school. Shared reading activities in literacy lessons ensure that pupils in the infant classes enjoy reading and respond well to books. They realise that words carry meaning and that pictures can be used to help you to understand the story. Pupils with special educational needs progress well in

understanding, for example, where a story begins and that words follow from left to right. Group reading and word activities ensure that pupils gain new vocabulary and learn effective strategies for working out unfamiliar words. More able pupils soon realise that some words rhyme or can be grouped into lists according to the similar sounds they make, for example, with the only change being the initial sound. By the end of Year 2, most pupils have sufficient phonic skills to read their chosen reading books and are able to retell stories in the correct sequence. However, some have difficulty in accessing information from reference books and do not always have the reading skills to be able to gain the meaning of technical words. More able pupils read well independently, with good levels of expression and fluency. They can talk confidently about events and characters in the stories they are reading and access information from reference books competently.

97. A similar emphasis is placed on planned reading sessions in Years 3 to 6 and this ensures that pupils make at least steady and often good progress. Almost all pupils in Year 3 read with accuracy and the more able pupils read with good expression and fluency. This is built on well in the other junior classes. Pupils throughout the junior classes have sound knowledge of how to access information, for example, using contents and index pages and using menus on the Internet. Most pupils in the older classes read unfamiliar texts with ease. More able pupils are able to infer from the text and use deduction to work out, for example, why characters are behaving in particular ways or to work out what might happen next. By Year 6, these pupils are reading such titles as Shakespeare's *Macbeth* in prose form, with interest. They talk enthusiastically about the plot and are beginning to make judgements about the personalities of the main characters in the story. One pupil entered into a detailed discussion about the emotions of greed and envy and how these human failings influence the story. By the time pupils leave the school, most are confident readers who use their skills effectively both for pleasure and for learning. The school provides well for those pupils with special educational needs, who benefit from carefully organised group activities and regular reading sessions with adults. Useful day-to-day reading records are kept to ensure that pupils build effectively on previous learning. Home / school reading diaries are also used effectively to support parents in helping their children.
98. A good stock of books is readily available for pupils to choose. Particular care has been taken to ensure that titles suitable for boys are available. As a result, boys remain interested in reading and make good progress. The non-fiction library is cramped and poorly organised. The space is shared with the school's reception area. As a result, pupils' opportunities for independent research are limited.
99. Most Year 2 pupils' writing generally conveys clear meaning in correctly punctuated sentences. Ideas are sequenced logically in stories and most express themselves effectively in simple poetry and letters. They generally spell simple words correctly and their handwriting is often neat and tidy. This is because teachers are consistent in how they teach letter formation and spelling. More able pupils sustain their ideas well and are using extended sentences and including interesting words and phrases in their stories. However, teachers do not always help these pupils to develop their ideas further, for example, to improve the characters and events. The infant children learn word processing skills as they compile lists, practise the use of capital letters and write sequenced sentences to produce poetic and descriptive writing on the computer.
100. Good teaching overall in the junior classes ensures that by the end of Year 6 pupils generally show a good knowledge of how to structure their writing for different purposes and how to sustain ideas in a good range of styles. They know how to plan,

draft and revise their work and they use the computer confidently to complete finished drafts. In Year 6 there is some lively and intuitive writing when pupils record their responses to extracts from literature. More able pupils empathise with the emotions expressed in the passages and express their thoughts clearly and logically. They are beginning to use their deductive skills to gain insights into the personalities of fictional characters. This is demonstrated, for example, in their writings about 'The Secret Garden', from the servant's point of view. Some good play scripts based on this novel include direct speech, stage directions and directions as to how characters speak their lines. More able pupils produce very good prose styles of writing based on the poem 'The Listeners'. Their work often includes accurate spellings and clear legible handwriting. However, when writing their own imaginative stories, particularly in timed situations, more able pupils do not always include those features which will help them achieve the higher national curriculum level. For example, they do not always sustain the development of characters and plot throughout their stories, or organise events as effectively as they could. In test situations, where pupils do not have a great deal of time to revise and edit their work, the standards they achieve are often significantly lower than those they demonstrate when working untimed in class. More attention needs to be paid to ensuring that pupils understand how they can improve their writing to attain higher levels and to providing practise in writing to a time limit. Some pupils with special educational needs and those of lower ability are not as successful in writing independently and consequently, when they are not supported by an adult, their rate of learning is not sustained. Where teachers' marking is effective, it includes clear comments and directions about how to improve. However, this is not consistent practice throughout the school and as a result, does not always help pupils to know what they need to do next.

101. The quality of teaching and learning in English is good overall. It is stronger for pupils in Years 1 and 6 because there are clearer links made between work undertaken in whole class sessions and in group work. In Year 6, lesson planning is particularly effective. For example, a very good selection of poems about the wind and the weather were chosen and used to stimulate pupils' own writing. Pupils are taught to analyse their work. They quickly gain confidence in the use of similes and personification. Finally they work with a poet before they draft and re-draft their own poems about 'The Wind'. Their completed work was of high quality. This high quality teaching is leading to good progress. Good teaching in Year 1 includes carefully planned group activities that link with the introductory part of the lesson and the very good deployment of extra teachers. This ensures that pupils develop high levels of interest and receive support and assistance when it is required.
102. There are good examples of the use of English across all subjects. By Year 6 many pupils have developed good quality report writing styles. Pupils write reports in science and 'eye witness' accounts of historical events. They make written evaluations of their work in design and technology, keep diaries, write letters and write informatively.
103. Subject leadership is good. The co-ordinator regularly monitors teachers' planning and pupils' work. She has analysed test results and has identified the need to improve the results more able pupils achieve. She has begun to evaluate teaching through classroom observations. The school has an effective scheme of work covering all aspects of English. This is supported well by exemplars of pupils' work and further guidance documentation which is available to support teachers.

