

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **TOCKHOLES C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Tockholes, Darwen

LEA area: Blackburn with Darwen

Unique reference number: 119459

Headteacher: Mrs B Cocken

Reporting inspector: Mr J J Peacock  
25344

Dates of inspection: 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> June 2003

Inspection number: 248021

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior school

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 5 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Rock Lane  
Tockholes  
Darwen

Postcode: BB3 0LX

Telephone number: 01254 701806

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Professor C Willis

Date of previous inspection: February 1998

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25344	Mr J J Peacock	Registered inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education Educational inclusion, including race equality English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
13346	Mr C Bailey	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
21666	Mr A Margerison	Team inspector	English Geography History Foundation Stage Special educational needs	How well are pupils taught? How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This voluntary aided Church of England primary school has experienced a period of significant change with a new headteacher and two new teachers in just over two years. It caters for pupils from four to eleven years of age and is much smaller than other schools of its type, being the smallest in the local education authority. There are 48 pupils on roll, 29 boys and 19 girls in two classes. Most of the pupils live in the immediate area, which is a rural area but 19 travel from the nearby towns of Blackburn and Darwen. Although children enter the school with a wide variety of experiences, overall their level of attainment is broadly average when compared to children of a similar age.

About six per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is below the national average. The school has 13 pupils with special educational needs and only one of these has a statement of special educational needs. This is above the national average and represents a significant increase from the previous inspection. Better procedures to identify pupils experiencing difficulty in learning are the reason for the increase. The school provides well for all these pupils and uses outside expertise to support two of them. There are no pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The movement of pupils in and out of the school during the year is fairly significant. It is mainly due to the policy of trying to attract pupils to maintain viable numbers. Seven pupils joined and only two left.

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

This is an effective small school with many strengths. It has received a School Achievement Award from the Department for Education and Skills for pupils' performance in the national tests for the past two years. Being small, there is an exceptionally good family atmosphere. As in a family, where all members are equally valued, great care is taken to meet the needs of individual pupils and recognise their achievements. The very capable headteacher, supported most effectively by knowledgeable and deeply committed governors, provides very good leadership and management. There is immense community pride in the school and a strong determination to create a very special learning community where pupils feel happy and can do well. The substantial amount of good teaching ensures that pupils make good progress and attain above average standards in most subjects. When all these factors are taken into account, along with the very high costs per pupil, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- The vision, energy and leadership of the headteacher are largely responsible for the growing reputation of the school.
- Governors are fully committed to developing the school. They are knowledgeable and use their considerable expertise to monitor, evaluate and bring about improvement where necessary.
- Pupils attain well above average standards in mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT). They also do well in most other subjects.
- The very good quality of teaching and learning is a strength of the school.
- Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. This has a major impact on pupils' attitudes to learning and on their behaviour, both of which are very good.
- The parents and the community of Tockholes are very supportive of the school.

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

- Opportunities for pupils to write more in history and geography.

*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 described as a successful school with many strengths in the previous report. The key features in 1998 were the supportive and caring learning environment and the importance of the school in the community. These strengths have been maintained. The three key weaknesses raised in the previous report have been successfully improved. All subjects now have a detailed scheme of work and good procedures exist to monitor and manage the curriculum. Curriculum time is in line with national recommendations and statutory requirements in respect of special educational needs are met. Governors take a keen interest in, and are fully involved with, school improvement, and all staff are deeply committed to providing a worthwhile education for the pupils in their care. As a result, the overall level of improvement has been good. Pupils really enjoy the wide range of interesting activities provided for them both in and out of the classroom. There has been a substantial improvement in teaching since the previous inspection. As a direct consequence, pupils show a very good attitude towards their learning and behave very well in school.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	B	A*	A	A
mathematics	A	A*	C	D
science	C	A*	B	C

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Overall comparisons about improvement, in relation to pupils' prior attainment or comparisons with all schools or similar schools, are made difficult because of the very small number of pupils who are tested each year. For example, only nine pupils were tested in 2002. This means that individual pupils can alter the percentage total significantly, so overall results should be treated with extreme caution. Pupils in Year 6 are on course to achieve the challenging targets set for them in English and mathematics in 2003. Pupils' individual records show all make good gains as they move up through the school. Inspection evidence confirms that standards in Year 6 are above average in English and well above average in mathematics and science. Standards are well above average in ICT and above average in all other subjects except history, geography and physical education where they are in line with those expected. The trend in the school's average National Curriculum points for all core subjects from 1998 is above the national trend showing a good rate of improvement.

The performance in the National Curriculum tests for Year 2 pupils is similarly affected by the small number who are tested. Inspection evidence shows standards for Year 2 this year are well above those expected for mathematics and science and in line for English and all other subjects. Children in the Foundation Stage benefit from consistently effective teaching and the close attention of their teacher or classroom support assistants and make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. They achieve nationally set targets, called early learning goals, in all areas before they transfer to Year 1.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment

Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are keen to come to school and are very enthusiastic in everything they do.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. This has a positive effect on pupils' learning. All are extremely friendly and well mannered. There have been no exclusions in the past two years.
Personal development and relationships	Very good, overall. Relationships with teachers and other pupils are excellent. Pupils really care for one another. There are many opportunities for pupils to show initiative and responsibility, both in and outside of lessons, such as the school council.
Attendance	Good. Pupils are punctual in spite of many having to travel some distance. Attendance figures are above average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching has improved markedly since the previous inspection and meets the needs of all pupils effectively. Teaching in the junior classes benefits from the added involvement of the experienced headteacher, who supports the talented junior class teacher very well. The consistently good teaching is beginning to have a significant impact on standards throughout the school. All lessons seen during the inspection, for example, were either good, very good or excellent. This is remarkable considering the short time all teachers have been at the school. All, including the newly qualified teacher and support staff, show enthusiasm for their work and an excellent commitment to raise standards. The basic skills in English and mathematics, for example, are taught very well. Teachers' caring and supportive relationship with their pupils mean that all pupils feel valued and always try to do their best. Targets for learning are usually shared with pupils and they are given many opportunities for independence or to take responsibility for their own learning. The overall quality of learning is very good. Pupils show much interest in their work, try extremely hard and have the maturity to concentrate, even when not directly supervised by their teachers.

The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been carefully and thoughtfully implemented. However, more opportunities could be provided in subjects such as history and geography for pupils to write. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in lessons and receive good support, helping them to achieve their targets. No pupils with special talents were identified, but in all lessons, care was taken to ensure that every pupil was sufficiently challenged.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Statutory requirements are met. Equality of opportunity for all is assured. The range of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. Links with the local community are very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Targets for learning are clearly defined and included in teachers' planning. Good support is available from well-trained classroom support assistants.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good, overall. Provision for pupils' social and moral development is very good. The local culture and art, literature and music are promoted well. Pupils are provided with a good understanding of the diversity in British society with visits to nearby Asian communities.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school provides a caring and secure environment for all pupils, making them feel safe and valued. Assessment procedures are very good. Recording absence and attendance needs improving.

Parents are extremely appreciative of the school and willingly give their full support. This is a strength as it was in the previous inspection. The successful partnership considerably enhances pupils' learning.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good, overall. The exceptional leadership qualities of the headteacher were recognised as she skilfully steered the school through a difficult period of change. All staff are totally committed to improving standards and creating a centre of excellence.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. Governors, led by an experienced and most able chair of governors, are active, extremely well informed and very supportive. They are firmly committed to building on the school's excellent reputation in the local area.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. There are detailed records on pupils' and teachers' performance. All staff are involved in identifying strengths and weaknesses in all aspects of school life.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The headteacher, ably supported by the conscientious administration staff, manage the finances very efficiently. Best value is sought in all expenditure to secure continuous improvement.

Classroom support staff make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. The overall cleanliness is a credit to the hard-working caretaker. Resources for ICT are exceptionally good. The library is well stocked and used effectively to support pupils' learning.

