

INSPECTION REPORT

**LEA NEELD'S ENDOWED CE PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Preston

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119567

Headteacher: Miss M Smith

Reporting inspector: Lynne Read
21199

Dates of inspection: 13 -16 January 2003

Inspection number: 248035

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Lea Road
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Preston
Lancashire

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs J Greenall

Date of previous inspection: 19 January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21199	Mrs L Read	Registered inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Music Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Special educational needs	What sort of school is it? School's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils' taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19343	Mrs M Howell	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22482	Mr B Potter	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Geography History Physical education Educational inclusion English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well does the school care for its pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Lea Neeld's Endowed CE Primary School is situated in the semi-rural area of Lea on the outskirts of Preston. With 107 pupils on roll, it is smaller than most primary schools. Several pupils travel some distance to attend. Children entering the Reception class have a range of learning experiences that vary considerably. For the present Reception class, attainment on entry to school is above average but in previous years it has been around the average mark. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average, at just over eight per cent. A total of 19 per cent of pupils are on the school's list of special educational needs. This figure is below average. Some of the pupils on the list have moderate learning difficulties whilst others have a sensory impairment or emotional and behavioural problems. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational need. This is below the average percentage. Most pupils have a British background and a small number have Asian and Caribbean heritage. All speak English as their first language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Lea Neeld's provides a sound education for its pupils. There are many strengths but also some important areas that require improvement. Pupils' attainment is above average for the current Year 2 group and, throughout the school, pupils' achievements in information and communication technology (ICT) and art and design are above expectations. Teaching is very good in the Reception class and good in Years 1 and 2. However, pupils capable of higher attainment do not achieve as well as they could in Years 3 to 6 and some aspects of leadership, management and the curriculum require attention.

What the school does well

- Pupils in Year 2 attain above average standards in their English, mathematics and science lessons. Throughout school pupils achieve well in ICT and art and design.
- Provision and teaching in the Reception class are very good and, as a result, children often make very good progress.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs is good.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and social education very well.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour are generally good.
- Parents have a high opinion of the school and provide good support for all aspects of its work.

What could be improved

- Attainment for the higher achieving pupils in English, mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6.
- The focus and co-ordination of school development planning.
- School policies and documentation to guide everyday practice.
- Planning for subjects other than English, mathematics, science and ICT to show exactly what pupils of each year group will learn in terms of skills, knowledge and understanding.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1998 when the school had some substantial key issues to address. Most have been tackled effectively but for some, improvement is only partial. Attainment has improved for most groups of pupils. The planning for English, mathematics, science and ICT now shows clearly what is to be taught for each age and ability group. Planning for the other subjects has not been adapted for the mixed-age classes to show how skills, knowledge and understanding will be taught in a progressive way. The assessment and recording of pupils' progress has improved. The information from the assessment is not, however, used effectively to set challenging targets for the higher achieving pupils in Years 3 to 6. School managers now have clearly defined roles but there are weaknesses in the way the school plans to meet the priorities identified. There is good improvement in the buildings, learning environment and some resources, especially for ICT. On balance, improvement is satisfactory.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

Children in the Reception class make very good progress. From this year's group, at least one third will be working in the National Curriculum programmes of study before they enter Year 1. In Years 1 and 2 progress is good and a good number of pupils are working at the higher level 3 in their lessons. The results for 2003 are expected to be above average and inspection findings support this prediction. The table above shows that the 2002 test results for Year 6 pupils were average in English and well below average in mathematics and science when compared to schools in similar circumstances. In all three subjects, too few pupils attained the higher level 5 with none doing so in mathematics. During the inspection, achievement in the classroom was judged as average in the three subjects and a better number of pupils were working at the higher levels but still not enough. The school is on track to achieve its realistic targets for attainment at the expected Level 4 in 2003 but is not providing consistent challenge for those pupils capable of higher attainment in Years 3 to 6. Trends over time at the school vary and reflect the differences in year groups and the percentage of pupils who have special educational needs. The numbers of pupils taking the tests are low and therefore each pupil represents a high percentage of the total marks - in 2002 it was seven per cent. Taking these factors into consideration, attainment in English has remained around the average mark when compared to schools nationally but it has been below average for some time in mathematics and science. Pupils who have special educational needs progress well and many attain the average level of attainment. In their lessons, boys and girls make equal progress, as do pupils from all ethnic groups. Attainment in ICT is well above average and in art and design it is above average.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and have good attitudes to learning. They are well motivated and work hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is good, both in lessons and during playtime. They work well together, readily sharing ideas and equipment.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are good, enabling the school to function as a secure, well-ordered community. Pupils' personal development is very effectively promoted and as a result, pupils have a good standard of self-discipline and confidence.
Attendance	Attendance rates are average compared with schools nationally. Punctuality is good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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 at the school has improved considerably since the last inspection. There was no unsatisfactory teaching and in nearly four out of ten lessons observed, teaching was very good or excellent. Teachers throughout the school pay great attention to pupils' personal development which leads to good levels of confidence and positive attitudes. A good emphasis on literacy and numeracy starts early in the Reception class where teaching and learning of the basic skills are very good. In Years 3 to 6 lessons have clear aims which teachers often share with the pupils, creating a purpose for learning. In some lessons, work is prepared to build on prior learning but this is not always the case for the higher attaining pupils. Teachers have little guidance of where to pitch the work because individual targets are not challenging enough. Class organisation in Years 3 to 6 is often inefficient. Pupils sit in mixed ability groups and therefore it is difficult for the teacher to intervene in the learning process. In this small school teachers' knowledge and understanding are good across the curriculum and staff who have expertise in specific subjects advise their colleagues effectively. Sensitive support for pupils who have special educational needs ensures that they meet their individual targets.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The range and quality of learning opportunities in the Reception class are very good. In Years 1 to 6 the curriculum is satisfactory. It is enhanced by the school's environmental work, by visitors to school and trips out. Planning does not always show what each group is expected to achieve, how writing opportunities will be used or which ICT programs or websites will support learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils who have special educational needs have good support. They have targets for achievement that ensure good rates of learning. They are well supported by teachers and assistants in the classroom.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for spiritual, social and moral education is very good and well supported by the Christian ethos of the school. Pupils have a well-defined sense of right and wrong. They are polite, friendly and helpful. Pupils respect other people's beliefs, views and opinions. They develop a good understanding of local and national culture. Opportunities to explore the richness of other cultures could be extended. The school operates as a harmonious community.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Established routines provide a good standard of care and safety for pupils. Positive strategies to promote good behaviour are successful. Systems for assessing progress are in place and track the pupils' learning successfully. In the Reception class and Years 1 and 2 the information gathered is used to plan challenging work for all groups but this not so for the higher attaining pupils in Years 3 to 6.

Parents have a very good opinion of the school and value the emphasis that staff place on pupils' personal development.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides sound leadership and management. The subject and assessment managers have a sound overview of teaching and learning and they produce action plans to improve identified aspects. These are not, however, combined into a coordinated whole-school plan that can be used as an effective tool to drive improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are supportive of the school's aims and several take an active role in classrooms. This is the main strength of their work but there are areas to develop. They do not have sufficient understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses in relation to trends in attainment. They have not given sufficient attention to the need to drive standards upwards. Some school policies are not in place. Overall, their leadership is unsatisfactory.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher has a sound overview of the quality of teaching, pupils' performance and trends in attainment. The assessment manager keeps up-to-date records of attainment and tracks each individual's progress. Evaluation systems are successful in identifying strengths and weaknesses but this information is not used to focus on the main priorities for improvement planning. The governors' role in school evaluation is not fully developed because they are not sufficiently informed about attainment and progress.
The strategic use of resources	Spending is linked to identified school action plans and governors regularly check that expenditure follows the budget allocations. However, at the moment, some areas of the curriculum are under-resourced and there is a large reserve of funds. This is unsatisfactory. Best value is sought routinely when making purchases or awarding contracts.

The accommodation has been thoughtfully extended and provides adequate facilities to teach the National Curriculum and religious education. Resources are sufficient in most subjects but not for English, geography and design and technology. There is no school library and the quality and selection of books in the class reading areas are unsatisfactory. Day-to-day administration is very efficient and effective.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children enjoy coming to school. • Children are expected to work hard and they make good progress. • Behaviour is good and the school helps pupils to become mature. • The teaching is good. • Parents feel comfortable about approaching school and feel well informed about their children's progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount and type of homework. • Activities out of school hours.

The team agrees with most of the parents' positive views but found that there are variations in the quality of teaching and some higher attaining pupils do not make consistently good progress. The homework is judged as satisfactory and very good in the Reception class. There is a suitable range of activities

outside of lessons. These take place mainly at lunchtimes or Saturday mornings so that pupils who travel home on the school bus can be fully involved.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children enter the Reception class with varying levels of prior experience and learning. The attainment on entry varies markedly from year-to-year depending on pupils' prior experiences and the percentage of pupils with special educational needs in each group. For this year, attainment on entry is above average but during previous years it has been average overall. There is no nursery and children come from a range of pre-school settings. Together with their parents, they benefit from an induction programme that includes meetings, printed information and classroom sessions. Children make very good progress in personal and social education, communication, language and literacy and in mathematical understanding because of the very good teaching that they receive. Lesson planning takes into account what children have already learned and moves them on quickly. They make good progress in knowledge and understanding of the world and in creative and physical development. By the time they enter Year 1, most children have achieved the early learning goals for this age group and are working on the National Curriculum Programmes of Study, especially in speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematics. Personal and social skills are very well developed and set a secure foundation for future learning.
2. The 2002 National Curriculum test results showed that, by the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment was average for reading and mathematics and well below average for writing when compared with schools nationally and those in similar circumstances. The more detailed picture shows that 100 per cent of pupils achieved the expected level 2 in mathematics and science, which is very high. In reading and writing 92 per cent of pupils achieved level 2 which is above average for reading and average for writing. The overall gradings for the school were adversely affected by the lower percentages of pupils gaining the higher level 3. In reading, mathematics and science it was 25 per cent, but in writing, there were no pupils at level 3. The school took immediate action and made attainment in writing a priority for development. During the inspection, attainment in reading, writing, mathematics and science for the current group of Year 2 pupils was judged to be above average, indicating the success of the school's measures. Achievement in the classroom in speaking and listening was also above average. In this small school, results for different year groups can vary greatly because one pupil represents five to eight per cent of the total marks. The present Year 2 pupils form a higher-attaining group and assessments show that around 60 per cent are on target to achieve the higher level 3 this year. The percentage of higher attaining pupils in Year 1 is lower and results for 2004 are expected to reflect this. All pupils in both year groups are fully challenged and progressing well.
3. By the end of Year 2, pupils read confidently. They find information efficiently using the index, contents and glossary sections of the book. Higher attaining pupils spell accurately and punctuate their sentences correctly. These pupils make good use of extended sentences and include interesting adjectives and adverbs in their writing. They use dialogue effectively to move their stories forward and write non-fiction reports in an appropriate, concise manner. In mathematics, pupils calculate answers using pen and paper methods and mental strategies. They have good levels of understanding in all areas of the science curriculum and use their investigative skills effectively. Their capabilities in ICT are well above average. Pupils use the facilities

of information and communication technology to record their work, for research and to program a floor robot. They are expert at finding and handling information on the computer and use multi-media facilities with confidence. Skills, knowledge and understanding in art are all above average and there are strengths in pupils' singing. No judgements were made about attainment in design and technology, physical education, history and geography. In all other subjects, attainment meets the expected standard.