## **MATHEMATICS**

104. Standards are above average at the end of Year 2 and average for pupils at the end of Year 6. This is broadly consistent with the most recently published national curriculum tests for 7 and 11-year-olds. There has been an improvement in standards since the time of the last inspection. It is commendable that the school has reversed a dip in attainment, especially at the end of Year 6. Good strategies, which have not only brought about a rising trend but look likely to sustain it, are now in place.
105. The implementation of the national numeracy strategy and the subsequent staff development has had a good impact on approaches to teaching throughout the school. New appointments to the staff have strengthened teaching quality. Curriculum improvements include the flexible use of published resources to supplement the numeracy framework and most notably a very strong emphasis on investigative mathematics. Rigorous diagnostic assessments identify individual needs and enable appropriate targets to be set for all pupils. Numeracy skills are taught well. Mental and oral number work at the beginning of lessons focuses well on basic knowledge and understanding of number and improves pupils' mental agility. In one lesson for instance, the teacher wrote examples and answers on the white board and pupils had to decide quickly whether or not they were correct. There is a strong emphasis on pupils learning multiplication tables. When they feel ready, pupils are tested by the rest of the school at the end of assembly. This improves pupils' confidence with number as well as their self-esteem, and makes learning something purposeful to be shared with others.
106. There are good opportunities for pupils to apply their number skills in other subjects. In geography fieldwork for example they record the width, depth and water speed of different sections of a river. The 'outside classroom' is also promoted well and pupils have planned maths trails around the school grounds, which have been tried and evaluated by others. Markings on the playground are designed to encourage mathematical games. Good use is made of computers in the classrooms to support learning of number facts.
107. By the end of Year 6 most pupils understand place value of numbers. They use this effectively for example when multiplying and dividing by 10, 100, and 1000. Pupils understand percentages and their fraction equivalents and use different methods of calculation when solving problems involving the four processes. They investigate angles and symmetry as well as the perimeters and areas of shapes. Data collected is presented as line and block graphs, sometimes using the computer to print out results. More able pupils are challenged well and manage tasks, which are well beyond expectations for their age. Examples include finding the volume of a large cube and calculating the number of smaller cubes needed to construct it. In another task pupils use their understanding of corresponding angles to calculate other angles within a geometric diagram.
108. Less able pupils and those with special educational needs learn appropriate skills with work matched to their particular abilities. For example, special educational needs pupils worked with the teaching assistant on a programme specially designed to boost mathematical ability. The task engaged pupils in solving money problems improving their addition and subtraction to 100.
109. By the end of Year 2, most pupils' skills at addition and subtraction to 20 are secure. They recognise and order numbers to 100 and begin to try out different ways of calculating such as 'counting on' or breaking tens and units down to make addition simpler for example  $21 + 32$  would be written as 50 (five tens) + 3 (three units). Pupils find fractions of shapes and investigate mathematical ideas such as the probability of

coins landing 'heads or tails'. More able pupils attempt more challenging work such as multiplication and division problems and those involving money beyond £1.

110. Given pupils' levels of attainment when they start school they achieve well. Pupils work hard and show an interest and enthusiasm for lessons. The pace of their learning is good because of the quality of the teaching they receive.
111. Teaching is consistently good, with some very good lessons in infant and junior classes. All teachers have good subject knowledge and a good understanding of the numeracy framework. Consequently lessons are planned well and teachers have clear expectations of what pupils will learn during the lesson. These objectives are shared with pupils at the beginning of the lesson so they know what is expected of them. There is a good pace to the teaching with some rapid questioning to start off the sessions. This injection of pace keeps pupils alert and interested and provides a good 'warm-up' for the main activity. In one lesson the teacher made good use of individual white boards during the mental 'starter'. Pupils wrote random numbers on their boards and had to match their numbers to the multiplication problems, which the teacher called out. This improvised 'bingo' game helped to sharpen up pupils' mental recall of the multiplication tables, whilst ensuring the whole class fully enjoyed the activity.
112. Teachers match work well to the different abilities of pupils in their class. This helps the rate of progress for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Teachers and teaching assistants give good learning support to these pupils, while more able pupils are challenged independently. The main activity session was well organised in a Year 2 lesson for example when less able pupils used computers to help them recall number facts, while more able pupils played a board game which tested their number skills when buying items and calculating the change from 50p. The teacher and assistant concentrated on boosting the skills of the others in the class. All were engaged at the right level and made good progress as a result.
113. Teachers use good strategies during the time at the end of lessons to assess what pupils have learned. For example, they question pupils skilfully to probe their understanding, or invite pupils to demonstrate skills in a practical way, such as writing on the whiteboard. The effectiveness of teaching is underpinned by the quality of relationships that are established in the classrooms. Pupils are confident, enthusiastic learners and the vast majority respond well to the teacher's expectations of them. Occasionally a small minority of pupils do not sustain concentration because they are not engaged as actively in learning as they might be. They sometimes make slower progress than they could in lessons because they do not always understand what to do. In some junior classes, particularly where there is a dominant number of boys, teachers are sometimes not aware of how evenly they question pupils to engage them in the lesson. In one lesson this resulted in the girls being too passive because they were not given enough opportunities to answer questions and demonstrate what they know.
114. Leadership and management of the subject are good. As a result of close monitoring of progress and the quality of teaching standards are being improved. The recently appointed co-ordinator has good knowledge and expertise in mathematics and has brought added commitment and drive to developing new ideas. The school has also taken good advantage of the support and training offered by the local education authority in the effort to drive up standards. Resources are very good and are used well to help maintain the pace of learning.