## 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>• Pupils like school and make good progress.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good and school helps pupils to become more mature and responsible.</li> <li>• Teaching is good and pupils are expected to work hard.</li> <li>• Parents are well informed about how their children are getting on.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• Parents feel comfortable about approaching school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils get the right amount of homework.</li> <li>• The way school works closely with parents.</li> <li>• The range of activities outside normal lessons.</li> </ul>

There was a very good response to the inspection questionnaire with over eight out of ten being returned. Inspectors agree with parents' positive views about the school. They do not agree with the very small number who wanted to see some aspects improved. Homework is satisfactory and, for a small school,

the range of activities is also satisfactory. No reason could be found for the disagreement over the way school works closely with parents. This is a happy school and parents are right to be proud of its achievements.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Standards have improved well since the previous inspection, when only mathematics and art and design in Year 2 were found to be above average. The evidence from the inspection is that by the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils attain standards that are at least in line with what is expected in all subjects and do much better in some. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school. The school achieved its targets for pupils in Year 6 in 2002 and has set itself challenging, but realistic targets for the current year, which it is on course to achieve.
2. Overall comparisons about improvement in relation to pupils' prior attainment or comparisons with all schools or similar schools are made difficult because of the very small number of pupils who are tested each year. For example, only nine pupils were tested in 2002. This means that individual pupils can alter the percentage total significantly, so overall results should be treated with extreme caution. In the national tests in 2002, the overall performance of pupils in Year 6 was well above average in English, average in mathematics and above average in science. Taken together, standards in all three subjects were above average. When the performance of this limited sample of pupils is compared to pupils in similar schools, standards are still well above the average in English, below the average in mathematics and in line in science. Pupils' individual records show all make good gains as they move up through the school. The trend in the school's average National Curriculum points for all core subjects from 1998 is above the national trend showing a good rate of improvement. Inspection evidence confirms that standards in Year 6 are above average in English and well above average in mathematics and science. Standards are well above average in information and communication technology (ICT) and above average in all other subjects except history, geography and physical education, where they are in line with those expected.
3. The performance in the National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds is similarly affected by the small number who are tested. In 2002, the results show that standards in reading were well above average and in writing and mathematics they were above average. Inspection evidence shows standards for Year 2 this year are well above those expected for mathematics and science and in line for reading and writing. This represents a good level of improvement in mathematics and science. In English, pupils' speaking and listening skills are above average. The apparent dip in standards in reading and writing is wholly due to the small numbers and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the year group.
4. Initial assessments carried out by teachers when children start in reception show that levels of attainment in language, literacy, mathematics and personal development are broadly in line with what is expected. Children achieve very well in reception because of the consistently effective teaching and the close attention of their teacher or classroom support assistants. Children achieve the nationally set targets, called early learning goals, in all areas before they transfer to Year 1. Most make particularly good progress in communication, language and literacy and in their knowledge and understanding of the world, because of the quality of teaching and the breadth of experiences provided in these two areas. They also do particularly well in their personal development. Being in such a supportive learning environment and in close

contact with older, more able pupils helps them to settle quickly and approach tasks with confidence.

5. Inspection evidence shows that pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well to attain standards of work that are in line with those expected in English and above average in mathematics and science. In all other subjects, standards are at least in line with those expected. This reflects good improvement since the previous inspection and confirms parents' views that pupils make good progress. In English, most pupils contribute confidently to discussions. They listen carefully to their teachers and each other and respond well to questions. Reading is taught well. Most pupils are fluent, confident readers and have a very secure understanding of how to use letter sounds to work out words they are not familiar with, and have a good understanding of how to use punctuation to make their reading interesting and expressive. When they are writing, pupils take pride in their work. Many pupils are beginning to write in a neat, legible, joined-up style, with most words spelt correctly. However, the scrutiny of work shows that they have very few opportunities to write in history and geography. The use of worksheets further limits pupils' opportunities to express their own views and opinions in these subjects. In mathematics, most pupils have a good understanding of the relationships between numbers and how to do basic addition and subtraction on paper and in their heads. Much emphasis is given to investigative work in science. There is a good range of resources, such as bulbs, batteries and magnifying glasses, to enable all to gain first-hand experiences. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because teachers and support staff ensure they have individual attention in lessons. There is no significant difference between the attainment of girls and boys.
6. Pupils continue to achieve well in Years 3 to 6, so by Year 6 standards are well above average in mathematics, science and above average in English. Pupils of all ages take part in discussions and willingly contribute their ideas. They are fluent, expressive readers and, because teachers give them plenty of opportunities to find out for themselves, they are good at using textbooks and the Internet to research information for particular topics like 'the Vikings'. Pupils' handwriting is neat and legible and joined. They have a good understanding of how to use a broad range of punctuation in their writing, and can write well in different styles. For example, their imaginative stories extend and develop ideas well and they describe in detail characters and events. In mathematics, pupils quickly work out sums in their heads and all can explain how they have arrived at the correct answer. There is a good emphasis on developing their problem-solving skills, and this is having a positive effect on their ability to work with numbers in a practical way. In science pupils have a good understanding of the different aspects of the subject, including how to plan, conduct and evaluate investigations.
7. In other subjects, standards have improved well since the previous inspection. Pupils now attain standards well above expectations in ICT. The very good level of resources for the subject and the effective way teachers use computers to support pupils' learning in all subjects are having a significant impact on standards. In ICT, pupils have a very secure understanding of the basic skills in all aspects of the subject, and also fully understand how to use these skills to produce written work, graphs or data charts. The only gap at present is the use of sensors linked to a computer. There are none in school. In art and design, design and technology and music, standards are above those normally seen, directly due to the subject expertise of teachers. For music, the school employs a specialist music teacher who also works at a local comprehensive school. Junior pupils respond exceptionally well to this teacher and

thoroughly enjoy music lessons. In art and design, pupils learn to express their ideas confidently in a broad range of media and styles. Their willingness to work hard and take the time needed to do their best means that models in design and technology are thoughtfully designed and finished to a high standard. Standards in history, geography and physical education are in line with expectations. Little evidence was seen of pupils' written work in history and geography and, as with the infant class, more opportunities need to be provided for them to use their literacy skills in these two subjects in order to raise standards.

8. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as they move through the school in reading, writing and mathematics. Although some of these pupils' attainment is below expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6, compared to their attainment when they enter the school, they achieve well and for a significant number of pupils, the gap between them and their peers has narrowed. This reflects teachers' strong emphasis on developing pupils' basic skills and the effective use made of pupils' targets to plan activities in lessons. As a result, by the time they are ready to leave at the end of Year 6, these pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and make good progress towards the targets set for them. There is no register of very able pupils or pupils with special talents but, because it is such a small school, teachers know their pupils very well and always provide work that is challenging for all pupils.

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

9. Pupils' attitudes to their work and the school are very good overall. They show positive attitudes to learning and are keen to come to school. They take pride in the school and are enthusiastic about their own achievements and interests. They enjoy learning and are able to communicate their particular interests even if that means looking for plants and insects in a pond opposite the school in the rain. Pupils are friendly and courteous to each other, staff and visitors.
10. In lessons pupils are attentive and undertake all the tasks required of them willingly. Most pupils are able to sustain their concentration so that tasks can be completed and are keen to participate in lessons by answering questions. They develop in confidence throughout their time in school.
11. Pupils' behaviour is very good, overall. When pupils make visits outside school their behaviour is of a high standard and this enables staff to arrange stimulating visits and learning opportunities for them, including regular visits to a swimming pool and trips to places of interest. Years 4 to 6 have the opportunity to make a residential visit every three years and this is a popular event. There have been no pupils excluded in the past two years.
12. Relationships between pupils and staff and between pupils are excellent and the high quality of these relationships is a strength of the school. The school has in place effective arrangements to minimise bullying and harassment. Older pupils often help younger ones so that relationships between pupils of all ages are very good; two pupils in Year 6 have been trained as mediators and they help to reduce tension amongst pupils. All staff offer pupils a high level of care and guidance to encourage their social development and minimise racial disharmony and bullying. Provision for care and guidance is assisted by the outstanding relationships between staff and pupils. The school provides a calm and orderly environment which is conducive to learning and pupils' personal development.

13. The school's behaviour policy is well structured and provides for suitable sanctions and rewards. All staff implement it successfully and consistently and pupils understand the difference between right and wrong. Teachers and support staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour; pupils know this and strive to meet these expectations in classes, around the school and on educational visits.
14. All staff provide good role models for pupils. They encourage pupils, at every opportunity, to consider the consequences of their actions on themselves and others. Pupils regularly get out and put away equipment. Sensibly, they willingly take on responsible roles as elected members of the school council, happily run errands for teachers and undertake other tasks. Pupils are given opportunities for collaborative working in subjects like physical education and English and sufficient emphasis is placed on developing pupils' abilities to learn independently.
15. The school's attendance is above the national average and unauthorised absence is slightly higher than most other schools. This is almost exclusively related to one pupil. Punctuality is very good at the start of the school day even though four out of ten pupils have to travel to school from outside the immediate area. Lessons start on time.

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

16. The quality of teaching was identified as a strength of the school in the previous inspection. This continues to be the case and teaching has improved further as no unsatisfactory lessons were seen during this inspection. Teaching overall is very good. It is good for children in reception and for pupils in Years 1 and 2, but it is consistently very good for pupils in Years 3 to 6 so pupils make good progress and achieve well as they move through the school. A consistent strength throughout the school is the very good management of pupils and the organisation of lessons so pupils behave very well and develop very positive attitudes to their work.
17. Children in reception are taught well. The teacher plans very carefully and thoroughly to ensure the children, who are in a mixed-age class with pupils in Years 1 and 2, have access to all the opportunities and experiences recommended for them in the National Curriculum guidance for their age. She places a strong emphasis on developing their basic skills in language and so by the end of reception they attain good standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing skills. A strength of the teaching is the very effective use that the class teacher makes of the teaching support staff. Her daily planning for all lessons, including literacy and numeracy, is very detailed so the support staff receive good guidance on what is expected in lessons. Most days the children have literacy and numeracy lessons on their own. Often, these sessions are taught by the support assistant. In these sessions, as with the class teacher, the quality of teaching is good. Teaching support staff are experienced and have a good understanding of the needs of young children. Activities are often varied to take into account the different needs of each child. Many lessons in other subjects start with the children joining in the class discussions with the older pupils. This helps them develop their language skills and personal confidence well. However, specific activities are then planned for them that are closely linked to the overall theme of the lesson. For example, in an ICT lesson where the oldest pupils were working with the 'roamer', reception children had a related activity looking at giving directions. The teacher and support staff use questions well to check what the children have learnt and support staff record on planning sheets what children have done well and what they have found difficult – information the class teacher uses well when planning subsequent lessons. Lessons have a good pace and children are

given good opportunities to work outside, to play with sand and water and to enjoy role-play activities that help develop their language and social skills well.