4. Results of the 2002 National Curriculum tests for Year 6 pupils were average for English, well below average for mathematics and below the national average for science. When compared with similar schools, results were average in English and well below in mathematics and science. In the small year group there were some important factors that affected the outcomes. Some pupils missed the higher grades by one or two marks and there was a small number who entered school between Years 3 and 6. The overall grades, especially for mathematics and science, were depressed by few pupils gaining the higher level 5 and this is not the first year that it has happened. The school has taken action by trying to improve assessment systems and tracking pupils' progress more thoroughly. The methods chosen, however, have not been as effective as hoped. This is because they form a retrospective check and do not provide useful information to teachers to help them plan work at the right level. During the inspection, attainment in English, mathematics and science was judged as average but provision for the higher attaining pupils is variable. In some lessons, the higher attaining pupils from each of the two year groups work on the same task. Whilst this provides good challenge for the younger ones, it often leads to lack of challenge for the older pupils. In some lessons, there is a clear difference in the work set, but planning still does not refer closely enough to the higher levels of the National Curriculum. Staff and pupils work hard to prepare for the statutory tests but there is less focus on promoting attainment at level 5 for those who may be capable.
5. By the end of Year 6, pupils' skills in reading are well developed. Their writing is logical, sequenced, and pays good attention to grammar. Some pupils are confident enough to use more sophisticated sentences containing detail that will interest the reader. Skills in writing for a specific audience, of organising the work and of maintaining style, which are all indicative of attainment at the higher level, are not as well developed. In mathematics and science, more pupils are working at the higher level but there is still room for improvement. Skills in information and communication technology are well above average and are a major strength of the school. There are good standards in pupils' singing and in art and design where some talented pupils work at advanced levels for their age. In most other subjects, attainment matches expectations. There was no judgement made for design and technology.
6. Over the last three years, the attainment for Year 2 pupils has remained above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Variations from year-to-year generally reflect the differences in pupils' prior learning when they enter school. In Year 6 there have been some variations in national test results, which again reflect the make-up of each year group but also show the effect of having few pupils working at the higher levels. Attainment in English has been slightly above national averages, largely because of strengths in reading, but in mathematics and science it has remained below average. Different percentages of pupils are capable of achieving the higher levels within each year group. In some, it is as high as 60 per cent and in others around 20 per cent. It can be expected, therefore, that results will vary somewhat from year-to-year. The crucial finding of the inspection is that not all those capable of higher attainment in Years 3 to 6 are working to their potential.

There is a small difference between the test results of boys and girls, with the former achieving better results in mathematics and science at the end of Year 6. Inspection findings do not point to any factor within the teaching or provision that favours either gender. Teachers work hard to involve both boys and girls in lessons and find books and topics that will interest them. There are no differences in the attainment of pupils from different backgrounds.

7. Pupils identified as having special educational needs make good progress, bearing in mind their prior learning and abilities. This is largely as a result of the generally good teaching, of the well directed input of teaching assistants and of their own good motivation. A programme of support is devised for each pupil and all the staff involved know the specific learning targets. All pupils are included in every aspect of the school's work, having access to extra-curricular activities and to school visits.
8. Pupils' skills in reading and numeracy are effectively consolidated through work in other subjects. Writing assignments are sometimes included in topic work but this is left to the teacher's discretion since there are no specific writing opportunities built into the planning scheme.
9. In 2002, the school met targets set with the local education authority for attainment in English but fell 4 per cent short of the target set for mathematics. On the basis of the inspection evidence and assessment records, this year's targets should be met in both subjects. Since the last inspection, there have been satisfactory improvements in attainment overall. The percentage of pupils achieving the expected levels 2 and 4 has improved. Attainment in history in Years 1 and 2 is now as expected and it is good for art and design. In ICT throughout school, attainment has improved further because the curriculum is more challenging, the teaching is very good and the pupils cover a wider range of experiences. The more able pupils in the Reception class and Years 1 and 2 achieve their best and pupils who have special educational needs make good progress throughout school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils have good attitudes to their work. Their behaviour is also good, as are the relationships between all members of the school community. These aspects have a good impact on pupils' learning. All the parents who completed the questionnaire agreed that their children enjoyed coming to school and that behaviour is good.
11. The pupils are enthusiastic about their school work and most show a lively interest in their lessons. They offer opinions and join in open discussions confidently. There is good support for the lunchtime extra-curricular activities, and for events organised outside normal school hours. Each pupil is valued as an individual and is helped to recognise and develop his or her particular talents and skills.
12. The pupils' behaviour is good. They come into school in a sensible manner and usually meet the expectations that their teachers set. The day-to-day routines are understood and followed by the great majority of the pupils. On the few occasions when the behaviour seen was less than good in Years 3 to 6, it was because pupils shouted out or engaged in incidental chatter when the teacher was speaking. In the dining hall at lunchtime, the atmosphere is calm and friendly, with pupils from different classes sitting together and chatting pleasantly.

13. Pupils of different age groups and genders mix and play well together. There are very few incidents involving disputes or arguments. Bullying is not considered to be a problem at the school. The pupils know that if they have any problems, they will be supported by their teachers. There were no exclusions during the last year or recent previous years.
14. Relationships within the school are good. The older pupils realise they are expected to act as role models for the younger ones, and they clearly enjoy this responsibility. Some older girls volunteered to help supervise the Reception children who were experimenting with their new playground chimes. Not only did they ensure a good level of safety but also made some interesting suggestions to promote curiosity. Pupils are thoughtful and caring of their classmates. They offer help, both during lessons and when playing together. They show concern if a friend is unhappy or has taken a minor bump, and they readily go to the teacher for help. During class discussions pupils offer their opinions confidently and usually handle opposing views with courtesy. There are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for daily routines, mainly involving the older ones. Pupils are encouraged to undertake personal research, both in school and at home. This successfully promotes good skills of independent learning.
15. The school has close links with a number of local schools and charities. The pupils are encouraged to take an active interest in environmental issues, and through their efforts, the school has been successful in winning a number of both local and national awards. All these activities help to raise the pupils' awareness of how their contributions can affect their locality and the lives of other people.
16. The attendance figures are broadly average and there were no unauthorised absences. Pupils arrive on time and eager to start work. This is a further reflection of their good attitudes.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. The quality of teaching in the Reception class it is very good, in Years 1 and 2 it is good and in Years 3 to 6 it is satisfactory. During the inspection, almost one in four lessons was judged to have very good or excellent teaching. Parents' returned questionnaires show that 98 per cent agree that teaching is good. The same views were repeated at the parents' meeting. There have been good improvements in the quality of teaching since the last inspection.
18. In the Reception class, the teaching is very good and sometimes excellent. Consequently, the children make very good progress in communication language and literacy, mathematical understanding and personal and social education. Planned learning opportunities are well organised and include some focused instruction, exploration, investigation and play. A notable strength of the teaching in this class is the interesting range of activities provided. Lessons extend skills, knowledge and understanding very cleverly. For example, the theme for the week of the inspection was 'day and night' and the initial learning took place in whole-class and group sessions. Children then extended their understanding through linked activities such as making mobiles, sharing appropriate books and through using a computer program, all based around the same theme. There are two teachers in the class, one of whom works for four days and the other for one day. It was possible to see the work of just the one teacher during the inspection. A scrutiny of planning shows good continuity in learning across the week. Both teachers collaborate in assessing the children and in planning the next steps. There is a strong emphasis in

the class to establishing routines and developing children's confidence and independence. In whole-class discussions, the teacher ensures that all groups participate fully. She poses challenging questions for those capable of higher attainment and maintains a fast pace to learning. As a result of these teaching approaches children develop good speaking and listening skills and express their opinions readily. A good amount of time is dedicated to the teaching of letter sounds and in helping pupils to blend different sounds into words. This sets a very firm foundation for later learning. Some children are on track to advance into the National Curriculum programmes of study in English and mathematics before they enter Year 1. The teacher was appointed after the last inspection and has made some very good improvements. She has a thorough understanding of the foundation stage curriculum and of children's needs and interests. The classroom is bright and stimulating and lessons consist of many short activities to keep the children well motivated.

19. In Years 1 and 2, the teaching is good and during the inspection it was very good in three lessons out of ten. In whole-class sessions, the teacher directs her questions so that she involves all pupils across the age range and ensures that everyone is engaged actively. She emphasises the development of reading, writing and mathematical skills through her planning and teaching. During shared reading she encourages involvement by asking pupils how they think the characters will act or predicting what they will say. An interesting range of puppets and toys also help to bring lessons to life. During the introductory oral and mental sessions in mathematics, the teacher encourages pupils to use different strategies in their calculations so that they build up confidence and speed. There is a good balance between practical activity and the recording of work. A trained nursery nurse is effectively deployed in supporting those who need extra help and in providing short, focused sessions to develop particular skills. Work is carefully matched to pupils' prior learning and age. Class organisation is good and resources are well prepared. Pupils who are at similar stages in their learning sit together so that the teacher can easily intervene to take their learning forward. This is an effective and efficient method of catering for the wide range of age and ability within the class.