## SCIENCE

115. Standards in science are around the national average at the end of both key stages. They are not as strong as they were judged to be at the time of the last inspection in 1998. However, in the 1998 national tests and teacher assessments, results dipped to below average at Key Stage 1 and well below average at Key Stage 2. The picture since then has been one of improvement. This is particularly the case at Key Stage 2, where the proportion of pupils attaining both the expected and higher levels in the national tests for 11-year-olds rose sharply in 2001 to meet the national average. Results for 2002 show that the proportion of pupils attaining the expected level has risen yet again and the proportion attaining the higher level has been sustained. An analysis of pupil progress lower down the school shows that this upward trend is set to continue. At Key Stage 1, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level in teacher assessments has risen steadily and in 2002, exceeded the national average. However, too few children attain the higher level (Level 3).
116. Improvements in standards have been brought about through good subject leadership and consistently good teaching. The curriculum has been redesigned, with recent national guidelines taken into account and adapted to meet the needs of the school. This has resulted in a very clear scheme of work, which guides teaching well and ensures that pupils can build effectively on their knowledge and skills from year to year. A comprehensive system for checking on pupil progress and pinpointing the next steps in learning has been recently introduced and is already helping teachers to plan learning more effectively for groups and individuals. The co-ordinator regularly checks on teachers' planning and pupils' work to ensure progress. A useful portfolio of children's work has been compiled to show examples of the different national curriculum levels, providing good support, particularly for staff new to the school.
117. In Key stage 1, pupils produce a very good amount of work and have plenty of exciting opportunities for practical, investigative work to help them discover scientific concepts for themselves. Most pupils can explain how shadows are formed because they have investigated this. They can explain the differences between raw and cooked food and describe what humans need to help them grow and keep fit. They understand how to make simple circuits with batteries, wire and bulbs to make the bulb light. No lessons were seen at this key stage, but pupils' work indicates that teaching is good, overall. Teachers are helping pupils to record their knowledge in a variety of interesting ways. They record their findings and observations in tables, charts and graphs, often responding to first hand observations as they work. For example, recording that a raw carrot was 'hard' and 'crunchy' and a cooked carrot was 'soft' and 'squashy'. They are taught from the earliest stages to draw careful diagrams and label these appropriately. Good use is made of the school grounds and visits further afield to study living things. The Year 2 residential visit to Pettypool, for example, gives good opportunities for pupils to study different habitats. However, there is not enough opportunity for more able pupils in Year 2 to extend their practical skills of investigation to the limit. They need more regularly to be asked questions such as, 'What else do you think you could find out?' and be challenged to pose their own questions more often. These pupils also need to be introduced to higher level work in other aspects of the science curriculum. For example, when learning about electrical circuits, instead of the more able pupils doing more of the same activities, as extension work, they could be introduced to the early stages of work programmes for children in Key Stage 2.
118. At Key Stage 2, good teaching is helping pupils to build rapidly on the firm foundation laid in the infant classes. All strands of the subject are covered in equal depth and as in the infant classes, pupils are given good opportunities to carry out practical investigations. By the end of Year 6, the majority of pupils can make sensible



predictions and draw conclusions from their observations. For example, a Year 6 pupil studying sound explained, 'Sounds travel best through solids because the molecules in a solid are packed together. The vibrations travel through them easily.' When carrying out experiments with torches and objects to make shadows, one child predicted that, 'The shadow will be bigger when the torch is nearer to the object.' Most children can explain how to construct a fair test. They understand that variables must be controlled. Pupils also understand and use a good range of scientific vocabulary because this is taught well. For example, they can use the terms 'evaporation' and 'condensation' accurately when talking about the water cycle. They can also explain reversible and irreversible changes in materials. More able pupils are regularly challenged to explain their findings in greater depth and extension work is often provided for them. However, there is more scope for these pupils to be given the opportunity to design experiments for themselves and to choose the ways in which findings are recorded.