18. Teaching of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is good. During the current academic year this class has been taught by several different teachers, which has led to some inconsistencies in the quality of marking and teaching methods over the year. At the time of the inspection the teacher had only been in school for a few weeks. She has very quickly established excellent relationships with pupils and has high expectations of pupils' behaviour and performance so they concentrate well and try hard. In most lessons, a strong emphasis is now placed on developing pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy. However, the major strength of the teaching is the teacher's very good planning of lessons and activities. In the vast majority of lessons, she plans activities that take very good account of the different ages and abilities in the class. At the start of lessons she generally shares the aims of the lesson with pupils so they know what they will be learning about, but these have different levels of challenge for the different year groups. During class discussions, she frequently targets questions to specific pupils that are carefully chosen to challenge them and to encourage them to use what they have learnt in previous lessons. In group activities, pupils of different abilities or different ages will have slightly different tasks to undertake within the overall theme of the lessons. For example, when pupils went pond dipping, pupils in Year 1 had to complete a simple sheet that required them to draw what they found and to name it. However, pupils in Year 2 had to be more specific in their identification, to record the number of legs and describe the animal they had found in a short sentence. Lessons are brisk and pacy which helps enthuse and interest pupils and support staff are used well to work with small groups and pupils with special educational needs.
19. The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, particularly in English and mathematics so pupils acquire the skills, knowledge and understanding of the basic skills in these subjects very well. In literacy and numeracy lessons, the headteacher works with pupils in Years 5 and 6 each morning. This ensures that these lessons reflect the more challenging learning needs of these pupils. The junior class teacher takes Years 3 and 4 lessons. Teachers' planning reflects the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy very well, so for all pupils activities are very well matched to their different abilities and ages. Both teachers have very high expectations of pupils so lessons are very brisk and challenging for all pupils. This ensures that they behave very well, concentrate very hard on their work and try their very best to succeed. Teachers use open-ended questions very well in discussions at the start and end of lessons to check pupils' understanding of what they have learnt in the lesson or what they can remember from previous lessons. However, in subjects such as history and geography, insufficient account is taken of the different ages and abilities in the class and not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to use and practise their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills that are taught so effectively in English, mathematics and ICT lessons. Throughout all parts of lessons, teaching support assistants have clear roles to work with specific pupils or to support groups. Teachers and support staff respond well to pupils in lessons and teachers' marking of pupils' work often highlights what pupils have done well. However, although teachers explain the aims of the lesson at the beginning to guide pupils in their work, they do not refer to them sufficiently in their marking to help pupils understand how they could improve their work. Homework is used well to support activities in lessons and the consistent use of homework diaries prepares pupils well for when they transfer to secondary school.
20. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well so they too make good progress. Targets in individual plans are used well to plan activities in lessons and

individual sessions. Teaching support assistants make a very good contribution to the pace of all pupils' learning, but have a particularly positive effect on the learning of pupils with special educational needs. In group activities, they provide very good support to pupils, helping them to succeed. They also achieve a good balance between helping pupils work out answers for themselves and guiding them so pupils understand what they have to do. In individual sessions, specific language programmes, some recommended by outside specialists, are taught very well. At the core of this work are the excellent relationships between pupils and support staff.

21. The school makes very good use of a specialist teacher for music. He is very skilled and teaches music to all the pupils, including children in reception. The activities are very well planned and take account of the wide age ranges in the group. Lessons develop pupils' basic skills well and give them opportunities to learn good singing technique and secure understanding of how rhythm, tempo and volume varies and creates a specific atmosphere to the music.

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

22. The curriculum makes a good contribution to the educational standards achieved by pupils and has improved greatly since the previous inspection. The quality and range of learning opportunities are now good for all pupils. A broad, balanced and relevant curriculum is in place that covers all the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum. There is now a whole-school curriculum framework. Within this the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been introduced as the basis for teaching English and mathematics and policies and schemes of work are now in place for all subjects. The school has introduced a systematic approach to review these policies to check the quality of provision. New targets for improvement are set and included in the school development plan. Teaching time throughout the school meets national recommendations and all subjects are now given appropriate lengths of teaching time.
23. Since the previous inspection the school has effectively introduced the latest national guidance for teaching children in the reception class. In addition, with the support of the parents' association, an outside activity area with large wheeled toys and other play equipment has been created. Consequently, work takes good account of all the recommended areas of learning for this age range so children are able to explore a wide range of challenging activities, both inside and outdoors.
24. All pupils have equal access to the full range of opportunities and experiences provided for them. The school is very aware of the importance of promoting equal opportunities for all pupils and the support given to both boys and girls results in their academic achievements being very similar. The school also ensures that pupils in the mixed-age classes throughout the school have some opportunities to work with their own age group. For example, the headteacher teaches each morning so that pupils in Years 5 and 6 and in Years 3 and 4 can be taught literacy and numeracy in smaller groups, working on activities recommended in the national guidance for these ages. Children in reception have their own planned programme and frequently work with a learning support assistant on activities directly linked to the national guidance for their age. This has a positive effect on both the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make.
25. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The policy and provision reflects the requirements of the 2001 Code of Practice. The quality of the policy has

improved well since the last inspection and now includes all the information it is required to do in a clear and readable style. There are individual plans in place for all those pupils the school has identified as in need of extra help. The targets in pupils' plans are clear and used well by teachers and support staff when planning lessons and individual support sessions. The teaching methods in these plans are well matched to the targets so pupils make good progress. These targets focus well on the needs of each individual and include targets for developing pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Where pupils have a specific learning difficulty or one related to physical problems, the school makes good use of external agencies to provide strategies for meeting their needs and ensures pupils have access to these activities.

26. There are good strategies in place to teach numeracy skills. Daily literacy and numeracy lessons are an integral part of the school's morning sessions and these areas of the curriculum are well planned for and effectively delivered. Provision in these lessons is having a very good effect on the standards reached by the pupils in mathematics. The strategy for teaching literacy is satisfactory. Literacy lessons are taught well and teachers place a strong emphasis on developing pupils' basic skills of grammar, punctuation, handwriting and spelling. However, not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to use these skills to record their own work or to express their views and opinions in other subjects such as history and geography.
27. The range of activities provided out of lessons is satisfactory. Two clubs operate after school and a judo club is to start in the near future. A good range of visits is made to places in the local area, such as the Manchester Museum, and older pupils go on a residential visit. However, there are no sports teams and there are no organised activities, such as computers or chess at lunchtimes, to provide an alternative for those pupils who do not enjoy playing football or using the range of play equipment provided for outdoor play.
28. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is sound. Pupils have a lesson of citizenship once a week that is based on the recent national guidance and the school is currently designing a whole-school scheme of work based on this material. Aspects of drugs and sex education are taught within this general framework as well as the science lessons. Outside speakers are brought in to teach pupils about specific elements of drugs and sex education.
29. Links with the local community are very good. Many of the people in the village have close links with the school and view it as an integral part of the community. The school premises are often used for community events such as the annual gala and the school uses the village very well as the basis for lessons. For example, during the inspection children in reception and the Years 1 and 2 classes went pond dipping in the garden of one of the parents. In addition, there are frequent visitors to school who contribute well to lessons and assemblies. The involvement of education business partnership has provided staff and pupils with a valuable insight into the work of the local business community.
30. The excellent relationships and very mature attitudes that pupils of all ages display are the product of the school's high quality provision to promote their personal development.
31. Pupils' spiritual development is promoted satisfactorily. All staff are good role models for pupils through the way that they treat everyone in a consistent manner and with respect. There are opportunities for pupils to reflect on how specific issues or events affect other people in lessons and assemblies.