20. In lesson observations, around one half of the teaching seen in Years 3 to 6 was good and some was very good. In the other half, the quality of teaching and the pace of learning were satisfactory. There are two main reasons for the difference. Firstly, the higher attaining pupils were not always sufficiently challenged and secondly, a few pupils did not follow the classroom conventions of turn-taking and their interruptions spoiled the flow of the lesson. The teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 are satisfactory over time. In the main, teachers establish good relationships with the pupils and encourage an enthusiasm for learning. Planning and pupils' books show a good emphasis on the extension of speaking and listening, reading and mathematical skills when studying other subjects. Opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills are less evident and there is little guidance in the planning schemes to ensure that a good range of non-fiction work is covered. During lessons, pupils sometimes have open-ended tasks that allow them to ask their own questions, investigate and explore. In practical sessions there are good opportunities for pupils to try out their ideas, make mistakes and find ways to solve the problems encountered. This was seen in art when pupils tried out various brushes and techniques and in science as they experimented with changing materials. The organisation of pupils within the class, especially in English, mathematics and science lessons, is inefficient. Pupils of the same level of prior learning do not sit together so that the teachers often have to repeat themselves as they move around the groups. It also means that pupils have to
move across the room for direct

teaching sessions. This wastes time and can cause disruption to others. Generally, there is a good deal of mutual respect in classrooms and the majority of pupils show good consideration for their classmates. However, there is a small minority of pupils whose incidental chatter or inappropriate replies interrupt the learning process. Teachers do not always deal swiftly enough with this issue.

21. Teachers throughout the school provide a clear focus to most lessons by telling pupils what they will be doing. This is an effective strategy in creating a purpose for pupils' learning and developing good attitudes. Skills in ICT are very well extended through work in other subjects. Some very good ICT sessions were observed when pupils worked with the specialist teaching assistant in the computer suite. These short sessions were focused and extremely well planned. For example, during their local history work, groups of pupils used a website to research about the Quakers. The specialist teaching assistant often sets further tasks for homework or provides extra time on the computers for those pupils who do not have the necessary hardware at home. This shows good attention to inclusion for all pupils. Whilst the teaching assistant keeps a useful record of programs and websites used in studies, these are not recorded within the schemes of planning for future reference.
22. The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is good throughout school. Teachers identify problems early and take appropriate action to support the pupil. Some have group tuition and others are well supported in the classroom by sensitive intervention. Whilst the teaching in the special needs groups is proving effective, some methods are out-of-date and do not match with the national strategies. This can cause confusion. For example, the teaching of letter sounds does not follow the steps in the recommended literacy strategy that is used in school and therefore it is difficult to see continuity or progression in learning. There is a successful system of intervention programmes for those pupils who are not making the expected progress in English and mathematics. These are usually led by the nursery nurse or teaching assistants who forge a good pace of learning and expect pupils to work hard. The shared planning and feedback to teachers ensure that continuity in learning is maintained.
23. The quality of teachers' marking is variable. It is often good in mathematics and science. Most marking consists of ticks and, often, congratulatory remarks. Clear evaluations of why the work is good or suggestions for improvement are not routinely included. Some teachers give very useful oral feedback, especially for the younger pupils, but this is not always recorded in books for future reference.

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

24. The school provides full coverage of the programmes of study in the National Curriculum for all its pupils. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements, including the provision of religious education. An appropriate amount of time is spent on each subject with a suitable emphasis placed on literacy and numeracy. For children in the Reception class, there is a very good range of learning opportunities that covers all the recommended areas of learning.
25. In January 1998, an inspection team reported that the school "had worked very hard and had made progress in developing a broad and balanced curriculum which reflected the school's aims but there were still some weaknesses". One issue concerned planning to cater fully for the mixed-ages within each class. Although there have been improvements since the last inspection, this factor, of catering for

the full ability range, remains a concern. In many subjects, other than English, mathematics, science and ICT the school has recently adopted a commercial scheme of planning, which requires further work in order to meet the specific needs of pupils in mixed-age classes. Plans do not provide the framework to show precisely how each age group in each class will develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in a progressive way. For example, in the history or geography topics there is not always a clear indication of what each age group will learn and there is no guidance to help the teacher provide sufficient challenge for the older, higher attaining group. Teachers often compensate by including different work in their lesson planning but the schemes themselves lack the precise guidance needed for future reference. These schemes of planning do not always include opportunities for pupils to write at length or indicate which ICT facilities can be used to enhance learning.

26. A very detailed scheme of work for ICT shows good progression year by year. Together with the excellent work of the specialist teaching assistant, it helps to ensure good rates of learning and very high standards in the subject. The computer is being used very well across the full curriculum. The teaching assistant spends a lot of her own time in finding programs and website addresses to support learning in other subjects. She keeps a record of materials and references used in the ICT files but the information is not routinely entered into subject planning so that it can be readily accessed by teachers in the future.
27. Very good progress has been made towards resolving the previous reported concern about the provision for pupils who have special educational needs. The policy is now well implemented and there is good support for this group of pupils, enabling them to make good progress.
28. The national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are satisfactorily implemented. The school makes good use of the suggested intervention programmes for those pupils who are not making the expected progress. These, together with the booster classes, are presented by very knowledgeable teaching assistants who have received the full training. There are some good instances of the effective use of literacy and numeracy to support other subjects. For example, pupils' work in science and history shows that some opportunities are provided for children to practice their developing literacy skills in writing accounts and reports of their work but these depend upon the individual teacher's planning. If opportunities were clearly identified within the overall scheme of planning, it would result in a consistent approach year by year. Good examples of pupils using numeracy are evident in science and ICT. The newly introduced planning for English is detailed and provides a good balance of work across different reading and writing styles. At present, there are not enough resources to teach this curriculum and they are not organised effectively.
29. The provision for personal, social and health education is good. Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to talk about issues in dedicated lessons and also through other subjects, especially science and religious education. The good emphasis on environmental issues helps to broaden pupils' awareness of the world around them and to consider the delicate balance of nature. The governors have only very recently decided that sex education should be included in the curriculum and planning is in the early stages. They are also investigating the best ways to introduce sessions about drug misuse.
30. Children engage in a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school, usually at lunch time. These activities include football, chess club, gardening

and a recorder group. They are open to both boys and girls. The ICT club is very well attended and includes younger pupils from Years 1 and 2. As a supplement to the curriculum, pupils take part in various environmental activities and were delighted to be the national winners of the David Bellamy Award for environmental cleanliness in 2001. Opportunities for after-school clubs are very limited because so many pupils rely on the school bus to get home. Nevertheless, pupils do have some opportunities to play in sporting competitions against other schools. The Saturday gardening club is popular and helps to promote a sense of pride in the school.

31. There are good links with other schools and the wider community. Strong links with the church support the Christian ethos and foundation of the school. The vicar takes assemblies on a regular basis and is a frequent visitor to school. There is a very good and long-standing association with a school for the hearing impaired. Exchanges of older pupils are arranged between the two schools. The experiences help pupils to learn how others cope with disability and promote friendships that last well into secondary school education. Pupils have the opportunity to visit a local rest home to meet elderly residents. Much concern is shown for the local environment, with children, parents and teachers working together to develop the school grounds. The school gained the ECO schools status in 2000 and is very proud of the achievement. There are good links with the local high school. Staff loan resources and provide occasional support for the school in its teaching of music, dance and science.
32. Visits and visitors to the school provide good enrichments to the curriculum. For example, the visit of the 'owl man' inspired some high quality work across many curriculum areas, especially in art and design. Pupils throughout school talk excitedly about carving the wooden sculptures and furniture for the playground and had obviously enjoyed the experience provided by a visiting craftsman.
33. The provision made for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good and parents feel that this is a major strength at the school. In returned questionnaires, 96 per cent agreed that the school is helping their children to become mature. The school is very successful in providing the climate and learning environment for children to develop as confident, well rounded and fulfilled individuals. Pupils are secure and happy and have very good self-esteem.
34. Assemblies are reverent occasions and help pupils to develop a sensitive awareness of the world around them. This was seen in an assembly where pupils were given the opportunity to read their poems and writings about winter weather. The work reflected very clearly the pupils' appreciation of the natural world. Teachers value pupils' comments and questions and give them time and space to develop their own thoughts, ideas and concerns. They encourage pupils to explore and share their inner feelings arising from their experiences. Some children in the Reception class were thrilled to see a squirrel scampering in the tree that they were observing through the telescope. The teaching assistant allowed them time to enjoy the experience and to talk about it.
35. The provision for social and moral development is of a similar high standard. The school provides a safe learning environment in which pupils can express their views and practise moral decision making. An illustration of the schools' care and concern for others comes through their 'adoption' of a Romanian orphan boy who they sponsor. Pupils know right from wrong and have mainly good attitudes. The school's positive approach to discipline results in pupils making sensible, informed choices of how to act. They reflect the care and consideration that is shown to them

by adults and are aware of the impact of their actions on others. The school fosters a strong sense of community with common and inclusive values and is clearly a model of the principles on which community life is based.

36. Pupils' understanding of local and national culture is good and the provision for multi-cultural education is satisfactory. Aspects of different faiths are taught in religious education but the school accepts that some work remains to be done to include world studies more fully in curriculum planning. There are opportunities for pupils to participate in a range of music, arts, crafts and other cultural events and there is encouragement for pupils to reflect upon the significance of these experiences. The standards and the improvement in art is good testimony to pupils' awareness of the work of great artists from different countries and times in history. However, there are few books in class library areas that reflect stories and traditions from around the world. There are few opportunities for pupils to associate with people from other cultures, either by meetings or e-mail. The school is largely mono-cultural and this is an important aspect of pupils' education and in preparation for life in a diverse society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. When children enter the Reception class a thorough assessment of their skills, knowledge and understanding is carried out by the teacher. The results are used to guide planning to ensure that children make a good start to their education in all the areas of learning. Over the year, the teachers check pupils' learning in line with the nationally recommended 'stepping stones' of progress. The information is very well used to group children for different activities and for the focused teaching sessions. This ensures that they are consistently well challenged and often make very good progress.
38. Pupils' progress in the subjects of English, mathematics and science is checked throughout Years 1 to 6. As well as the statutory assessments at the ends of Years 2 and 6, the school uses nationally provided tests in other year groups. Some results are used to check the effectiveness of the curriculum. For example, the manager for mathematics highlighted some categories of questions that were difficult for the pupils in the National Curriculum tests. She reviewed the planning and talked to teachers about placing more emphasis on these areas in the future. The use of assessment information to plan the next steps in pupils' learning is good in Years 1 and 2. It is also used effectively to decide which pupils need extra support for English and mathematics in Years 3 to 6. However, the information is not used in a co-ordinated way for setting challenging targets for higher attaining pupils in Years 3 to 6. Assessment in ICT is thorough and all the information is very well used to plan the next lessons so that all pupils are fully challenged.
39. Individual teachers keep their own records and they know their pupils well, but there is no consistent system for tracking progress in all the subjects. It is therefore difficult to gain an overall view of the individual's attainment in subjects other than English, mathematics, science and ICT and there are no reliable sources for identifying gifted and talented pupils.
40. The attainment and progress of pupils with special educational needs are carefully assessed. Records are thorough and well maintained. After initial assessment, the progress of pupils on the register of special educational needs is reviewed frequently. Individual education plans inform future teaching and the development of learning support programmes.