119. Good support from teaching assistants is helping pupils with special educational needs at both key stages to make good progress in their scientific understanding. Teaching assistants ensure that pupils understand their tasks and help them record their findings. This often ensures that those with weaker literacy skills are still able to demonstrate what they have understood. However, on some occasions, a small number of pupils in junior classes, mainly boys, find it hard to concentrate and work independently without direct supervision. The pace of learning slows for these pupils, as a result and sometimes affects the concentration of those around them.
120. In the science lessons seen in the junior classes, teaching was good. Lessons were well planned and organised to ensure that children could work practically. Resources were well chosen to support the tasks. Teachers used questions well to draw from the pupils what they already knew and help them build on this. For example, in a Year 5 lesson on healthy and unhealthy food choices, the teacher asked, 'What foods can we eat so that we can have a healthy diet?' and then extended this further by asking children what groups the various foods belonged to. Questions are often carefully targeted to ensure that pupils of different abilities are challenged at the appropriate level. Teachers explain scientific concepts well and as a result, children 'cotton on' quickly to new concepts. They also explain tasks well, as for example in a Year 3 lesson, where pupils were being asked to make and test predictions about whether materials were magnetic or not. Very clear explanation of the task enabled children to get down to work quickly, with the minimum of fuss. A weaker area of teaching is teachers' marking. Although work is regularly marked in most classes, there are inconsistencies. The best examples point out misconceptions and point the way forward for the child. However, on too many occasions, marking is limited to a tick and a brief positive comment, if appropriate, which gives pupils little indication of how they might improve. Sound use is made of computers in science to present findings and handle data.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

121. The high standards in art and design attained by the end of Year 6 at the time of the last inspection have been maintained and standards at the age of seven have risen and are now also above average. Pupils make good progress in art throughout the school and are very enthusiastic about the subject, try hard and produce good quality work, as a result. Pupils with special educational needs make the same progress as other pupils because of good teaching, which ensures they are supported, for example in making careful observations and developing their skills.

122. In Year 1 pupils build on the rich variety of experiences in the Foundation Stage and begin to refine their skills. They use felt pen and pastels to draw self-portraits after studying their reflection in a mirror. These techniques were then used to draw portraits of the queen. Some which were very good likenesses. They are able to use simple computer programmes to create colourful pictures. Year 2 pupils study the work of artists and produce work, for example, in the style of Lowry, Matisse and Paul Klee. These are all of a good standard and reflect the high status that art and design has in the curriculum. The work produced after a residential visit links together many subjects helping to provide children with a good understanding of the place of nature in art, and of art to enhance and support literature. Many of the works of art illustrated poems that the children had written and revealed a growth in the pupils' spiritual development through their capacity to appreciate and respond to beauty and emotion in an artistic way.
123. The spiritual aspect of art appreciation is further developed in Year 3 where pupils were inspired by Australian Aboriginal painters to design secret symbols to show events that are important in their own lives. These were then put together to make a 'map of me'. The finished results of these are stunning. Year 4 pupils use pen and ink to make spiritual and social statements about relationships. Again these have been carried out in a thoughtful and painstaking manner and are of a high quality. As a result of studying African prints and fabrics, the Year 5 pupils investigate craft and design in a variety of forms and textures, then combine visual and tactile features to weave bright, colourful wall hangings. Afterwards these were photographed using a digital camera to create two-dimensional versions of their work. The very bright pastel drawings produced by Year 6 were the result of collecting visual information to develop thoughts and ideas and to make thoughtful observations, and these were used as starting points for still life. The pupils then compared the methods, ideas and approaches they used in their own work with those of other pupils. Thoughts and ideas were discussed and exchanged helping them to develop a critical approach to art and design.
124. Only one art lesson was observed; this was in Key Stage 2. In this lesson the teacher showed very good knowledge of the subject and of a wide variety of techniques to produce effects with print and stencils. While the pupils were all very interested at the start, the end of the lesson was spoilt by a small group of pupils who were unable to work independently and concentrate for a sufficient period of time. Evidence from the lesson observed, and from art displayed around the school and in portfolios shows that the skills needed for success in art and design are taught consistently well throughout the school. The teachers take time to display the pupils' work with care and to ensure that artwork from all classes is shown across the school.
125. The leadership of the subject is very good. It is shared by two co-ordinators. One works with the younger children and the other with the older pupils. Both are very well qualified for the role and their shared expertise ensures that the curriculum planned and resources available are very well matched to the needs of the pupils. They give good quality advice and guidance to their colleagues to ensure that a very rich art curriculum is taught. The work in school is further enhanced by the use of visiting artists and visits out of school. The progress of the pupils is assessed the end of each academic year and the standard achieved is reported clearly to parents.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

126. Pupils in Key Stage 1 get off to a very good start so that by Year 2, they are reaching standards, which are much better than those in most schools. In Key Stage 2 this very good progress is continued and at age 11 standards are also much better than

those found in most schools. Standards are higher in the Infant classes than at the time of the previous inspection. Progress across the years is now more even because the co-ordinator, who leads the subject very well, has provided staff with a scheme of work that identifies and sequences the full range of skills. This helps staff to plan lessons that take into account the pupils' previous learning. Those pupils with special educational needs are given extra adult support or are paired with more able children to help them achieve well in relation to their abilities.