32. The provision for promoting pupils' moral and social development is very good resulting in the very high quality of their behaviour and excellent relationships displayed throughout the school. Teachers' management and organisation of lessons is consistently very good and based on ensuring fair and respectful treatment of all. Consequently, children in reception very quickly learn what is expected of them and develop the confidence to contribute to lessons and not to be subdued by the presence of older pupils. Pupils' involvement in creating their classroom rules, based on the whole-school code of conduct, helps them to develop a clear sense of right and wrong, and also to grow in their awareness of how to create a harmonious society. Initiatives such as the school council give pupils an effective say in how the school runs and also helps them to develop a sense of responsibility. They are generous in their support for charities and the school ensures that much of the fundraising is generated by pupils. For example, the school supports a charity devoted to helping refugee and orphaned children in Rwanda which helps pupils appreciate the difficulties faced by others around the world. In many lessons, teachers and support staff encourage pupils to discuss their ideas, help each other and collaborate on different activities.
33. Pupils' cultural development is promoted well. English lessons, in particular, offer pupils opportunities to study texts that portray different cultures and types of writing, while in history, for instance, they learn about the Vikings or the life in Tudor England. The school organises a good programme of educational visits to places of interest. The school has, for example, established good links with a school in Blackburn whose pupils are mainly of Asian origin. Tockholes' pupils visit the school, local shops and the mosque. The visit is reciprocated later in the year when the Blackburn pupils spend the day at Tockholes. In art and design, pupils learn about the work of different artists and in music they are introduced to work from a variety of times and places. The religious education programme introduces pupils to aspects of different world religions and teachers capitalise, when possible, on the different cultural backgrounds of pupils' families and friends. The overall emphasis that the school places on according everyone equal respect prepares pupils well for living successfully in a diverse society.

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

34. Overall, the school cares well for its pupils' welfare, health and safety, and provides a secure and safe environment for learning in which pupils feel confident.
35. The school has sound arrangements for child protection and follows the policy laid down by the local area child protection committee. The headteacher is the nominated person for child protection. Good links exist with external agencies involved in child protection issues. Staff are fully aware of the importance of child protection and know the first steps to take if an instance arises.
36. Health and safety arrangements are good and no major hazards were noted during the inspection. Risk assessments have been completed and one member of staff has recently finished a course in risk assessment for physical education. Pupils' health screening is up to date. Accidents to pupils and staff are properly recorded. Fire equipment is in good condition and drills are held regularly.
37. Registration of pupils is carried out briskly and unobtrusively before the start of morning and afternoon sessions. However, absence is not always accurately

recorded in registers even though the school is normally aware of the pupil's reason for absence. Links with the local education welfare officer are satisfactory.

38. The school's behaviour policy sets out a range of sanctions and rewards; these are well publicised and implemented consistently by staff. Pupils are well aware of school rules and even the youngest pupils understand what sanctions may be applied. The school's policies for eliminating oppressive behaviour and bullying are very good. Staff are alert to situations where bullying and harassment can arise and, according to pupils and parents, take prompt and effective action to stop it if it occurs. Supervision of pupils at breaktimes and lunchtimes is good. Lunchtimes provide opportunities for pupils to socialise with each other; the school makes no provision for lunchtime clubs which would further enhance pupils' opportunities to socialise and learn, even though the school has sufficient resources and expertise to make these available.
39. All staff know and understand the needs of pupils well and respond sensitively to them. The personal, social and health education programme is adequate. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by support staff who are skilled and sensitive to their needs. Individual targets are set for pupils termly. Each child does this with their teacher and target cards are then sent home for parents to see. This ensures parents are fully involved in helping pupils to achieve their targets. Pupils with statements of special educational needs are well catered for by the school. The provision reflects the requirements of their statements and they have access to any specialist teaching that they may need.
40. The school makes good provision for the induction of pupils into reception and other classes. Pupils in Year 6 have opportunities to visit local comprehensive schools to which the great majority transfer on leaving.
41. Procedures to assess pupils' attainment and progress are very good. In addition, to national tests at the end of Year 6, the school uses the optional national tests at the end of Years 3, 4 and 5 and a reading test to monitor the progress whole classes, groups of pupils within classes and individual pupils are making. This information is used well to track the progress pupils are making, to set whole-class targets and to identify targets for each pupil. This ensures that teachers are clear about what they are aiming to achieve through their teaching. Pupils are also fully aware of what they are working towards.
42. Procedures to monitor pupils' academic progress are good. For most subjects, including science and design and technology, teachers use a system of tests at the end of each topic or evaluate pupils' work against national guidelines to check what they have learnt. This information is also used well to inform future lessons.

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

43. The parents' questionnaire carried out before the inspection and interviews with parents and carers during the inspection showed they have positive views of the school. Issues raised by parents at the well-attended pre-inspection meeting are answered elsewhere in the report.
44. When they visit, the headteacher and other staff make parents feel welcome. There are occasions at the beginning and end of the school day for parents and staff to have informal contact with each other and both parents and staff take advantage of these opportunities. They are also invited to termly consultation evenings where they can meet their children's teacher and attendance by parents and carers at these

discussions is very high. Parents and carers support school events very well, for instance at Christmas, sports day and other activities.

45. Parents and former parents contribute to the life of the school through serving as parent governors and classroom assistants. In addition, some parents volunteer to help in classes. Homework is set regularly in all subjects and parents often comment in homework diaries. The school's parents and friends association is very active and has raised significant sums of money enabling it to contribute recently towards the school's extension and purchase wheeled toys for pupils in reception. It also has good links with residents in the village of Tockholes, many of whom are former pupils of the school and continue to support it.
46. The school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents present a well-rounded picture of the school's activities and are attractively produced although there is no reference in the school prospectus to the drugs awareness programme, as required by legislation. The school sends an annual written report to parents at the end of the school year. These reports provide considerable detail on what pupils have studied but inclusion of targets for improvement are often omitted in subjects like history and geography and sometimes in other subjects. Parents receive considerable information from school through regular newsletters, letters and other documents describing the school's activities and achievements as well as information on the curriculum.
47. Overall, the school's partnership with parents and carers is very good and a strength of the school. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved in the review of their children's individual plans, and some parents have a specific role in the plans to show them how they can help their children at home.

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

48. The quality of leadership and management provided by the headteacher, appointed just over two years ago, is a strength of the school. This aspect has improved markedly since the previous inspection when management was judged as satisfactory. The headteacher has impressed all by the way she has managed a significant period of change, resulting in two new teachers being appointed, the latest a few weeks prior to the inspection. The three key issues raised in the previous inspection relating to information about special educational needs provision, curriculum development and teaching time were quickly put right by the previous headteacher. The current headteacher shows a strong determination to raise standards in all aspects of school life. Her very capable leadership and vision are proving to be the driving force largely responsible for the school's success and its growing reputation in the area is reflected in the increasing number of pupils from out of the immediate area attending the school. Overall, leadership and management are very good.
49. The headteacher has a clear picture of what she wants to achieve for the benefit of the pupils and the community. As a direct result of her vision, energy and leadership, the school has made a good level of improvement since the previous inspection. The high proportion of good teaching, the improvement to the library and reception outdoor area and rising standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are some examples. In addition, the way computers have become an integral part of pupils' learning has resulted in standards well above those expected from pupils of primary school age. Staff and governors share the headteacher's very strong commitment to the school and work hard in partnership with her to meet the clear and

specific aims set out in the school's prospectus. The 'Tockholes dream', urging pupils to go further than they thought, run faster than they hoped and to reach higher, is reflected in all aspects of school life such as, the pupils' very good attitudes to their work and their mature and sensible behaviour. There is an excellent atmosphere for learning in the school.

50. The shared commitment to improve and the school's capacity to succeed are excellent. The delegation of responsibility to staff is a key feature of management, even though there are so few people to delegate to. The approach is for all to work together co-operatively on specific areas, identified for improvement through rigorous monitoring procedures. This promotes a feeling of unity as all staff work very effectively as a team, sharing responsibility to evaluate the school's performance and to make changes should they be necessary. Like the headteacher, all staff constantly strive for high standards and implement a regular programme for analysing national test results and monitoring pupils' completed workbooks to evaluate the standards being achieved. The quality of teachers' lesson planning is checked by the headteacher on a weekly basis, and each half term an assessment is made of individual pupils' progress in each subject area. The headteacher is solely responsible for monitoring and evaluating teaching at present but as the new teaching staff become established, they too will share the responsibility.
51. The school development plan, criticised previously, now has a clear focus on raising pupils' attainment. Relevant issues for the school are identified and a detailed action plan, carefully costed, is in place to address each. Staff work corporately to co-ordinate the development of subjects within the curriculum, giving much support to one another. Subjects are tackled on a rota basis as outlined in the school improvement plan. However, because of the importance placed on English and mathematics, a member of staff takes specific responsibility for each subject. The headteacher routinely observes lessons. They are then discussed and areas for improvement or training requirements are noted. This is very useful for quickly highlighting any areas of weakness. Detailed records are maintained of the evaluation of these monitoring visits. These records provide an effective way of identifying areas for development and directing the collective energy of everyone to bring about change.
52. Classroom support staff feel very much part of the school team and enjoy the responsibility given to them by class teachers. The quality of their work with individual pupils, such as those with special educational needs or those experiencing difficulty with reading, makes a significant contribution to these pupils' learning experiences. All are extremely conscientious and deeply committed to helping pupils to improve. When left with all the class whilst the teacher takes a group, pupils respond well to them and work hard, just as they would for the class teacher.
53. The governing body is totally committed to the development of the school. They see growth and development as the best way to ensure the survival of this historic school for the community. All governors carry out their statutory duties very well and work hard to support the school. The chair of governors is extremely knowledgeable and along with all governors, has an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Individual governors accept responsibility for areas such as literacy, numeracy and special educational needs. This gives them a clear overview of learning in these areas. All approach their duties conscientiously and are proud to be associated with the school. Importantly, all appreciate the level of improvements brought about by the headteacher and express confidence in her. Meetings of the governing body are well attended and business is conducted efficiently. The statutory requirements for the special educational needs Code of Practice are met with detailed

information now included in the governors' annual report to parents. The co-ordinator for special educational needs leads and manages this aspect of the school's work very well. She provides advice and support for teachers and support staff in reviewing pupils' individual plans so the majority of targets are specific and closely linked to the planned teaching approaches.