41. The school provides a secure and stable environment for its pupils. The teachers play a significant part in the personal development of the pupils, who they know well as individuals. Measures are in place to ensure pupils' health and safety on a day-to-day basis.
42. There are clear procedures to promote good behaviour. There is a good system of rewards and sanctions, and the pupils consider that these are used fairly by all the teachers. The pupils also understand how they should deal with any incidents of oppressive behaviour or bullying. These procedures are all included in the school's prospectus, and are known to parents. However, there are no formal written policies covering these areas. This lack of written guidance could lead to difficulties when new staff are appointed, or supply teachers used. The school actively discourages parents from taking children on holiday during term time; and parents also appreciate the need to keep the school informed if their child is ill. The educational welfare officer visits the school regularly, and is very occasionally needed to help resolve a situation.
43. The school has appropriate policies and procedures in place relating to child protection procedures and health and safety matters. There is a newly designated person appointed to cover health and safety issues. No training has yet been organised and the school is aware that this needs to be undertaken. The school's health and safety procedures provide a safe and secure environment for the pupils. However, there is no consistent system in place to monitor and record the various checks and inspections that take place on a regular basis, or to record and file the risk assessments carried out.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44. There was a good response to the parental questionnaire and good support for the pre-inspection parent's meeting. The overwhelming majority of the opinions expressed were very positive. There was particularly strong support for the progress made by the pupils and their good behaviour. The children all enjoy attending the school, and the parents considered the school expected its pupils to work hard. The inspection team agreed with these positive views with the exception of the progress made. The majority of pupils make at least satisfactory progress, but this does not apply to the higher attaining pupils in Years 3 to 6. Parents are very appreciative of the care their children receive whilst at the school. The only areas where any concerns were expressed related to the amount of homework set, and the provision for activities outside of lessons. The inspectors found that the amount of homework set is satisfactory and appropriate to the ages of the pupils. They judged that the school makes satisfactory provision for extra-curricular activities. With almost half of the pupils travelling home by bus, it is much more practical for the clubs to take place during the lunchtime when all can have the chance to enjoy the activities.
45. There is a useful amount of information supplied to parents to keep them up-to-date with developments and events. Regular newsletters are produced, both by the school and the pupils. The information supplied to parents with children in the Reception class is very good. The weekly newsletters that accompany the homework in this class provide good information about what the class is learning and include some useful ideas for parents. There are two parents' meetings held each year, with a third option available after the annual reports are sent out. Most parents feel well informed about their children's progress. The reports for Years 1 to 6 do not contain any information about targets that are set for the coming year. The previous inspection report stated that the reports were 'barely adequate', and the position has hardly changed in the last four years. One good improvement is seen in the new

reports for children in the Reception class that are very detailed. The headteacher and staff are committed to an 'open door' policy and parents value being able to talk with teachers at any time. The school has very recently launched its own website and staff hope that this will be an effective way of communicating with parents. The site is easy to navigate and, when fully operational, will give details of the topics to be covered during each term, and suggestions of how parents may help their children. Whilst this is extremely useful for some families, not all will have ready access to the Internet. The school will still need to provide printed information to ensure all parents are being kept up to date with school events, especially for those who visit infrequently because their children use the school bus.

46. Parents are encouraged to take an active part in the life of the school. There are a number of parents and grandparents who regularly help in the classrooms. In addition, the school can rely on good support for school outings, trips and school productions. There is an active 'Friends of the School' association and regular fundraising events are organised. These are well supported and provide valuable additional monies for the school. The help and support provided by the parents and the local community make a significant contribution to the learning and development of the pupils, both in school and at home.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. The strengths of the headteacher's leadership and management are reflected in the very good provision for personal and social education and the way in which the school lives out its mission statement in developing pupils' creative, physical as well as academic skills. She is very highly regarded by parents who value her hard work and commitment. Under her direction, attainment is good for children in the Reception class and for the pupils in Years 1 and 2. Progress in ICT is very good. The key issues from the last report have all been tackled to some extent. She promotes a strong team spirit among teaching and non-teaching staff that contributes to the secure atmosphere in school and the consistent approach.
48. The governors are supportive and many give their time freely to help in classrooms. The chair person is very supportive and knows staff, pupils and parents well. There are, however, some important areas where leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Governors do not have an accurate view of attainment at the school, development planning is not sufficiently focused, some policies are not in place and financial planning has not taken full account of shortages that managers have identified.
49. The headteacher is well supported by the deputy headteacher who takes an active role in ensuring that agreed school practice is carried out on a day-to-day basis. Together, they are very successful in promoting an environment where pupils work hard, enjoy good relationships, and show respect for peers and adults. All staff are committed to the school's aims. The subject managers have a diligent approach to their responsibilities. They check planning and pupils' completed work to maintain an overview of learning and attainment. The assessment manager and those for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science analyse the results of national and other tests to monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum and to track progress in all aspects of each subject. This works effectively for most pupils but not for the higher attaining ones in Years 3 to 6. Most managers have appropriate opportunities to observe lessons and so have a sound overview of teaching in their subject. They produce detailed action plans that show development year on year. The subject and assessment managers have tried to improve attainment at the higher level and have had some success. Several subject action plans refer to the issue but there is no co-ordinated approach nor is there a clear target for raising attainment.

50. Procedures for the monitoring of teachers' performance have been put in place with the headteacher and deputy headteacher sharing the responsibility for lesson observations. A good range of courses have been attended by staff and the training programme is based on priorities identified through action plans, national priorities and individual targets from performance reviews.
51. The manager for special educational needs has worked hard to improve provision for these pupils since the last inspection. Comprehensive records are kept and parents are informed about their children's progress. The individual education plans that teachers produce are detailed and provide a good guide for lesson planning. The success of the approach is evidenced by the good number of pupils who achieve the nationally expected levels in National Curriculum tests. The governor for special educational needs is very knowledgeable. She provides valuable support for the school through her experience and expertise.
52. Governors are very supportive and committed but do not fulfil their role in actively shaping the educational direction of the school. This was an issue at the time of the last inspection. Some governors come into school on a regular basis to provide good support for teaching and learning and to talk with staff and pupils. Governors know about the initiatives in the school action plans and are updated on the progress and success of the work completed. In this respect, they provide sound support for the school. Managers and governors are careful to ensure that best value is obtained when making purchases and awarding contracts. Governors keep a close eye on spending and ensure that budget limits are adhered to. Some of last year's reserve has been spent on improvements to the ICT suite and in paying the school's share of the recent building work. However, the school continues to hold a large reserve of funds and, at the same time, there are shortages in resources for English and class library areas. Whilst the resourcing for design and technology and geography features in this year's action plans, there is no actual amount allocated to buy equipment and this situation is not satisfactory. Most recommendations from the last audit report have been acted upon by the school secretary, headteacher and governors but one remains outstanding. Some school routines and procedures are not supported by policy documents and there is an inconsistent approach to maintaining records of actions taken. For example, risk assessments are not routinely recorded and filed. The deputy headteacher has been asked to take responsibility for health and safety matters when she already has an extremely heavy workload that covers curriculum and finance as well as her teaching commitments. As a whole, members of the governing body do not have a detailed understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses relating to trends in attainment. Some members have received training in analysing school results and have some knowledge of trends in attainment but they do not share their knowledge routinely with the full governing body. Agenda issues relating to attainment do not always have priority at meetings. The percentages of Year 6 pupils attaining the level 4 in the National Curriculum tests in 2002 were described as 'above average' in the governors' annual report to parents which is not entirely correct. The governors are not sufficiently involved in deciding priorities for school development and have no long-term strategic view of future developments. Overall, the leadership and management of the governors are unsatisfactory.
53. The school development plan consists of several managers' action plans. There is no strategic overview for the next few years. The main priorities listed for this year are exceptionally vague and do not contain any reference to attainment. The action plans form a broad guide for the subject managers but the document as a whole does not provide a clear indication of the school's main drive for improvement that is agreed upon by staff and governors. It is not therefore a useful management tool.

54. There are many strengths in leadership and management but also some areas for development. As in the case of most small schools, there is an above-average level of expenditure per pupil when compared nationally. Considering the balance of strengths and weaknesses, the school provides satisfactory value for money.
55. Lea Neeld's is staffed by a suitable number of teachers who are effectively deployed to meet the demands of the curriculum and to support pupils with special educational needs. All the teachers have high levels of professionalism, dedication and commitment. Staff work closely together in a well motivated team. They plan all their work conscientiously, sharing experience and expertise. Very knowledgeable teaching assistants provide very good support for pupils' learning. One brings exceptionally good expertise to the ICT curriculum and others bring good expertise to the learning intervention groups in mathematics and English that they lead. There are satisfactory arrangements for staff development guided by the school improvement plan. The school is well served by appropriately skilled non-teaching staff, all of whom are committed to its aims and policies. Lunchtime supervisors provide a high standard of care at midday and know the pupils very well. The caretaker is very conscientious in her work, ensuring that the buildings and resources are well maintained. The standard of cleanliness is commendable. Administrative support is very effective and efficient. The school secretary makes a significant contribution to the smooth running of the school, discharging a wide and diverse range of responsibilities. Her expertise in finance and efficient use of ICT frees the headteacher from routine matters.
56. The accommodation has been intelligently extended to provide enough space for learning. Good quality displays of pupils' work significantly enhance the learning environment of the school. There are appropriate facilities for the delivery of all programmes of study contained in the National Curriculum. There is no central library, however, and the class reading areas are not sufficiently developed to compensate. The hall is quite small but teachers cleverly arrange equipment for physical education in the limited space. Two classrooms are divided from the hall by folding screens and, during some lessons, this causes noise disturbance. For example, pupils in their music lesson had to cope with the inevitable noise created by another class doing gymnastics. The grounds provide satisfactory facilities for sport and physical education and have been imaginatively developed to support the school's environmental work and pupils' interests in the natural world.
57. Overall, resourcing is adequate for most subjects but there are some shortages. Teachers organise all equipment effectively in their classrooms and ensure good labelling. This allows pupils to access material when needed and encourages them to become independent learners.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