127. Although only one lesson was seen during the inspection, it is clear from the products and records of work that there is very good teaching in both Key Stages. This ensures that children make very good progress throughout the school. In Year 1 pupils carefully follow their design sheets to assemble tubes and containers of different lengths and volume to make musical instruments. The work is carefully evaluated with their opinions recorded on the design sheets. Sliders are carefully incorporated into Easter Cards enabling the 'egg' to crack open and the 'chicken' to hatch. Very good levels of care and concentration have been exercised to complete these models to a very high standard. This impressive work is continued in Year 2 where children have followed the design make and evaluate cycle to produce lunch boxes made from recyclable materials, a multicoloured coat for Joseph and a coach for the Queen's Jubilee. Pupils make very good progress in their use of accurate technological language. By Year 2, pupils are able to write about their work using increasingly complex sentences and their designs are carefully and accurately labelled.
128. Teachers in Key Stage 2 have made good use of the locality as when Year 4 pupils assemble models of a local Elizabethan Hall. Younger children construct traffic lights using battery-powered circuitry to make working models that followed the correct sequence. The oldest pupils successfully assemble cam movements using construction kits. They listen carefully to the teacher's clear explanations about how they should go about their work. This clarifies their thoughts and ideas, enabling them to assemble an off-centre working cam. They successfully improve their designs by applying their previous knowledge of stable structures. There are very high levels of collaboration as groups of children share their ideas and apply a number of suggestions before they made their final selection. The adults carefully supported the activities by raising questions and giving support rather than directly intervening. The pupils, particularly the boys, enjoyed the practical and challenging nature of these tasks. The groups never gave up on the task and carefully described their models to the rest of the class.
129. The co-ordinator's leadership in the subject is very good, and it has successfully moved forward since the last inspection. There are very good links with other subjects, for example the use of scientific knowledge in the construction of traffic lights and the insights into the levels of technological expertise during their work on the Ancient Egyptian Civilisation when pupils assembled models of shadufs. Lesson plans are monitored regularly and the comprehensive portfolio of work supports teachers' planning and highlights the high levels of attainment achieved in the school. A clear action plan guides the subject with future developments being planned to include the use of computer control to operate models of lifts and traffic lights.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

130. Standards in geography are similar to those found in most schools at Year 2 and above those found in most schools at Year 6. Good standards have been maintained at Key Stage 2, but standards are not as high at Key Stage 1 as they were judged to be at the last inspection. The amount of fieldwork undertaken by pupils, both around the school and further afield is a strength of the geography curriculum. As a result,

pupils' skills of geographical enquiry are well developed by the end of Key Stage 2. The subject is also enriched through the 'theme weeks' held each year. For example, the 'Outdoor Classroom' week enabled all pupils to study an aspect of their immediate environment in the school grounds. The school's 'Multi-cultural Week', which focused on Africa was featured in a national education magazine last year and deepened the children's understanding of life in a culture very different from their own. Improvements to the school grounds, designed and implemented by pupils and staff, have recently won a 'Britain in Bloom' award for the school. This helped children to develop a greater understanding how changes to the environment can affect people's lives for the better.

131. Good management of the subject has ensured that a strong scheme of work guides teachers' planning and the delivery of lessons. The co-ordinator gives good guidance to colleagues about how they might tackle topics and which resources they might use. Careful checks of teachers' planning and pupils' work ensure that standards are maintained and areas for improvement are identified. Current priorities are the further development of mapping skills throughout the school and the development of a more formal system for recording pupils' progress.
132. One geography lesson was observed during the inspection. This was in the Year 6 class and was a very good lesson. An examination of pupils' work indicates that teaching is good overall. It is strongest in Year 1, Year 3 and Year 6 and as a result, pupils in these classes make the best progress. The best teaching ensures that children have the opportunity to pose their own questions and follow their own lines of enquiry. This provides a good level of challenge for all pupils, but particularly for the more able. Work is sometimes adapted for pupils with special educational needs and on other occasions, they receive extra adult support or are paired with more confident pupils, as appropriate. This ensures that they make good progress in relation to their abilities. A relative weakness in teaching is the quality of marking. Although work is regularly marked in most classes, teachers rarely give suggestions for pupils as to how they might improve.
133. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils can compare their own lives with that of a child in Africa. They attend a residential visit to Pettypool and as a result, can compare and contrast key features of this environment with their own area of Knutsford. Good use is made of literacy skills, for example, as pupils draw up a 'Woodland Code' using bullet points. Good use is made of the school grounds to ensure pupils' work is practical and relevant. For example, Year 1 pupils search out plants and animals in the spinney adjacent to the school and make plans of the playground. However, there is some overlap of topics between classes, which slows progress. For example, Year 2 pupils make a map of their journey between home and school, which is very similar to one they complete in Year 1. This does little to develop their mapping skills.
134. At Key Stage 2 pupils undertake a very good volume of work of a rich and interesting nature. They build quickly on the firm foundation laid in the infant classes. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a good knowledge of the development of their own local area and key locations around the world. Mapping skills are secure and the majority of pupils can use six figure co-ordinates to find places on a map and can plot a journey on a road map. Pupils can sensibly debate environmental issues, such as the effects of extending Manchester Airport. Skills of geographical enquiry are very well developed. For example, Year 6 pupils are encouraged to pose questions about the contrasting locality of Barmouth, prior to their residential field trip. Pupils of all abilities are able to use the Internet with confidence to research facts and download maps. In the Year 6 lesson observed, pupils made very good progress working in groups to develop questionnaires to send off to people in Barmouth, to find out about the town

from local residents. As they worked, they realised that some questions would generate 'yes' and 'no' type answers, giving limited information. As a result, they adapted their work accordingly. In all junior classes, pupils are encouraged to record information in a wide variety of ways, for example in graphs, charts and tables as appropriate and to undertake personal research. Good links are made with other subjects. For example, pupils visited the River Bollin to undertake a river study. They used their mathematics skills when measuring and presented their findings in very clear chart form. These were then enhanced by carefully executed watercolour paintings of the plants on the riverbank. Throughout Key Stage 2, the richness of such opportunities for practical, 'hands-on' study of geography engages pupils' interest and helps them to learn at a good rate.