54. The school office is run efficiently. Administration staff are friendly and welcoming, giving visitors an excellent first impression of the school. Very good use is made of new technology in the office, with an electronic mail facility and computer programs for managing the finances. The headteacher actively seeks out additional funding from a wide range of sources. Very good use is made of funds from three local charities. Funds from all three, for example, helped finance the recent building extension. The school has a very favourable ratio of computers to pupils, for example, with one for every six pupils. Plans are well advanced to provide more of the interactive computer linked whiteboard in the classrooms. The headteacher, ably supported by the chair of the finances committee, is meticulous in making sure that funds are applied to the best effect. Overall financial control is very good. The large contingency budget from the financial year beginning in 2001 will be reduced substantially this year by staffing costs, and further expected reductions in pupil numbers will bring it within acceptable limits by the end of next year. Unless numbers recover, the school will then be faced with having to reduce staffing costs further. Governors are well aware of this and have a clear strategic view for the next three years. The school buys its resources at the most competitive prices and pays careful attention to quality.
55. The accommodation in a Victorian building is spacious for the numbers on roll following the addition of an extra teaching area and office and administration space. However, some improvements are still needed. There is no disabled access or suitable toilet facilities and the field is poorly drained, making it unusable for much of the year. The caretaker does an excellent job keeping the school well maintained and spotlessly clean. Library facilities are good and used well by pupils. Many old books were recently discarded. Resources are good overall, and very good for ICT, physical education and the under-fives in the reception class.
56. This is a successful school, with a well-deserved local reputation. Taking into account the way in which the school is led and managed, the standards being achieved, the wholly good quality of teaching and pupils' very good attitudes, along with the high costs for each pupil, the school is providing satisfactory value for money.

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

57. In order to further improve the quality of education and raise standards, the headteacher, staff and governors should now:

(1) improve the quality of writing by relying less on commercially produced worksheets and providing more opportunities for pupils to express their own views and opinions in subjects such as history and geography.

(Paragraphs 7, 19, 26, 71, 98-102)

The school should attend to the following less important weakness, to:

- ensure that any absence is recorded appropriately;

- inform parents about the school's drugs education policy.  
(Paragraphs 37, 46)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	18
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	10

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	7	9	0	0	0	0
Percentage	11	39	50	0	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	48
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	13

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.1

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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*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	10	3	13

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	12	12	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (100)	92 (100)	92 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	12	12	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (100)	92 (100)	92 (100)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	4	5	9

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	n/a	n/a	n/a
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89 (100)	78 (100)	89 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	n/a	n/a	n/a
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89 (100)	89 (100)	89 (100)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Separate scores for girls and boys are not supplied as the small numbers could lead to the possibility of individual recognition.

### ***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	44	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	4	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	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	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***

### ***Financial information***

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16
Average class size	24

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

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	73

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

Financial year	2001/02
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	£
Total income	201,360
Total expenditure	192,522
Expenditure per pupil	4,010

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.9
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.0
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
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	48
Number of questionnaires returned	39

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	36	8	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	62	28	10	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	64	31	3	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	51	31	13	5	0
The teaching is good.	72	18	8	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	67	23	8	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	26	5	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	26	3	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	67	18	10	3	3
The school is well led and managed.	69	26	5	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	64	28	5	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	21	31	3	5

## **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**

57. The majority of children spend a year in the reception class. Currently, there are only five reception-age children. They are taught alongside pupils in Years 1 and 2 for some lessons, but they work in a small group in an adjacent classroom for literacy and mathematics. Teaching in reception is good and due to the class teacher very carefully planning activities within the theme of the lessons that are appropriate to their age, children make good progress. By the end of the year, their personal and social skills are very good and their communication, language and literacy skills and their knowledge and understanding of the world is good. They develop sound mathematical, creative and physical skills, so overall their base for further learning is good. Since the previous inspection the school has introduced the latest guidance for planning the curriculum as the basis for planning work so children enjoy a good range of interesting and stimulating experiences across all the areas of learning. In addition, with the help of the parents' association, the school has developed an outside play area with a good range of large wheeled toys and other play equipment so children now have the outside activities not available to them at the time of the last inspection.

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

58. Teaching is good. Staff give a high priority to boosting children's confidence and self-esteem. There is strong emphasis on praise for even the smallest achievement and children are encouraged to try out new experiences and to develop positive attitudes to learning. The wide range of well-planned activities stimulates children's interest; they learn to organise tasks for themselves and to take turns when playing games and using equipment such as computers. Children show an impressive level of concentration as they work at the tasks that they have chosen. Working for extended periods with the older pupils in Years 1 and 2 helps them learn the routines and expectations of school very quickly.

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

59. Teaching is good and children attain good standards. The major factor supporting the good progress children make in this area of learning is the teachers' very good planning. The teaching support assistant is used effectively to work with children in a small group for literacy lessons. Activities that are planned are very appropriate for their individual needs. The information gathered by the support assistant is used very well to help plan subsequent lessons. The support assistant is very experienced and has a very secure awareness of how to work with young children. Consequently early literacy skills are taught well and children develop very positive attitudes towards books.
60. In the area of speaking and listening, progress is good. All the children follow instructions and listen carefully to questions; their responses show good understanding. Most speak clearly in short sentences. However, a minority still use single words or short phrases to communicate. Higher attaining children have a very good vocabulary and use complex sentences confidently. In reading, higher attainers read simple books with confidence. Most children recognise commonly used words and have a good understanding of basic letter names and sounds. Lower attaining

children do not read independently, but know some letter names and sounds and use this knowledge and the pictures in a book to follow a story. In writing, most children write short sentences and captions independently. Letters are easily legible and most words are recognisable. Higher attaining children write short stories using full stops and capital letters to organise their work into a series of simple sentences. Lower attainers are still at the stage of copy writing and make reasonable attempts at writing their names independently. Classroom support staff are used effectively to support children's learning in lessons.

### **Mathematical development**

61. By the end of reception, most children have attained the expected levels for their age working with numbers up to ten and beyond. Teaching is good. When children start in school they do not have a secure understanding of different numbers or write them correctly. This is most likely due to the lack of nursery provision at the school and limited pre-school provision in this rural area. However, expectations of what children might achieve are high and a good range of activities and incidental opportunities are used to develop children's awareness of number. Most are beginning to work on practical addition to ten and beginning subtraction. Higher attaining children are beginning to record addition and subtraction sums. Much of the direct teaching is done by the teaching support assistant, although the teacher spends some time with children so she is clear about what they can do and is able to plan very carefully what they need to learn next.

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

62. Teaching of this area is good so children make good progress and their level of attainment is also good. Children are generally taught alongside pupils in Years 1 and 2 so they benefit from working with, and listening to, the older pupils discussing what they are doing. A good range of experiences is planned to encourage the development of early skills in science. For example, children are encouraged to observe and understand the process of change through growing seeds. Very good use is made by the teacher of the local area. During the inspection, a visit to the garden of one of the pupils to go pond dipping was an excellent example of the strong emphasis placed on practical activities. The children were very enthusiastic and excited and showed a good level of observational skills when they were drawing the small animals they found. Through the topic on seaside holidays and, following the travels of 'Timmy Tockholes', they develop a secure understanding of different places and that places change over time. Provision to develop children's skills in ICT is good. They have many opportunities to use computers and develop good skills. For example, many reception children use the mouse well to operate simple mathematics programs and in creating pictures of butterflies.

### **Physical development**

63. Children now have plenty of opportunities to use outdoor play areas and have physical education lessons with the pupils in Years 1 and 2. Consequently, they make sound progress and, by the end of reception, attain the expected levels for their age. Most children throw a ball accurately and higher attainers are beginning to learn how to catch and strike a ball with a bat. Children show good enjoyment of movement. They move in a variety of ways and change direction in response to teacher's instructions. However, their skills in finer movements are better and many show very good control in colouring, cutting and sticking.

## **Creative development**

64. Teaching is satisfactory and some elements are good. Overall, children attain satisfactory standards. There is good provision to develop children's imaginative skills through role play and many reception children show good skills in taking on a role, for example, as they 'collect' money for riding a bike in the outside area. They are given good opportunities to play with sand and water and to enjoy role-play activities that help develop their language and social skills well. Children have regular opportunities to sing and make music. In addition, they have a weekly music lesson with pupils in Years 1 and 2. They sing clearly and in tune and when using a simple percussion instrument maintain the beat when playing together.