58. The school has made satisfactory improvements since the last inspection but there are some important issues left to address. The governors, headteacher and staff should:
- (1) **Improve provision and achievement in English, mathematics and science for those pupils capable of higher attainment in Years 3 to 6 by:**
 - setting annual targets for pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science that include a good level of challenge aimed at the higher National Curriculum levels;
 - using the targets to plan lessons that consistently contain a good element of challenge;
 - using the information gathered from regular assessments to check whether pupils are on track to achieve their targets and taking effective action where problems occur;
 - developing a formal method of identifying gifted and talented pupils and ensuring that they have sufficient challenge in their lessons.
(paragraphs 4,6,38,72,75,77,81,82,83,86,88,91,93,118)
 - (2) **Improve the focus and co-ordination of school development planning by:**
 - developing the role of the governors to ensure that they have an accurate view of attainment and progress to help them decide on priorities for improvement;
 - involving all staff and governors in the process so that all essential information, including that about resources, is shared and to ensure that each has a specific role in a consolidated and concerted effort to drive standards upwards.
(paragraphs 48,49,52,53,74,78,86,102,108)
 - (3) **Improve documentation to guide everyday practice by:**
 - ensuring that school procedures and practices are supported by policies that are adopted and regularly reviewed by the governing body and that records of health and safety checks and risk assessments are recorded and filed.
(paragraphs 43,48,52)
 - (4) **Improve planning in subjects other than English, mathematics, science and ICT to ensure that lessons cater for the different age and ability groups within each class by:**
 - clearly stating the specific skills, knowledge and understanding to be taught for each group;
 - including planned opportunities for pupils to write at length where appropriate;
 - including a reference to the ICT resources that can be used to enhance learning.
(paragraphs 20,25,26,28,77,98,101,108,113)

In addition, when drawing up their action plan, governors should give consideration to the following issue:

- Improving the reports for parents so that they provide a comprehensive commentary about pupils' progress and attainment and include targets for future learning.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	35
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	22

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	12	12	10	0	0	0
Percentage	3	34	34	29	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 around three percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/a	107
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	9

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/a	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/a	20

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	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	5	7	12

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	11	11	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (94)	92 (100)	100 (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	9	9	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75 (100)	75 (100)	100 (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	5	9	14

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	12	11	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (88)	79 (75)	93 (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	11	11	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (81)	79 (94)	79 (100)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

*The numbers for boys and girls have been omitted because there are less than ten of each. This is to ensure that individual pupils cannot be identified.

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	107
Number of questionnaires returned	50

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	30	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	58	42	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	44	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	48	14	0	0
The teaching is good.	56	42	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	50	2	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	76	22	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	78	22	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	58	36	2	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	58	36	2	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	34	0	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	30	20	4	6

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

59. Children's attainment on entry to the Reception class varies widely from year-to-year though it is generally in line with what is expected for their age. Many start their school life demonstrating a confident command of spoken English and an interest in, and an awareness of, the world around them. However, a number have less well developed language skills and particular needs. Children make very good progress in personal and social skills, communication language and literacy and mathematical understanding because of the challenges presented to them, the interesting range of activities and very good teaching. There are no children with special educational needs in the class at present but the systems for identifying and supporting children who need extra help are well established and past evidence shows that they make the same progress as the rest of the class. One teacher works for four days and another for one day. They plan together very well to ensure a good consistency of approach. Volunteer helpers are made most welcome and their contribution is valued highly. The chair of governors takes a very active interest in this class, regularly providing extra support for teaching and learning. The children are presented with good role models who help establish a warm, caring and stress-free environment. There are strong and very positive relationships. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting commended provision in this class.
60. There have been very good improvements since the last inspection. There is a good balance between teacher-directed activity and opportunities for children to select a task that interests them. During whole class sessions, children enjoy sharing a book or solving a mathematical problem together. They are very confident in replying to the teacher and often pose their own questions. All the classroom activities are designed to build on and consolidate the introductory learning sessions so that language, skills and understanding are promoted effectively. One very good feature of the class is the homework system. Each week children take home tasks and a clearly written letter for parents to explain how they can help.
61. The daily evaluation of children's learning is very good and informs the next week's planning. The children's progress is assessed over time and detailed records are kept to show what they have achieved. This information is then used to set new targets for learning and to ensure that all children have sufficient challenge in their work.
62. Before starting school, children and their parents are invited into the classroom so that they can get to know the staff and their new surroundings. There is a good amount of information for parents regarding school routines and about what their children will learn. As a result of the preparatory meetings, children quickly settle into school life.

Personal, social and emotional development

63. Teaching is very good in this area. Classroom routines focus on developing responsibility and independence. When they come into school in the morning, children organise their belongings independently, taking care to put their homework

books, lunch boxes and reading bags in the correct places. They are happy to come to school and develop a good sense of curiosity and independence. The teacher establishes very clear routines and children show good levels of responsibility by following these well. For example, they 'post' their names into the box as part of the registration process without being reminded. Reception children develop firm friendships and play collaboratively, sometimes taking the initiative in organising activities. Teachers build trusting relationships with parents and children to help them feel secure.

64. The teacher has high expectations of children so they learn to behave well and take care of the things around them. The teacher explains tasks clearly to the children who follow instructions very well. They think carefully about what to choose when they are not involved in a directed activity and demonstrate an ability to persevere, to collaborate and share resources. There are plenty of opportunities for children to develop a sense of team work. For example, they share ideas to help the 'postman' deliver the letters to the right house. Children manage their own personal hygiene effectively and dress independently for physical education lessons in the hall. During class assemblies the children explore some difficult concepts. The teacher skilfully told the story about 'hope soup' so that the children could grasp the idea at their own level of understanding. The opportunities provided for quiet reflective prayer help to develop children's spiritual awareness. By the end of the Reception year children have a positive self-image and treat others with consideration and respect.

Communication, language and literacy

65. Children often make very good progress in this area of learning. Very good teaching and well planned opportunities help children to develop speaking and communication skills and an interest in books. Children listen to and enjoy stories because of the interesting way in which books are presented to them. In one session, they enjoyed the story of 'Peace at Last' and were able to re-tell the events in the right order. During shared reading, the teacher often includes interactive activities to keep the children interested and motivated. For example, they thoroughly enjoyed making the noises in the story, such as the hoot of the owl, and repeating some familiar words or phrases. There is a suitable range of storybooks available that are well organised into boxes so children can see the front covers clearly. However, the furniture in the book corner is old and out of keeping with the rest of the attractive learning environment. The writing area is bright and attractive and offers a good range of writing materials for the children to try out. The teacher uses different games to help children to recognise letter sounds within words, a very important aspect of early reading and writing. In one session, they pinned the tail on the word, finding the correct letter to complete words such as 'pen' or 'dog'. Most children are already reading books; they recognise some common words and work out others by building together the individual letter sounds. During an excellent reading session, the teacher very skilfully supported the children as they used the reading strategies that they had learned to tackle a new book. The children take great delight in learning new words for their 'beanstalk' challenge. They stick their well-deserved awards on their chart with great pride and are obviously enthused by this novel way of familiarising children with the most common words.
66. The teacher's questioning skills underpin learning very well. All adults constantly encourage children to ask, 'Why?' and often focus on new, specific language. In one interesting outdoor session, the classroom assistant encouraged the children to use the correct terminology such as magnifying glass or binoculars and helped them pronounce the new words.

Mathematical development

67. The teaching is very good, vibrant and fun. It is based on activities that are purposeful for the children. Every opportunity is seized for counting, sorting and using mathematical language. For example, the teacher involves the children in working out the numbers for packed lunches and cooked dinners. Individual children are given the responsibility for changing the information daily on the calendar. Children count confidently, recognise numerals to 20 and order numbers correctly. In one session the teacher insisted that the children use the word 'after' to say where the numbered teddies should go in the sequence. The classroom assistant challenged the higher achievers by estimating where the random numbers will fit on the empty washing line. One child had to think how many numbers would go before and after 11 before deciding. This is work that is more usually seen in Years 1 and 2 and successfully promotes mental agility. Once again the teacher's very skilful planning of activities ensures that children have continual opportunities to apply their mathematical understanding and that they are using it to solve everyday problems. Many activities are open-ended so that children can investigate and extend their thinking further. There are many opportunities for children to explore two and three-dimensional shapes as they work on patterns or construct models.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

68. Teaching is very good. The thematic approach to the planning means that all the skills involved in the other areas of learning are developed through the topic of the week. Currently the subject is 'day and night' which provides a fertile foundation for various activities. It enables children to reflect and use their everyday experiences as well as finding out new things and asking their own questions. Some children went outside to look afresh at the world through binoculars and the telescope. They were amazed at some of the patterns they observed in the tree bark and delighted to observe the antics of a squirrel. There was much spirituality in this session as the teaching assistant gave them plenty of time to enjoy the experience. Wherever possible, the teacher draws on previous learning from the children, encouraging them to use whatever they already know. They discuss stars and planets showing some understanding but also highlighting some misconceptions that the teacher noted for further planning.
69. The children have an excellent range of experiences in using ICT. Alongside the specialist teaching assistant, they have made a multi-media presentation entitled 'Nursery Rhymes'. In the computer suite children demonstrate very good confidence in using the mouse to negotiate their way around an interactive reading book. They use the 'paint' programme to draw some colourful pictures which they save and print with help. The work illustrates children's very accurate control of the mouse and their ability to follow on-screen prompts.

Physical development

70. The teaching is good and is sufficiently imaginative to overcome the absence of a dedicated outside area. Some sessions are organised in the hall where children use equipment to walk, run, skip and change direction. They enjoy playing games and the children develop their co-ordination and throwing skills on the playground and fields. The classroom has direct access to the playground and there are opportunities for the children to use their wheeled toys and larger equipment when

the weather is suitable and there is an additional adult to supervise them. The range of classroom activities provides a great number of opportunities for developing small motor skills and hand eye co-ordination. The teacher ensures that she explains, demonstrates and provides plenty of opportunities for children to handle tools and materials safely and effectively. They handle construction materials deftly, are confident with scissors and pencil control is good.

Creative development

71. Teaching is good and children are encouraged to explore and communicate their understanding in imaginative ways. Almost all are on target to achieve the early learning goals. The children took inspiration from their shared book to create some day and night mobiles. They chose from an interesting range of materials, including shiny and matt finishes, to make their collages. There was good attention to shape, texture and colour and the children appraised their work as they went along, changing their original ideas to gain the desired effect. The display of a winter scene in the classroom shows that some are developing good skills in drawing from observation and in painting. They enjoy music and learn the tunes and words of songs and favourite rhymes. The bears' bedroom provides an interesting role play area where children can enact a scenario or make up new stories.