## HISTORY

135. Standards in history are better than those found in most schools at Year 2 and similar to those found in most schools at Year 6. This is somewhat different from the last inspection. Then, standards were judged to be meeting expectations at Key Stage 1 and exceeding them at Key Stage 2. The school has done well to improve standards at Key Stage 1 and achieve satisfactory standards at Key Stage 2 during a period of time in which a new curriculum has been introduced in the subject and other areas have assumed greater priority.
136. Good management of the subject has resulted in a strong scheme of work being implemented to guide teacher's work. Careful monitoring has enabled the co-ordinator to identify the need to reduce the breadth of some topics at Key Stage 2, in order to allow pupils to study areas in more depth. A clear action plan is guiding the development of the subject and highlights the need to develop a more formal system for recording details of pupil progress.
137. Two lessons were seen during the inspection, one in the infant classes, which was good, and one in the junior classes, which was satisfactory. However, an analysis of pupils' work shows that teaching is generally good overall. Over time, pupils make the best progress in the infant and lower junior classes. In the upper junior classes, progress is not as rapid because topics are not always studied in sufficient depth. This limits the opportunity to develop skills to a higher level. There are strengths at both key stages in the way in which teachers make links between history and other subjects such as literacy and art. Work at both key stages is presented in a variety of different ways, using charts, diagrams, pamphlets and posters, as well as accounts and reports.
138. In Year 2, pupils have a good understanding of life 'then' and 'now'. They are able to make comparisons, for example, between life at the beginning of the twentieth century when the Queen Mother was born and life at the beginning of the twenty-first century when she died. They know that we can use pictures and objects from the past to give us information about how things were. They also know that we can find out about the past from books, videos and the Internet and have used these sources to find out about Queen Victoria. Pupils had produced good quality drawings after careful observation of artefacts. All pupils are given very good opportunities to write independently. For example, pupils in Year 1 describe old and new toys and how to use them. More able pupils in Year 1 are expected to give reasons, for example, for why a bathtub was placed near the fire in a picture from the past. One child wrote, 'The bath tub was in the lounge because it was near to the fire'.
139. By Year 6, pupils can explain the key events of the periods they have studied throughout Key Stage 2. They can talk about the lives of key figures, such as Queen

Victoria and Henry the Eighth. They have a good understanding of the different ways we can find out about the past, through primary sources such as paintings and eyewitness accounts and secondary sources, such as books and the Internet. However, pupils' understanding of the importance of being aware of the difference between fact and opinion when interpreting history is less well developed. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils are given good opportunities to understand what life was like for people in the past. They use this knowledge effectively in accounts such as 'My Life as an Anglo-Saxon', showing a developing ability to put themselves in the place of others.

140. A strength in provision is the way in which the local area is used effectively to enrich pupils' historical understanding and their appreciation of their own local heritage. The emphasis on studying history at first hand, wherever possible, through the use of visits, visitors and artefacts engages pupils' interest, generates enthusiasm and ensures most learn effectively. Visits to Little Moreton Hall and Ford Green Hall help them to understand more about life in Tudor times. At Tatton Park, children are given the opportunity to dress in Victorian costume and take on the various roles of workers in a stately home, as they prepare for Christmas. Classes visit Chester in order to learn about the Romans in Britain. In school, Year 5 have experienced a 'Victorian Day' and presented a Victorian assembly. Pupils talk readily and enthusiastically about these experiences and remember them in great detail.
141. Pupils with special educational needs at both key stages make good progress. They are often given worksheets, which are adapted to ensure they can cope with the reading demands and which support their writing. In some lessons, whilst they are given the same work as other pupils, teachers' expectations of what they produce is reduced in relation to their abilities.
142. Strong links are made between literacy and history. Children are given good opportunities to use their literacy skills for recording their findings. Good examples were seen of diary writing and poetry, for example, about Greek Gods. Such experiences challenge pupils to use their historical knowledge in a different way, as well as giving valuable practice in writing for different purposes. Text features learned in literacy lessons, such as bullet points, captions and labels are used effectively in presentation. Good links are also made between history and art and design. For example, good use is made of computers, for research purposes, using the Internet. However, more effective use could be made of ICT in presenting work.
143. In contrast, throughout the school, pupils' understanding of how key historical events relate to each other in time, whilst sound, is a weaker area. Pupils have too few opportunities, for example, to construct time lines. There are also fewer opportunities for them to pose historical questions themselves than there are for them to answer questions posed by others.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

144. By the end of both key stages, standards are similar to those found in most schools. Pupils make good progress because the subject skills are not taught in isolation. Opportunities to use ICT are interwoven into the planning for almost all the National Curriculum subjects. During the inspection the only subject that did not include ICT was music. This has ensured that pupils understand the relevance and importance of ICT in their everyday lives. These findings represent a good improvement on those of the previous inspection report.
145. Pupils in the Infant classes operate the keyboard accurately using alphabet and command keys to create text. There are good links with English as the younger

children type in a list of words including some that require capital letters. Pupils use the space bar accurately, for example, when compiling lists. Displays around the school and in the portfolio show accurate and confident use of the mouse to change the colour of the texts. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress to achieve these skills. They are supported well in some lessons by teaching assistants and at other times, are grouped with more able children, who assist them. More able children use word processing programs to independently write increasingly complex sentences with capital letters and full stops. They use the mouse to choose functions from the tool bar to create patterns and self-portraits, for example, to illustrate their poetic writing. Many pupils work successfully in pairs to write collaboratively and print out their work as they begin to develop multi-media presentations. Pupils link the application of computer control to mathematics, as they accurately input co-ordinates into a programmable toy to draw geometrical shapes. However, the placement of the keyboards, in some classrooms, is such that they are not fully aligned to the screens. This makes it more difficult for younger children to use both hands to type and co-ordinate their typing skills with their displayed work on the screen.