## **ENGLISH**

65. By the end of Year 2, standards in English are satisfactory overall. Standards are above expectations in speaking and listening and an average proportion of pupils attain the expected level in reading and writing. Pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6 so by the end of Year 6 standards are above those expected, particularly in speaking and listening and reading. Standards in writing are average. Although this indicates a fall in standards when compared to the school's results in the 2002 national tests, the small number of pupils in each year group means that there is a significant variation from year to year. For example, in the current Year 2 class, there are seven pupils and in Year 6 there are only eight. Since the previous inspection, the school has successfully introduced the national strategy for English as the basis for teachers' planning. This has led to the basic skills of grammar, punctuation and spelling being taught very well. The good teaching is beginning to have an impact on the rate of progress pupils make as they move through the school. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in developing their basic skills in reading and writing.
66. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are confident speakers and willingly volunteer their ideas to the rest of the class. They are confident enough to stand in front of the class and take a lead role. For example, in a music lesson the teacher asked for a volunteer to lead the class in a song. He had many volunteers from all ages, including a reception child. In discussions, they listen very attentively to adults and each other. Older pupils are very respectful of younger ones in the group and patiently listen to them even if what they are saying is not directly relevant to the topic. Throughout the school, pupils are given good opportunities for speaking and listening which also makes a very positive contribution to their personal development. As a result, by the end of Year 6, most express their views, ask questions and put forward a reasoned argument clearly. Even lower attaining pupils give coherent and detailed explanations about, for instance, the type of books that they like to read and their favourite pastimes. In lessons, pupils listen very respectfully to teachers and each other. They are keen to answer questions and in most subjects they have a good understanding of subject-specific vocabulary and use it well in their answers. Higher attaining pupils are confident and articulate speakers. When they are asked to explain why they have come to a specific conclusion they justify their ideas by referring to the information they have used to form that view.
67. Throughout the school, pupils have very positive attitudes to books and are supported very well at home. By the end of Year 2, higher attaining pupils read well. Most tackle an unseen text effectively, using a range of strategies, for example, blending letter sounds. Some show particularly good expression and understanding and respond

well to punctuation, for example, by emphasising words in bold text or those followed by an exclamation mark. Most pupils read confidently and can discuss the plot and the characters. Most try hard to read expressively, knowing that it makes a story more interesting to listen to. Lower attaining pupils also know a broad range of strategies but do not use these consistently. Year 2 pupils name different types of stories, non-fiction texts and poetry and have some knowledge of different authors. Most higher and average attaining pupils know how to use contents and index pages in non-fiction books.

68. By the end of Year 6, higher and average attaining pupils read accurately, fluently and with good expression. In summarising stories, pupils provide good information about the characters, setting and plot and give some detailed explanations about what they think will happen. Higher attaining pupils have developed advanced skills of 'reading between the lines', explaining meaning that is inferred rather than explicitly stated. Lower attaining pupils are not expressive readers, but accurately explain what has happened in a story and, with some prompting, comment on the actions or motivation of characters in the stories or poems. Most pupils develop good skills in skimming and scanning lengthy texts to find information. Research skills are generally good and pupils have a clear understanding of how books are organised in libraries.
69. Throughout the school, pupils make satisfactory progress in writing, but good progress in handwriting. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are beginning to write in a joined up style and spelling and punctuation is satisfactory. Most pupils use capital letters and full stops correctly. However, much of the writing is narrative and sentences tend to be short and simple. In contrast, higher attaining pupils use a broad range of punctuation, including speech marks, routinely in their writing to add interest to their work. Their stories have clear beginnings and extend their ideas well using complex sentences and some description of characters and events. For example, *'The sun went down and the sea washed the sandcastles away'*. By the end of Year 6, most pupils write in a neat and fluent style with many having developed their own style. Their work includes stories, persuasive arguments, letters, poems, biographies, notes, play-scripts and newspaper accounts. Pupils are taught to plan and draft writing, including thinking carefully about interesting openings, ways to develop the characters and plot, and how to organise events into paragraphs. Through effective teaching, pupils develop sound skills in proof reading and editing their work to extend and improve it. Pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation is a strength in their writing which reflects the very strong emphasis that teachers place on developing their basic skills in English lessons. However, only higher attaining pupils use descriptive vocabulary well to add interest, imagery and suspense to their writing. For example, one Year 6 pupil, when writing sporting poems, wrote:

*'So I put my gun into my sweaty hand.  
Feeling nervous I stumbled up  
and took a glance at the golden cup.'*

70. English is taught well. Throughout the school, teachers manage pupils very well so they behave very well and concentrate hard. Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent and make a very positive contribution to the progress pupils make. Teachers have very secure subject knowledge and place a particularly strong emphasis on developing pupils' basic skills in literacy lessons. They have high expectations of what pupils' can achieve and plan a broad range of activities that develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in all aspects of the subject well. The interesting range of activities and experiences in lessons also results in pupils

developing a very good attitude to the subject. Good account is taken of the age and ability ranges in each class so all pupils are provided with activities that are well matched to their needs. Teachers use the individual plans for pupils with special educational needs well to plan these and teaching support assistants play an important role in ensuring they are fully involved in lessons. During class discussions they support and prompt lower attaining pupils or those with special educational needs and during group activities they have a clear role to work with groups or individual pupils. Teachers and support staff respond well to pupils in lessons and teachers' marking of pupils' work often highlights what pupils have done well. However, although teachers explain the aims of the lesson at the beginning to guide pupils in their work, they do not refer to them sufficiently in their marking to help pupils understand how they could improve. Homework is used well to support activities in lessons.

71. The basic skills of literacy are taught very well in English lessons and in some subjects such as science, pupils have good opportunities to investigate and research topics using books, information sheets and the Internet. However, in other subjects such as geography and history, not enough opportunities are given to pupils to use their skills to express their own views and opinions.
72. The subject is led well. Careful monitoring of strengths and weaknesses in teaching, planning and the standards being attained has resulted in much improvement since the previous inspection. Resources, including the range of books and the quality of the library, have been developed and pupils have easy access to a wide variety of reading material. There are very good systems to assess the attainment and progress pupils are making in English and these are used effectively to plan future learning.

## **MATHEMATICS**

73. Standards in Year 2 this year are well above the level expected nationally. In the 2003 national tests for seven-year-olds, seven pupils were tested and preliminary results show that every one attained the expected level with just under half capable of working within the higher Level 3. In national tests in 2002, standards were above average and in line with those of similar schools. However, this comparison needs to be treated with caution, as so few pupils are involved. From 1999 there is no obvious pattern in the results in the national tests and they vary from very low to very high. One pupil failing to achieve the expected level can change the percentage by as much as 20 per cent in some years. In the previous inspection, standards were judged to be above average. Pupils in Year 2 make very good progress in their learning due to the current very good quality of teaching of mathematics in this class.
74. Standards of attainment are also well above average in Year 6. This reflects the very good quality of teaching and the setting arrangements where Years 3 and 4 are taught separately from Years 5 and 6. In the national tests in 2002 standards were in line with the national average, but this comparison also needs to be treated cautiously for the same reasons as above. Analysis of prior attainment shows that pupils make very good progress in mathematics and almost all achieve the levels expected based on previous tests in earlier years. About half of the pupils in Year 6 are attaining at the higher Level 5. In the previous inspection, no judgement on standards was possible as there was only one pupil in Year 5 and one in Year 6. There are no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls.
75. In Year 2, most pupils have very good mental skills, though one or two need support in questions such as rounding numbers to the nearest ten. All readily explain how they

arrive at the correct answers to questions. In written numerical work, it is clear that pupils understand what they are doing. In both number and work with shape and space, all pupils use their skills effectively to solve problems and clearly enjoy their lessons. In a lesson seen, reception children were taken by the skilled classroom support assistant, leaving the teacher more time to concentrate on pupils in Year 1 and 2. All had a very good knowledge of two- and three-dimensional shapes. Good use was made of a mobile programmable toy to reinforce right angles and mathematical vocabulary associated with directions.