ENGLISH

72. In the 2002 National Curriculum tests the number of Year 2 pupils achieving the expected level 2 in reading was above average and for writing it was average. An average number achieved the higher level 3 in reading but no pupils gained this level in writing. When compared to similar schools, standards in reading overall were average and well below average in writing. The school took immediate action to improve the standards in writing and, during the inspection, attainment for this year's group was judged as above average. For the Year 6 pupils, the percentage gaining the expected level 4 in English in 2002 was above the national average. Around one fifth achieved the higher level 5, a figure which is one percent below average. Lesson observations during the inspection indicate good speaking and listening skills and above-average reading standards in all year groups. The achievements in writing vary. Overall, skills in reading are better than in writing. The subject manager has made this a focus of her action plan. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained the percentages of pupils working at the average level in Years 2 and 6. The percentage of pupils working at the higher level in Year 2 has improved. In Year 6 there are still too few pupils attaining at the higher level.
73. Standards in speaking and listening throughout the school are above average. Pupils express their ideas clearly and listen well to others. In a shared reading session, pupils used their voices expressively to mimic the 'Little Red Hen's' comments. They suggested what else she might say, using some forceful terms. In Years 3 to 6 pupils talk at length about a range of topics and respond sensitively to their classmates' ideas. They speak with clarity and assurance, listening carefully to other points of view and giving clear reasons for their opinions. In a Year 5 and 6 lesson, for example, pupils showed maturity as they worked in groups to evaluate the effectiveness of some advertisements. They talked about the exaggerations made and the use of word play to create effect. Progress for all groups of pupils is good, with the higher achievers able to clarify statements and to handle opposing views with courtesy.

74. Pupils' achievement in reading is good. Those who have special educational needs achieve standards that are appropriate in relation to prior learning and make equally good progress. Guided reading is used effectively and there is a suitable match of texts to pupils' prior attainment and developing expertise. Teachers choose books from a limited selection that will move learning on at a good pace. In Years 1 and 2 skills such as the recognition and articulation of letter sounds are well developed and help pupils to tackle unfamiliar words by 'sounding them out'. They had great fun in one lesson where they helped the 'Alien' to articulate all the sounds in simple words. This is essential work in the development of good reading and spelling skills. When reading, pupils use clues in the story and illustrations and their knowledge of grammar to predict and read new words. Most pupils recognise the features of both fiction and non-fiction books and higher attaining pupils know how to use the contents and index sections to find information. Pupils take reading books home regularly and are well supported by parents. This makes a good contribution to learning. By the end of Year 2, pupils talk about the plot and characters in a story, often predicting what will happen next. Pupils read with good expression following the punctuation marks and features of the text, such as bold print or words written in capitals. In Years 3 to 6, pupils read fluently and show good levels of comprehension. The majority of pupils recall in detail what they have read and skills of inference and deduction are well developed. One group in Years 3 and 4 read about 'The BFG', exploring the giant's motives and the captive's feelings. They accurately analysed a piece of dialogue as 'small talk' where the two were actually trying to get to know each other. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 locate information efficiently, using subheadings, diagrams and captions. They identify features of different types of text, such as persuasive writing. There are few opportunities for pupils to borrow books and extend their reading experiences because there is no library in school and the stock of books in class reading areas is unsatisfactory.
75. In Years 1 and 2, pupils practise writing in logically sequenced sentences. They apply their knowledge of letter sounds effectively when spelling simple words and know many more difficult words by sight. By the end of Year 2 writing is well structured. Capital letters and full stops are generally well used to demarcate sentences. A good number of higher attaining pupils are also using speech, question and exclamation marks correctly. Pupils wrote some interesting and extended sentences that included good use of adjectives. Good examples of writing from the higher achieving pupils in Year 2 included some interesting connecting words and longer sentences containing detail. Handwriting is becoming well formed and legible. In Years 3 to 6 pupils write imaginative pieces of work including good use of simile, metaphor and powerful adjectives. Some poetry is of a high standard. The majority of pupils have a secure grasp of punctuation and grammar. However, the range of writing styles is limited and there is not enough non-fiction work covered in the English lessons. There is little evidence of writers using sophisticated techniques to hold the reader's attention such as using the full range of punctuation or adding a short sentence to create impact. This is partly because teachers do not give enough emphasis to investigating different authors' strategies when they are reading material. The range of authors and styles that are available to pupils in school is also limited. Nevertheless, some good work was seen in Years 5 and 6 where pupils used their knowledge of persuasive texts to write some short extracts similar to those seen in travel brochures. They experimented with some sophisticated language to persuade the potential traveller. Some higher attaining pupils are beginning to use complex sentences to add interest and imagery. Many older pupils pay good attention to the accuracy of their spelling although they tend to rely on memory and syllabification. They hardly use word derivations or the structures of words, such as root, prefix and suffix, to support their spelling.

76. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Individual programmes of learning are used to plan work and pupils have additional support to help them meet their targets. Their rate of progress is at least equal to that of their peers and many show levels of competence expected for their ages. There are effective intervention strategies in place to support pupils who experience some difficulty or whose progress is less than expected. These are usually led by teaching assistants under the direction of class teachers. Learning is good and pupils enjoy the balance of oral, practical and written tasks they are given.
77. The literacy hour has been successfully implemented in the school. Teaching is good in Years 1 and 2 and has a direct impact on pupils' learning, resulting in the good standards of attainment seen during the inspection. In this class, pupils are grouped according to their prior learning and the teacher has set clear, challenging targets for them. Work is set at different levels to build on prior learning. Expectations are generally high. In Years 3 to 6, the system of mixed grouping is inefficient and makes direct teacher intervention, in for example the process of writing, difficult. The new planning that has been recently adopted provides balance in the coverage of different styles of reading and writing, including fiction and non-fiction. When pupils leave Year 2 their attainment is generally good but they have not, in the past, made enough progress in Years 3 to 6. This is partly because the targets for attainment do not contain enough challenge and the old planning had flaws, especially in supporting the development of writing skills and in catering for pupils who are capable of higher attainment. During guided reading sessions teachers and teaching assistants extend pupils' skills by questioning them about the plot and possible outcomes. There is a strong emphasis on developing skills of inference and deduction from an early age, which enhances comprehension. Teachers constantly seek out opportunities to extend pupils' vocabulary but there are not enough opportunities for pupils to write at length when studying other subjects, largely because specific opportunities for writing are not identified in the planning for other subjects. Reading skills are well deployed in pupils' research work and independent study. Pupils make good use of ICT to draft and edit writing and to present their work. Homework is suitably used to practise and consolidate reading and spelling skills. There are few extended writing assignments for the older pupils. Marking is satisfactory in this subject. Comments sometimes point the way forward for pupils and teachers often include congratulatory remarks. There are few references to pupils' targets in marking and few evaluations as to how far the pupils have progressed towards their goals. The information gathered from classroom assessments is used to track each individual's progress in Years 1 and 2 and to inform weekly planning. The same system is not so well developed in Years 3 to 6.
78. The resources that are available are used effectively to support pupils' learning. However, there are some shortages in books and materials to match the full range of work in the new planning. As a result, teachers spend too much time finding and adapting material for their lessons. The range and quality of dictionaries are unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6 and they do not provide enough support for pupils' spelling. The subject manager has worked hard to catalogue the reading books into 'book bands' so that pupils' reading skills are progressively extended. However, the quality and selection of early reading books is unsatisfactory. Many are outdated, uninspiring and in poor condition.
79. The subject manager has good expertise and experience but has few opportunities to share these with colleagues. She has some time allocated to observe lessons, check planning and look at pupils' work. The priority for development this year is

writing and this has led to some good improvements, for example, in the planning and through the intervention strategies. The manager is aware of the shortages in resources but will need some dedicated time, support and funds in order to address the issues.

MATHEMATICS

80. Overall standards attained by seven-year-olds in the 2002 national tests were in line with the national average when compared with all schools nationally and with similar schools. One hundred per cent of the Year 2 pupils achieved the expected level 2 but a lower than expected reached the higher level 3. There has been a steady and, in the case of 2000 to 2001, a steep upward trend in attainment since 1998.
81. Results for pupils at the end of Year 6 were well below the national average. The percentage of pupils who attained the expected level 4 was around the national average but no pupils achieved the higher level 5, which is very poor. Two pupils were expected to achieve the higher level; one pupil missed it by one point and the other was ill. This is an important consideration when looking at the results of a small school where each pupil represents 7 percentage points. Nevertheless, achievement in mathematics for pupils capable of higher attainment is below average. Across the age groups, there is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls or ethnic groups in the classroom.
82. Inspection evidence shows that there is a good number of Year 2 pupils who are currently working at the higher level and indications are that the results in this year's tests for seven-year-olds will be above the national average. The school has made good improvements in mathematics in Years 1 and 2 since the last inspection. Good progress is being consistently made by all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs who benefit from the well planned work and the good quality of support. Pupils have good opportunities to gain experience in oral and mental calculations at the beginning of every lesson. They understand and apply the rules for addition and subtraction in a practical way. Pupils are well accustomed to using the language of mathematics, appropriate to their age. They recognise two- and three-dimensional shapes and are becoming confident in estimating weight. In one lesson, pupils demonstrated their good investigative skills as they responded eagerly to some challenging problem work using an unmarked but graduated number stick. Pupils measure objects around the school using non-standard measures such as hand spans and progress to a good standard of accuracy using conventional measurements. In Years 3 to 6 pupils develop a sound grasp of tables and use them to solve multiplication and division problems. Good standards in data handling are developing and supported well by using ICT facilities such as spreadsheets. Observations of a Years 5 and 6 lesson indicate better attainment for the present group of Year 6 pupils. The school is working hard to improve results at the higher level, grouping the pupils well in booster classes to help them take that one step further. However, in order to improve attainment for the future, pupils need to have that level of challenge consistently built into their targets for learning throughout Years 3 to 6. A scrutiny of pupils' work shows that the majority are working successfully towards achieving the key objectives of the National Numeracy Strategy for level 4.
83. Teaching is very good in Years 1 and 2 and planning accommodates the range of ages and abilities in the class very well, ensuring that all are encouraged to achieve their potential. The teacher encourages active participation by the pupils. This leads to good interest and positive attitudes from them. The teacher's planning is detailed

and shows exactly what she expects from each group. Her skilful questioning ensures that all are involved in the oral session. Her structured approach and good management mean that no time is lost and lead to good rates of progress. All this ensures that everyone is involved and there is plenty of interest to maintain the enthusiasm of the higher achieving pupils. In a Year 2 group, pupils were effectively challenged through a task of completing a 'magic square' of nine numbers to total 15 vertically, horizontally and diagonally. They thoroughly enjoyed the activity and were delighted with their success. The teaching of mathematics in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory with some good features. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 learn about the value of digits within numbers and the teacher extends one group by working with numbers involving tens of thousands. The mental activity session seen in Years 5 and 6 encouraged pupils to work quickly and give speedy answers. The major learning focus of each lesson is explained to pupils so that they know what is expected. Activities are usually planned for the different abilities and different age groups but, in some cases, the expectations for higher achieving pupils did not differ sufficiently from that expected of the average workers. Those pupils of below average ability and those who have special educational needs are suitably supported, which contributes to the good progress that they are making. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject. However, the present system of class organisation is ineffective. Pupils of different ages and prior learning are seated in mixed groups. This makes it more difficult for the teacher to monitor their progress as they work or to direct support to pupils who may be encountering similar problems.