146. Pupils in the junior classes continue the good progress. Year 3 children can change letter size and font styles in the documents they create. They operate the mouse accurately, for example, to draw geometrical shapes in mathematics. Older pupils operate software to design playground markings to maximise the use of space and use the digital camera to make permanent records of their artwork. Good progress is made in the use of websites to locate and download information in history and geography projects. Year 6 pupils systematically record their physical education competence by inputting the results of their jumping, throwing and exercise activities into a data base, then using the software to compile graphs of their performances. Pupils with special educational needs use relevant mathematical software in Year 6 to consolidate their addition and subtraction skills.
147. Although no full lessons were observed during the inspection, records of pupils' achievements and observations of printouts or pairs of pupils working at the computer indicate that the quality of teaching is good. Many skilled staff, including learning support assistants, were observed working with small groups or individual pupils giving them instructions about the procedures for operating the software. More skilful pupils worked with less advanced classmates and staff continually circulated to support the computer activities. This ensured that pupils were able to learn new skills and techniques. Often good planning identified appropriate software to help the youngest children. Pupils in the Infant classes worked on the computer to reinforce their computational skills. Older pupils used computer programmes to check their multiplication skills. In a very good geography lesson the oldest pupils successfully completed a simulation of a river study which involved taking measurements of depth, width and water speed in different sections of the river.
148. This involvement of ICT in lessons produces high levels of interest and very good attitudes in many pupils to their work. They often work collaboratively in pairs to complete tasks. Sufficient machines are available in all classes to ensure that all children have appropriate time to work on the computer. The availability of the 'subject skill continuum' document effectively supports this method of organisation. It directs the teacher to the specific subject skill to be taught within the group. This is a good improvement on the finding of the previous report.
149. Management of the subject is very good. The co-ordinator has a very good vision and the scheme of work has been modified to meet the requirements of the pupils. Up to date computers have been purchased to support a ratio of one machine to nine pupils

and the available software ensures that all aspects of the subject are now planned for and delivered. The new system for recording pupils' progress using a subject checklist of skills and the 'I can do' statements, which outline the next learning steps in child friendly language, is a valuable tool for ensuring pupils achieve appropriately.

## **MUSIC**

150. Pupils throughout the school attain average standards for their age. These standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. There have been some improvements to the range and quality of resources. There are now some tuned instruments and also a few which reflect minority cultures. This satisfactorily addresses an issue raised in the last report. A further improvement is the way in which singing is taught. Older pupils are more challenged than previously by a wider range to their repertoire, which now includes some two-part singing. The school choir, which attracts pupils from Years 3 to 6, enriches pupils' skills and experiences of music. Techniques are taught well. Singing is tuneful and pupils are taught to control pitch and dynamics in order to improve their performance. They have a good repertoire of songs and during the inspection practised purposefully in readiness for the school's Christmas concert.
151. In Years 1 and 2 pupils explore the ways in which sounds are made and begin to compose simple rhythmic patterns. Terminology associated with music, such as 'pitch' and 'rhythm', is promoted well. Pupils perform confidently on percussion instruments. By the end of Year 6, pupils used tuned and untuned instruments to compose musical sequences. They explore ways in which music is written for different purposes and evaluate their own work in order to improve it. Pupils listen to a wide a selection of music and learn about the lives and work of well-known composers.
152. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers generally use resources well to engage the class in music making. In a Year 3 lesson the teacher introduced the pupils to the use of timbre and dynamics so they could perform on their percussion instruments with more expression. Challenging and interesting activities motivate pupils well. This was seen in a lesson where pupils in Year 6 composed verses for their football 'chants', having previously decided on a chorus. The activity called for good collaboration and negotiating skills within the groups and resulted in confident performances which were evaluated in turn. In a lesson for Year 1 pupils the teacher's very good organisation and class management skills ensured that pupils made good progress in learning a new song as well as the names of the instruments they were playing. There was particularly good learning when pupils were taught the place of 'silence' in music, and the need to obey the conductor so that sounds stop and start at the same time. Teaching is less effective where teachers' subject knowledge is not secure and opportunities to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding are not explored.
153. The subject is managed satisfactorily. The co-ordinator has been in post since the beginning of term and has not had enough time to influence practice. Nevertheless she is clear about the potential for developing music and has a good capacity, because of her music skills, to move the subject forward. Although choral performances are good there are too few opportunities for individual pupils, who are able, to learn to play instruments. Those in school are underused.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**