76. In Year 6, those with average and above average attainment in their class show that they have a very good knowledge of fractions, decimals and percentages. They respond very quickly to mental arithmetic questions where they need to calculate percentages and easily convert their answers to fractions. Those with lower attainment have strategies to calculate mentally and just take longer to work out answers. All pupils have a secure foundation of methods of written calculation and a good understanding of topics such as probability. Data-handling skills are developed appropriately and used effectively to support science. Work in some aspects of shape and space is above the level expected, for example work with co-ordinates, but in all aspects of mathematics, including problem solving, almost all pupils are working at the level expected for their age, with many exceeding it. Pupils in both mathematics groups have excellent relationships with their teachers and there is a quiet purposeful atmosphere in each class.
77. The quality of teaching is very good. Practical resources such as calculators are well organised and used effectively to help pupils learn. Pupils know what is expected of them in the classroom and behaviour is very good. This means that little time is wasted. In all lessons, mental and oral activities are sharply focused and used well to speed up pupils' ability to recall facts rapidly. In most of the lessons seen tasks were well matched to the level of pupils' attainment.
78. Teachers' lesson plans clearly identify targets for learning. These are useful in helping teachers to structure lessons. Where teaching is most effective these plans are used flexibly and adapted to match the needs of individual pupils in the class. This was particularly evident in Years 3 and 4. In this lesson dealing with capacity, the teacher targeted questions carefully to allow pupils with all levels of attainment to take part in whole-class teaching. She expected explanations from pupils for their responses, so developing their speaking skills. Key vocabulary is identified on lesson plans and developed effectively in lessons. Most teachers use the final section of each lesson appropriately to reinforce what has been covered and assess learning or move on to the next stage of learning.
79. Pupils with special educational needs are given valuable additional support in lessons by classroom support assistants. This effectively improves their confidence and their skills. Pupils enjoy lessons and maintain their concentration for long periods. ICT is used well to reinforce basic skills. One pupil benefited from a specific audio program on number, for example.
80. Assessment and record keeping are very good. The effective subject co-ordinator, together with all staff, ensures that any identified weaknesses in teaching, planning or in mathematical topics are identified quickly and sorted out. Both the headteacher and co-ordinator regularly monitor standards and the quality of teaching. There is an excellent commitment from everyone to raise standards. By creating the extra teaching group for junior pupils and making good use of support staff in the infant

class, the match of teachers to the demands of the mathematics curriculum is very good. Resources for mathematics are good.

## SCIENCE

81. In the previous inspection, the standards attained by pupils in Year 2 were in line with those expected. However, no judgement could be made on standards in Year 6 as there was only one pupil in the year group at the time. Care has to be taken about placing too much reliance on national comparisons because of the small numbers involved. Since 1999, for example, standards in the national tests for Year 6 have fluctuated from very low to very high. Year 2 appear to have improved significantly as overall standards are now judged to be well above average. In the teacher assessments for 2003, every pupil attained the nationally expected level, compared to 92 per cent in 2002. No pupils were assessed at the higher Level 3 as this assessment was not undertaken by the class teacher. The improvement in Year 2 is made more remarkable because of the disruption faced by pupils because of the different teachers they have had during the year. The small numbers and close attention from staff, coupled with clear guidance from the detailed scheme of work, a good range of resources and sufficient emphasis on investigative work are the main features contributing to the high standards. The very good behaviour in lessons involving pupils of all ages was also a strong feature along with the good support for lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs provided by classroom support assistants and teachers.
82. Standards for Year 6 pupils have also improved from above average last year to well above average. Every pupil achieved the required level in 2002 and a few managed to achieve the higher Level 5. This year's pupils are set to improve on the performance at the higher level. Standards of work seen in the scrutiny of completed pupils' work confirms the well above average standards. Tracking individual pupils' performance shows that every pupil made good progress throughout the junior classes. This is mostly due to the impact of the consistently good quality of teaching. Pupils generally make good progress throughout the school.
83. Pupils in Year 2 are beginning to understand the principles of scientific investigation as they classify materials, sorting them into natural or man-made. They know how to label parts of a plant, or describe the dangers of electricity or harmful substances. Younger pupils can describe the sounds from different musical instruments, classify animals and conduct plant-growing experiments. They record their results using diagrams and pictures to describe how plants grow and what they should eat to have a healthy diet. The good use of a theme to connect various areas of the curriculum helps pupils to understand why learning about science is important. By the time they are seven, pupils know the properties of materials found around the home, describe forces and know how to keep healthy. In the excellent lesson seen, all age groups in the infant class visited a local pond to catch and observe the insects and pond creatures. They used magnifying glasses sensibly and carefully recorded data about the mini-beasts they found.
84. Pupils in Year 6 show a very mature attitude towards science. This is due to the very good quality of teaching and exciting way science is taught. The challenging questions posed by their teacher about investigating the effects of the different thickness of wire on the brightness of a bulb in a circuit enabled all to show a good knowledge of scientific procedures as they predicted and designed their investigation. Computers were used effectively to support pupils' learning as pupils worked in pairs to investigate different circuits on a program. All pupils could explain the different parts of

plants and their functions, give explanations why certain animals were most suited to their habitat and appreciate the need for hygiene and a healthy lifestyle. The teacher and a parent helper supported pupils carefully, especially those with special educational needs.

85. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers invariably prepare their lessons well, making good use of the resources to give pupils first-hand experiences whenever possible. The organisation in these lessons and management of pupils is very good. Pupils are quite simply too interested, too busy and so engrossed in lessons to think about wasting time. Good use is made of computers to support pupils' learning. However, the school does not have sufficient sensors, which can be linked to computers to measure temperature differences. All teachers insist on pupils using scientific vocabulary and most set challenging questions for pupils, encouraging them to find out the answers for themselves. Pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills well, recording their findings and taking measurements. Pupils measure the length of shadows to monitor the movement of the sun, for example, or measure the length of the tibia or fibia of their classmates. All competently record data and can produce graphs to illustrate their results.
86. Teachers ensure that pupils fully understand how to conduct a scientific experiment and make any testing accurate. This provides very good opportunities for pupils to develop their independence and organisational skills by working in groups to investigate, record results and reach conclusions. Good support is always readily available for pupils with special educational needs. This ensures that all are fully included in lessons and the rate of learning and progress by all these pupils is also very good. The marking of pupils' work by teachers is thorough. An analysis of pupils' books indicates that pupils cover all aspects of the science curriculum, meeting statutory requirements. Very good procedures exist to assess pupils' learning at the end of each teaching unit and the results are used well to identify areas which need further development.
87. Management of the subject is good as it is a shared responsibility by all teachers. All display an excellent commitment to raise standards. The headteacher has a good overview of what is being taught throughout the school through monitoring teachers' planning and monitoring lessons in order to evaluate the quality of teaching. The results of annual tests are analysed in depth to identify any gaps in pupils' learning. There is a detailed scheme of work with topics such as electricity or forces covered on a two-year cycle. The curriculum meets requirements. Resources for the subject are good.

## **ART AND DESIGN, DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY, MUSIC, PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

88. By Year 2, pupils attain the standards expected for their age in art and design, design and technology, music and some aspects of physical education, such as games skills. Standards were similarly found to be in line with those expected in the previous inspection. However, in art and design they were above average. The most likely reason for the apparent drop in standards in art and design is the disruption caused by the number of different teachers taking the infant class this academic year. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making satisfactory progress in each subject. The enthusiastic, newly-qualified class teacher is providing an interesting and stimulating range of activities and, coupled with pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour, this should help to improve standards in each subject area.
89. By Year 6, standards are above average in all these subjects with the exception of

physical education. Only one aspect, outdoor and adventurous activities, was seen. Standards are in line with those expected in this aspect. Pupils generally make good progress because of the good quality of teaching provided by an experienced teacher, supported by classroom assistants and parent helpers. All pupils are enthusiastic and keen to learn.

90. In art and design, no specific lessons were seen. However, a wide variety of pupils' work was available for inspection. Pupils in both classes create interesting, imaginative and carefully observed work using a very wide range of different materials and techniques. Pupils in Years 1 and 2, for example, paint regularly and their observational drawings of flowering hawthorn and shells are of a satisfactory standard. Links are made with other subjects, such as mathematics and geography, as they paint symmetrical butterflies and pictures of the seaside. Clipart is used to make patterns and explore colour combinations. The paintings of Years 3 to 6 pupils are often vibrant because they choose colours carefully. Artwork is varied. For example, pupils illustrate nursery rhymes, sketch the head of animals and design safety posters about topics such as driving slowly or not smoking. Pupils' work is used effectively to create bright and stimulating displays in classrooms and the school hall. The co-ordination of art and design is satisfactory. All teachers share collective responsibility for monitoring and evaluating all aspects of the subject.
91. No separate lessons of design and technology were seen, but teachers' planning and a range of completed models and designs shows that all aspects of the curriculum are satisfactorily taught. For example, infant age pupils design, make and evaluate wheeled vehicles and try different ways of suspending a spider they have made for a big picture illustrating a nursery rhyme. Completed projects show that a good range of materials are available. In evaluation sheets, most pupils say that their favourite tools are a saw or hammer! Junior pupils make photograph frames and decorate them by painting their own repeating design. Pupils use the appropriate vocabulary and know how to make and strengthen hinges to make sure the frame stands up. They evaluate their work and know what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. Pupils in Years 3, to 6 compare the taste, texture and appearance of a range of different types of bread, and design sandwiches taking account of healthy food fillings. Computers were used to research further information about bread. Pupils work together well to carefully take apart toys to find out how they move and design toys for a baby before attempting to make them.
92. Subject management is tackled in the same way as all subjects, except English and mathematics, that is by all staff corporately. A careful assessment of pupils' progress is made termly. Since practical skills are mainly involved, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, concentrate well and take pride in their work. Literacy skills are employed well as pupils write thoughtfully of the problems they have encountered and how they took on board the suggestions from others to improve their work. Numeracy skills are also used as an integral part of lessons as pupils measure lengths of wood or proportions in their designs. Resources are satisfactory, overall.
93. Two music lessons were seen, both taken by a specialist visiting music teacher from a nearby comprehensive school. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 listen carefully to instructions and all are able to follow a beat and keep to a rhythm. They learn a new song quickly, reading the words from a song sheet very well. All know the names of a range of percussion instruments and can play them in time. Junior pupils thoroughly enjoy their music sessions and behave exceptionally well. Most have a good understanding of the skills and knowledge of the subject. Pupils sang 'Frere Jacques' as a round very energetically and tunefully, concentrating well on their own part. They

accompany songs being prepared for a festival expertly with a good range of percussion instruments. Pupils' enthusiasm for music is obvious and reflects the excellent quality of teaching available to them. The school is hoping to retain its specialist help in music next year. Resources for music are satisfactory.