84. All aspects of the mathematics curriculum are taught in a balanced way. The use of ICT is making a very good contribution to mathematics teaching and learning throughout school. Pupils' mathematical skills are effectively promoted across the curriculum. For example, they produce graphs in science, use co-ordinates in geography and measure accurately in design and technology.
85. Assessment is satisfactory overall. The subject manager scrutinises test papers and ensures that more emphasis is put into areas where answers have been weaker. The information is also used in planning the booster classes. Marking is thorough and supports learning well. The children derive some encouragement, pride and support from the helpful comments written by teachers in their books. The use of homework is good; it is regular and very closely linked to the current class lesson focus. Parents are well informed about the work expected of their children. Completed assignments are marked conscientiously by teachers and children are assured that their work is valued.
86. The subject manager is a hard working and experienced teacher who has benefited from training, enabling her to carry out her duties. She is well aware of the need to improve attainment at the higher level and has taken some measures to address the issue. However, the targets for learning for the higher attaining pupils are not rigorous enough in Years 3 to 6 and there is no co-ordinated whole-school drive for improvement. As part of her role, the manager monitors colleagues' planning and checks the quality of pupils' work to check that they are covering all the programmes of study. Resources for mathematics are satisfactory. There is a basic selection of books to support teaching and learning and of equipment for practical work.

SCIENCE

87. The results of teacher assessments in 2002 for pupils in Year 2 were well above average for those achieving the average level 2 of attainment and satisfactory for those managing the higher level 3. At the end of Year 6, attainment in the National

Curriculum tests was below the national average and well below when compared to schools in similar circumstances. An average percentage of pupils achieved the expected level 4 but the number who achieved the higher level 5 was low.

88. The findings of the inspection indicate that the standards achieved by the current Year 2 are above those expected nationally with a large majority of children working at a good level of attainment. For pupils in Year 6 attainment is average overall although few pupils work at the higher level. This is a good improvement for Year 2 on the findings of the previous inspection but standards in Years 6 have remained broadly the same.
89. In a practical lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2, they investigated floating and sinking. They demonstrated very good attitudes and showed great excitement in their discoveries. Learning was very good across the class. One group was guided in their work by effective adult support and achieved a sound understanding of what would sink and float. The higher achieving pupils were more accurate in their predictions and, from their experimentation, were able to draw conclusions. For example, one pupil noted 'My spoon and paper clip both sank, they are made of metal so things made of metal sink'. The statement gave a good indication of the child's skills in drawing a conclusion based upon actual findings. All groups recorded their findings with evidence of some very good presentation by Year 2 pupils. The lesson was very successful in that each ability group in each year group had appropriate challenge.
90. Standards for the current Year 6 pupils are in line with national averages. Throughout the school, pupils make predictions which are increasingly based upon scientific knowledge and understanding as they get older. They understand the notion of an investigation and learn to use a simple framework to assist their planning. All pupils use appropriate scientific vocabulary with confidence. They know the meaning of a fair test and the higher attaining pupils know how to control variables in order to ensure a reliable result. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 make very good attempts to identify natural and manufactured materials in their walk around the school grounds. They research for information and, in so doing, they show good skills in using the contents and index pages of a reference book, employing their literacy skills effectively. Further information is obtained enabled by using a CD ROM. Year 6 pupils show a sound understanding of the different properties of solids, liquids and gases. They experiment with reversible and irreversible changes. In one lesson, pupils added acid, such as lemon juice, to bi-carbonate of soda to create a gas. Pupils' learning was clearly seen as they recognised that the change taking place was irreversible.
91. The national guidance that is used as the basis of planning ensures good coverage of all programmes of study, including practical and experimental work. Teaching ranges from very good to satisfactory. Work is especially well matched to age and ability in the Years 1 and 2 class. Some work expected from higher attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6 lacks the degree of challenge that would take them to the higher level of attainment. Pupils are managed well and the teachers generate excitement and enthusiasm for the subject. Teachers make sure that the work for pupils with special educational needs is appropriate and that they are well supported in recording their findings.
92. Assessment is satisfactory but is used to check that learning has taken place rather than to drive progress forward at a better rate. Marking is thorough and, in the better examples of practice, indicates the next steps in learning. Science resources are

satisfactory and the use of the computer suite enhances learning in science. The higher attaining pupils have successfully produced a PowerPoint presentation about 'keeping healthy' that shows good understanding and will hopefully help to promote good lifestyle habits.

93. The manager has taken measures to help raise standards. For example, regular homework was started last year that links to the focus of the class lessons. She maintains a thorough record of monitoring and has a sound overview of teaching and learning in the subject. However, the targets for pupils' achievement are not challenging enough for those capable of higher attainment and there is no whole-school approach towards improving standards for this group.

ART AND DESIGN

94. Attainment in art and design is above expectations in Years 2 and Year 6. This is a very good improvement for Years 1 and 2 and a good improvement in Years 3 to 6. The improvements are due to better teaching, a more detailed planning scheme and closer monitoring of pupils' achievements. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs are making good progress. Boys and girls do equally well. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their art lessons, share resources and ideas sensibly and are keen to learn.
95. By the end Year 2, the pupils know about the works of some famous artists and have experiences of different kinds of art, craft and design. They create some effective self portraits and sketch from direct observation. Their woven designs show a good attention to texture, pattern and colour. In some early work on sculpture, pupils investigate the possibilities of malleable materials and use various tools to make marks and patterns in the surface. By moulding, twisting and pinching they create some unusual shapes. This exploratory work often underpins pupils' learning and allows them to try out new ideas and express themselves imaginatively. They use computers to find information for their designs and are confident in using ICT programs to generate, evaluate and improve their artwork.
96. In Years 3 to 6, the pupils research into the lives and work of famous artists such as Lowry. Those in Years 3 and 4 had produced an interesting display of his work, showing a good understanding of style and technique. In Years 5 and 6 the pupils have painted winter scenes in the style of Litlington. They show very careful attention to colour, tone, shape and line. The standard is above that normally expected for pupils of this age. During the inspection, the older pupils worked on some Willow patterns as part of their studies entitled 'telling stories through art'. There was excellent attention to detail in this lesson with pupils often experimenting with different approaches to gain the desired effect. They constantly evaluate their work and are able to provide constructive criticism for each other. Pupils are open to suggestions and willing to try out new ideas to improve their work. Good levels of concentration and perseverance were evident. The subject provides good support for pupils' cultural development as they study the work of craftspeople from different times in history and around the world.
97. Throughout the school, the quality of teaching in art and design is good and sometimes very good. Lessons are well planned and resourced. The teachers ensure that there are plenty of visual stimuli to help the pupils develop ideas and skills of their own. The teachers use questioning well, in order to make the pupils think and to recall what they have already learned. In the lesson for Years 5 and 6, the teacher helped the pupils to recall the story of the willow pattern, which helped

them to focus on the context of their task. In this lesson, the teacher highlighted good examples of pupils' work, helping others to evaluate and improve their own paintings. There is good teaching of specific art and design skills, such as colour mixing, brush control and shading. The teachers develop the pupils' confidence in using a variety of techniques and media, encouraging them to experiment freely with their own ideas. Volunteer helpers make a good contribution to learning by bringing their talents to the classroom. During the inspection, one volunteer supported pupils as they sewed, plaited, and created collage faces as part of a whole-class project.

98. The coordinator provides good management for art and design and shares her enthusiasm for the subject with colleagues. She checks on the quality of teaching and regularly looks at pupils' completed work and projects. The new scheme of planning is in place but has yet to be developed in order to show precisely what skills, knowledge and understanding will be taught to each age group in the class. There are adequate resources to support teaching and learning. Learning is enriched by visits to places of interest such as the Ellesmere Port museum where pupils studied canal artwork. Inspiration is provided by visitors to school such as the sculptor who created the owl and other wooden artefacts that adorn the playground. As part of their environmental work, pupils design garden areas for a particular effect or purpose. Pupils at the school have been successful in winning competitions for art which is another indicator of their enjoyment for the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

99. No lessons took place during the inspection and therefore no judgement on standards and teaching was made. Evidence about the subject was gathered from photographs, samples of pupils' work, teachers' plans and discussions with pupils and the subject manager. Pupils have enjoyed and completed activities suitable for their age and there is a strong link with the design aspect for art. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy this practical subject and have similar challenges to their peers.
100. Various 'design and make projects' are timetabled for each year group. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 use their study of the Saxons to inform their designs and making of pots. There is evidence, in every class, of pupils thinking about the nature and purpose of the object that they are to make. Older ones made bird feeders using a range of materials and joining techniques. They took great care with the finish of the product, knowing that it had to sustain the rigours of the changing weather. Much of the designing and making has a real purpose. For example, pupils designed and made the Christingles, Christmas crackers and Christmas tree collages as part of the season's celebrations. A current project in Years 5 and 6 involves the use of textiles in making a class collage. Pupils practice their needlework techniques to good effect. Opportunities to evaluate and make modifications to work are included in all projects.
101. A new subject manager has recently been appointed for the subject. She is in the process of conducting a thorough audit of standards, curriculum and resources and of up-dating the policy and scheme of planning. At present, there is a programme of topics that roughly covers all elements of the subject but does not stipulate exactly what each pupil in each year group will learn nor how the skills are to be progressively developed. There has been little input in to the subject over recent years and the manager is keen to improve the profile of design and technology within the school curriculum.