154. Standards for pupils at the end of Year 2 are above those found in most schools, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Standards for pupils in Year 6 have improved and they too are better than usually found. Shortcomings in pupils' gymnastic performance, which were identified in the last report, have been eliminated because of stronger planning and teaching. More effective leadership in the subject has ensured that physical education has a high profile within the school curriculum and all pupils achieve well.
155. A commendable achievement is the Active Mark Gold award, recently won by the school in recognition of the very high level of pupil participation in physical activity.
156. Pupils also benefit from a range of coaching in soccer, cricket and personal fitness skills provided by local professional footballers and other community providers. The physical education curriculum is further enriched for pupils through a very good range of activities outside of school time. During the inspection, sessions for netball, soccer and aerobics for Years 1 and 2 were very well attended. Skills were taught very well contributing positively to the standards pupils achieve. Residential visits also give opportunities for pupils to develop their physical skills in a different way, through outdoor pursuits.
157. By the end of Year 2, pupils are well co-ordinated for their age. Movements on the floor and apparatus show good control and balance. Pupils evaluated their own performances during lessons and also in writing, providing important links to literacy. For example a pupil in Year 2 wrote 'I am good at bouncing the ball, but not very good at walking with it'. Another assessed his performance clearly, writing, 'In gym I am good at jumping and landing safely'.
158. By the end of Year 6, pupils combine skills and techniques well in games. In netball for example passing is precise and there is fluency and control in movement. Pupils show good awareness of attack and defence tactics. In gymnastics and dance pupils work confidently at different heights to perform fluent sequences of movement. They evaluate and refine their performances and know what effect exercise has on their bodies.
159. By the time they leave the school, most pupils reach the expected standard of swimming 25 metres. The school has been able to make good use of their outdoor pool over the recent months because of the more prolonged good weather. This has been of particular benefit to infant pupils, many of whom have got off to a good start in building their skills and confidence in the water.
160. The quality of teaching was good overall in lessons seen and very effective in one lesson because of the teacher's subject knowledge, energy and enthusiasm, which motivated pupils. The Year 1 pupils learned how to use space well and to improve the precision of their movements. The teacher was very aware of pupils who needed extra support and ensured that all were fully included and made good progress. The pupils responded very well to the challenges, which the lesson brought and increased in confidence because of the encouragement they received.
161. Similarly high expectations were seen in a lesson for Year 4 pupils. They clearly understood the lesson routines, working quietly, with concentration to improve balance and movement between floor and apparatus. All lessons are well planned and well managed. Resources are used effectively in order to engage all pupils and bring out their best performance.

162. Strong and effective leadership from the co-ordinator promotes high standards. Her specialist knowledge and expertise enables her to support colleges very well. By being involved in teaching infant and some junior classes she maintains a clear overview of standards and development of skills. The many initiatives introduced to promote sports have a good impact in the school. Pupils' learning is supported well by the very good range and quality of the school's resources.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

163. There has been good improvement in Religious Education since the last inspection. Standards in Year 6 remain satisfactory, but the curriculum has improved and is now both interesting and relevant to the needs of the pupils.
164. In Years 3 to 6 pupils are encouraged to reflect on what it means to have a faith and to learn from religions as well as about them. As a result, the children develop a sound understanding of Christianity, Islam and Judaism. In Year 3 pupils learn about the role of angels in religion and the place of light in spiritual and cultural celebrations. They learn about God, prophets, places of worship and about the Holy Books belonging to the three religions studied. In Year 4, they study the books of the Old Testament and learn about pilgrimages. Pupils in Year 5 learn about religious festivals and Year 6 learn about rites of passage.
165. In Years 1 and 2 standards have improved since the previous inspection and are now good. In Year 1 pupils learn to understand the religious significance of baptisms. These are linked appropriately to the children's own experiences of belonging to a family. Visits to the local church help children to better understand the words associated with christenings such as 'font' and 'vicar'. In Year 2 pupils learn about Christian celebrations such as harvest, Christmas and Easter. Year 2 pupils are also taught a little about Islam and begin to be aware of the existence of a wide variety of faiths and beliefs that abound and to respect the values and beliefs of others.
166. Throughout the school children enjoy their lessons. During a discussion with Year 6 pupils, one said, 'RE is good,' only to be contradicted by a classmate who said emphatically, 'RE IS GREAT!' This positive attitude is reflected in the pupils' work. In every class children produce lively, well thought out responses to their lessons. For example, in Year 1 there was an account of the story of the flood written in conversational style between God and Noah.
167. Three lessons were observed. Two in Year 1, and one in Year 6. The quality of teaching seen in one of the lessons in Year 1 was satisfactory, but when taught to the other Year 1 class the teacher had amended and improved her planning and that lesson was good, supporting the children's spiritual development well. In the lesson seen in Year 6 the teaching was also good. The teacher explained the differences between Judaism and other religions well. The children showed interest and knowledge of contemporary news and the teacher discussed the differences between Israel and Palestine in a sensitive way. The teacher's very good relationship with the pupils helped the children to talk about their feelings. At the end of the lesson the children had grown in their understanding of the Jewish faith.
168. The subject is well led by the headteacher who has been effectively trained in implementing the Cheshire Scheme for Religious Education. As a result, a new policy has been written and good improvements have been made to the curriculum. A programme of work has been devised. This provides clear guidance for teachers about what to teach, the resources to use, and the way in which religious education can link to and be reinforced by other subjects of the curriculum. There are sufficient

resources to teach the curriculum which is enhanced appropriately by visits to local churches and by ministers from local churches coming into school. The school has planned appropriately for further improvements, such as arranging visits to Mosques and Synagogues and for in service training for teachers.