94. Pupils are keen and enthusiastic when taking part in physical education sessions. In Years 1 and 2, they run, hop, skip and jump around the playground with confidence. All know the reasons why they have to warm up before exercise. All manage to throw a ball accurately and use a racket to hit the ball back to a partner. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 all have the opportunity to learn to swim and, by the time they leave Tockholes, most achieve the required level of competence, swimming the expected 25 metres, with many able to exceed this distance. In the adventurous activity session seen, pupils constructively discuss the skills and ideas shown by other pupils and recognise ways in which they can improve their own performance when trying to cross a crocodile infested swamp! Teachers are deeply committed to raising standards and make good use of the playing field and well-equipped outdoor play area for younger pupils. One brought her kitchen carpet tiles to be used as stepping stone, for pupils use, to get across the swamp. Resources for physical education are good. However, the field is poorly drained and pupils are unable to use it for most of the year, denying them a valuable resource.
95. Raising standards in areas such as team games is difficult because of the small number of pupils. Nevertheless, teams from the school do compete locally in cricket competitions and swimming events. The school does not have an established dress code for physical education sessions. It was disappointing to see so many older pupils inappropriately dressed for their lesson. Many kept on their normal clothing and footwear and this must have been uncomfortable considering how hard they worked and hot they became.
96. Teaching and learning is good throughout in each of these subjects. However, no overall judgement can be made about the quality of teaching in music as none of the teachers at the school were seen teaching the subject. Pupils are taught the basic skills and techniques in each subject well from when they start school. Teachers plan units of work carefully by using each subject's scheme of work, which ensures that skills and techniques are taught in a progressive way. Good links are made between subjects. For example, art and design is linked well to subjects such as ICT, history and science, but is also taught as a separate subject so that pupils gain a wide experience of using different materials in a creative way. In most lessons teachers place a very strong emphasis on using subject vocabulary so that pupils learn the correct names of items used, for example musical instruments or techniques in art and design. In addition, literacy and numeracy are an integral part of most lessons, with pupils having good opportunities to record their own ideas or draw and label diagrams or charts. Teachers make learning thoroughly enjoyable and pupils look forward to their lessons and visits. The management of pupils is a strength and little disruption is caused to pupils' learning because of indiscipline. Teachers also make very good use of support staff during lessons. The result is that in most lessons, pupils of all ages and abilities are provided with interesting work and are always fully challenged.
97. Teachers ensure that these subjects make a positive contribution to pupils' personal development. The involvement of the whole infant or junior section in many activities fosters a very strong sense of community and ensures that each pupil develops confidence, maturity and sense of responsibility for others. For example, when pond dipping, older pupils and those with more skills were expected to help younger ones

or the less able.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

98. Standards in both subjects have been maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress and, by the end of Years 2 and 6, attain standards that are in line with national expectations.
99. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a secure understanding of the local area, how people's lives and places differ and change over time. In history, they learn about some famous events and characters from the past, such as Florence Nightingale and the Plague. Through a topic on seaside holidays they learn how places and people's lives change over time. In geography, on walks around the area close to the school, they learn how to look around them to learn more about the place in which they live and how it is different to places they have visited or seen in pictures. They begin to draw simple maps, such as their route to school, marking significant buildings or landmarks. By following the travels of 'Timmy Tockholes' they learn about places around the United Kingdom and abroad.
100. In history, by the end of Year 6, pupils have developed a secure understanding of the key events of periods in history, such as the Roman, Viking and Saxon eras in Britain and of how people lived then. This helps develop their ability to appreciate how people lived in the past and how it is different from their own lives. In geography, pupils know that areas of the world have different climates and understand that this affects the way people live. Through a topic looking at the effect of traffic calming measures in the village, they also develop a secure understanding of how people affect the environment.
101. Due to the timetable arrangements very few lessons were seen during the inspection in either history or geography. However, teachers' planning and pupils' work clearly show that the teaching of geography and history is satisfactory throughout the school. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and involve pupils in a range of activities that develops their interest and their skills and understanding of both subjects effectively. A strength of the teaching is the effective way that teachers use the village as the focus for topics. However, in some topics, commercial worksheets are used too much so the opportunities for older and higher attaining pupils to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding is limited. In particular, this restricts the opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills to express their own opinions and views. There is also little evidence of ICT being used in lessons. However, in the lesson seen in Years 1 and 2, activities were varied carefully to match the broad range of ages and abilities in the group. Pupils were managed very well so they behaved well and got on well with their work. Consequently, the lessons had a positive and purposeful atmosphere based on very good relationships between pupils and adults.
102. The subjects are managed corporately by all the school staff who review each subject, its policy and planning on a rota basis with other subjects. This process is an effective approach, considering the size of the school, and ensures that teaching and learning in both subjects is regularly evaluated. Since the previous inspection, the long-term plans for the subjects have been revised in the light of the latest national guidance and all staff have a clear understanding of the strengths of the subjects and what they want to develop further. The school's use of the village and the visits pupils make to places such as Manchester Museum means that both subjects make a good contribution to pupils' personal development.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

103. The subject expertise of teachers and the very good use made of the many computers to effectively support learning in all subjects, are the key factors which are largely responsible for the well above average standards being achieved by pupils of all ages. This represents a significant improvement from the previous inspection when teaching was satisfactory and standards were more or less in line with those expected. No secure judgement was possible for Year 6 in 1998 as there was only one pupil. All pupils have regular access to computers giving them lots of opportunities to practise their computer skills or to work independently, researching information, for example. Parents, at their meeting prior to the inspection, reported that they were happy about the opportunities for pupils to use computers. Inspectors agree with these views. The ratio of one computer for every six pupils is much better than in most other primary schools.
104. By the age of seven, Year 2 pupils are able to load programs into the computer unaided and are familiar with the functions of the various keys. They change font size, use capital letters and print their work. All demonstrate very good control of the mouse when selecting options in programs and are able to write instructions to program a computer-controlled programmable toy. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, pupils tried to find some hidden treasure behind a square on a grid. This involved them in counting and describing directions to move the cursor for a partner. Good use is made of a digital camera. Printed photographs of pupils creating mathematical shapes on pegboards were used as an effective way of revising previous knowledge. Pupils were able to retrieve and display successfully information about dinosaurs and the Plague.
105. By Year 6, pupils show confidence when using computers and all concentrate well on given tasks such as retrieving information from the Internet, creating a database or adding pictures to texts. They work conscientiously in pairs, helping one another sensibly. All have an individual disk and this shows a wide range of work from many subjects. In history, there is research about the Vikings, planet information for a science topic, details about rainforests for geography, Christmas card designs and many examples of writing. Some help to produce 'The Tockholes Times' for example, and others write letters to a school in France. Year 4 pupils all manage to produce a database to list features of their classmates, such as the colour of their hair, eyes or length of various bones such as the tibia. Year 5 pupils collect information about kings and queens of England as part of their history topic and research the life cycle of frogs from the Internet. All pupils display skills that are well above those normally seen for their age group.
106. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers' make sure that skills are taught effectively from the time pupils enter the school. Lesson planning is meticulous with details of opportunities for pupils to use computers to support their learning in all subjects clearly shown. ICT skills were used well in a science lesson, for example, to reinforce learning about electrical circuits. The management of pupils in lessons is very good and there is a good balance of teaching methods. The high interest shown by pupils and their exceptionally good behaviour means all can be trusted to work independently or with a partner. When new skills are taught to the whole class, all watch and listen carefully. Pupils with special educational needs are provided with a good range of programs to practise their literacy and numeracy skills. All teachers and classroom support assistants are sufficiently skilled to effectively use computers. Plans are well advanced to introduce a computer-linked whiteboard into each

classroom, showing the school's commitment to continue improving ICT opportunities for pupils. Subject management is effective. It is a corporate affair with all staff regularly monitoring and evaluating all aspects of the subject. There are very good procedures to assess the progress and attainment of all pupils, for example, and the information is used well to plan future learning. Resources are very good for such a small school.