102. The range and quality of resources are unsatisfactory at present and the subject manager is aware of the issue. There is a basic selection of tools but not enough material, mechanisms or components for the pupils to choose from. Learning is enhanced through the skills and time that volunteers provide. For example, the bird feeder and the class collage project are both supported by adults from the community.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

103. Opportunity to make lesson observations in Year 2 in both history and geography were limited during the days of the inspection. It was not possible therefore to make a secure judgement about attainment. The content of the curriculum and the planning suggest a satisfactory basis for improved standards and a more systematic development of skills since the last inspection. By the end of Year 6, pupils are attaining what is expected in both subjects. The rate of progress has been sustained since the last inspection with similar levels of attainment. Both subjects are taught through plans based upon national guidance and commercial material. The school covers the topics in a two year cycle in order to ensure that each age group, in the mixed-age classes, receive their full entitlement to the curriculum.
104. In history, pupils in Years 1 and 2 have the opportunity to learn and develop early skills through work on such varied topics as 'changes in transport over time' or 'seaside holidays in the past'. They learn about important historical events, such as The Great Fire of London. Through such studies pupils are able to gain knowledge of changes that have occurred over time and how they affect our lives today. They begin to put events into a sequence using a time line. Geographical investigation is very much based upon the local and familiar. Pupils investigate the area around the school and ask appropriate questions such as 'how can we make our local environment safer?' They then extend their learning by comparing their locality with other places, including those overseas. They learn about weather and seasons and how they influence people's lives. Both subjects are sometimes reinforced through other areas of the curriculum. For example in their non-fiction work pupils study food from around the world.
105. In Years 3 and 4 pupils use a time line to place events in order of time from the Ancient Egyptians to the present day. Their work on Ancient Greece shows satisfactory knowledge and understanding about the everyday lives of the people. They gain satisfactory knowledge of the climate, landscape and buildings and consider the advantages and disadvantages of life at the time. There is evidence of good research as they study the city of Athens. The pupils in Years 5 and 6 study the Tudors in depth. From their lessons and research they form their own opinions about the character of Henry VIII extending beyond his notoriety of having six wives. They recognise that historical evidence comes from many different sources and are beginning to detect bias in writing. The importance of the Mary Rose to historical enquiry is considered and pupils learn to appreciate the educational value of historical artefacts. In their geographical studies, pupils in Years 3 and 4 learn about the differing climatic conditions around the world. Pupils show they are able to respond well to the teachers questions, using appropriate geographical vocabulary. They show a sound understanding of the factors that influence weather conditions. Pupils in Year 6 write eloquently about different kinds of environments such as the desert, savannah and prairie. Evidence from pupils' books shows good coverage and satisfactory standards in topics ranging from co-ordinate work to geological studies.

106. Teaching in the one geography lesson seen was good and promoted good learning. All pupils, except a few, were well behaved, contributed well and tried their best. The teacher showed appropriate high expectations in her requirement for the older pupils to use books and maps to research for information and work with increasing independence.
107. Environmental issues are appropriately developed in investigations about gas and fossil fuels. There is a very good emphasis on practical environmental work with pupils helping to care for the school grounds and the creatures that inhabit them. Pupils have a thorough understanding of issues such as re-cycling and using natural methods to generate energy. The use of information communication technology greatly enhances the learning opportunities in both subjects and for all ages and groups of ability.
108. The resources for geography are unsatisfactory. This has been recognised by the subject manager who has made this a priority of her action plan for the subject. Monitoring of teaching and learning in both subjects is satisfactory. The topic plans are fairly new and do not show exactly what each year group will learn and how skills will be developed in a progressive way. Opportunities for writing in different styles are not included and the ICT programmes and websites used are not recorded for future reference.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

109. Standards in information communication technology are well above expectations throughout the school. A good number of pupils achieve above the expected level for each year group. All pupils are making very good progress. Those identified as having special educational needs receive very effective and well targeted support. They are able to use ICT facilities to help with their work, for example, they re-draft and improve their writing or use spell checkers.
110. At the time of the previous inspections standards were reported as very good. Substantial development has taken place since that time and the school has done very well to maintain those same very high standards. This has been achieved through the purchase of good quality hardware, the provision of a suite for whole class or group teaching, detailed curriculum planning, and through the very high quality of support, enthusiasm and expertise of the specialist classroom assistant for ICT. Pupils show very good interest in the subject, are keen to learn and establish the basic ICT skills very quickly.
111. In Year 1, children learn how to import pictures into their text and there is very good development of technical language. They select a picture, change its size, shape or detail and consider where it can be best positioned. Even at this young age, they have experience of recording sounds to add to their work. By the end of Year 2 pupils are proficient in the use of the standard keyboard and mouse. They follow icons on the tool bar and on-screen prompts to retrieve and improve work from their own files. They organise information and present findings clearly, using pictograms, charts and graphs. Pupils have a good understanding of the use of ICT in the world at large. They know, for example, how it is used in shopping, credit cards, the Internet and e-mail. A very high number of children work to the higher National Curriculum levels by using the computer to develop ideas and solve problems. In one mathematics lesson, pupils investigated shapes from different angles, then labelled and categorised them. Some pupils make a PowerPoint presentation including animations and sound. They are confident in word processing and know

the benefits of re-drafting work using computer facilities. They access and use a variety of websites for research. In a coordinated way, pupils use the digital camera, the microscope and DVD player to enhance or record learning in other subjects. They learn about control technology by programming a floor robot accurately to move and turn in different ways.

112. Throughout Years 3 to 6, the very good provision ensures that skills and experience are further developed. By the end of Year 6 there is ample evidence of very secure attainment at a high level. Pupils are discriminate in their use of ICT and know that it is important to consider whether ICT or manual systems will be most efficient for the job in hand. They handle, analyse and present information for specific purposes in various forms and styles. Some examples include their advanced use of spreadsheets and the animated and audio weather maps they produced during their geography work. They confidently use the Internet and CD ROMS to find and select information. In this way, pupils often explore several different sources and find a wealth of material to support their independent studies. Some very good skills of interrogating sources were seen in completed work from the recent 'owl project'. Pupils' work was enhanced by this opportunity to collate, edit and process the material they had accessed. The use of e-mail is introduced in Years 3 and 4 and pupils' control skills develop well.
113. Pupils make very good progress because of the high quality of teaching. The expert tuition provided by the teaching assistant ensures that pupils have the individualised support they need from an early age. The school has successfully embedded ICT work into lesson planning so that it is not simply "tagged on" as an element of a lesson but becomes a valuable tool for learning and presenting work. Unfortunately the excellent range of resources used are not entered into the different subject plans but are kept together in the ICT files. This makes it more difficult for teachers to access the information quickly when, for example, planning the history work for a term. Record keeping and assessment procedures are very good, showing clearly what each pupil has learned and needs to know next. There is an excellent certificate award scheme which recognises milestones in pupils' learning.
114. The school has worked very well towards ensuring ICT is fully integrated as a tool for all subjects. The extra-curricular clubs held for all age groups are very good. The older pupils produce a very good news letter in their time at the club. From this, they derive a great sense of pride in achievement which reflects the very good attitudes to ICT. The subject co-ordinator, with the considerable help of the teaching assistant, has done a very commendable job in maintaining high standards and very good provision for the subject.

MUSIC

115. From evidence gained through lesson observations, in discussions with teachers and pupils, by looking at planning, attending assemblies and listening to pupils sing, it is apparent that the school provides a stimulating programme of work throughout the year. Inspection evidence shows that, overall, attainment is in line with national expectations for pupils at the ends of Years 2 and 6 and there are strengths in singing. Some pupils who attend the recorder club or have additional instrumental tuition read and play music to a good standard. Since the last inspection, the school has continued to provide a wide range of experiences so that pupils progress at the expected rate in all elements of music. There are opportunities for pupils to perform in various settings, which they do with confidence.

116. By the end of Year 2, pupils use their voices expressively when singing. They enjoy listening to music and express their likes and dislikes. Pupils learn to sing simple songs from memory, to use their voices confidently in a variety of ways and to modify tempo and dynamics. They control pitch very accurately when singing. In one lesson, pupils chose from a selection of instruments to play a high or low pitch. They know the names of the instruments and are confident in their work. In groups, pupils compose some music, rehearse and then perform. The teacher records the work so that they can evaluate it during the next lesson. Some, without any prompting from the teacher, were already making suggestions about how they could improve. In Years 3 to 6, pupils extend their experiences of music, exploring different ways to combine sounds and create effect. In Years 3 and 4 pupils appraised music and responded appropriately. They talked about the feelings and images that it evoked. One pupil said that it reminded him of a peaceful sea, another said it sounded like 'birds flying' and one pupil picked up the cultural element and said that it reminded him of 'Chinese boats'. Pupils follow the teacher's explanation of the pentatonic scale, showing a good understanding of notation. Their singing is very good as they follow the conductor carefully through some complicated rhythm work. In Years 5 and 6 pupils experiment by playing sets of notes to create different textures of sound showing confidence in their compositions. Their singing is above the average standard expected as they progress from a two-part to a four-part song. Throughout school pupils have good opportunities to experience music from a variety of times and cultures. Pupils enjoy performing and do so with confidence when they take part in an evening of music at the university or present their passion play at several local venues. The school's Christmas productions are a further avenue where pupils can develop their talents.
117. Teaching is usually good and there is a good level of expertise within the school. Learning moves at a fast pace and lessons include a series of short activities to maintain pupils' interest. There are good opportunities for pupils to share ideas and talents. Teachers often set open-ended tasks that allow pupils to express themselves imaginatively. Pupils with special educational needs do well in this subject, developing their talents and interests. Music has a high profile in the school. It is played quietly as pupils enter the hall for assemblies, creating a calm atmosphere. Visits by professional musicians enhance learning and provide exciting experiences for pupils of all ages. Resources for the subject are satisfactory with an appropriate selection of instruments and recorded music from around the world. The clear, detailed scheme of work helps to develop confidence in non-specialist staff and creates a good balance between listening, composing and performing. ICT is used effectively for recording and playing music but there are few opportunities for pupils to compose or alter music using computer programs.
118. The subject manager keeps a watchful eye on teaching and learning through lesson observations. She checks on progress and assesses work by transferring the class taped performances onto a master copy and checking this against National Curriculum criteria. Extra-curricular opportunities include the recorder group, a timbrel group and brass music tuition. There are very few books about music and composers in the class reading areas. Although teachers recognise pupils who have particular talents in the subject and provide for their needs, there is no register of gifted and talented pupils in place.
119. All pupils thoroughly enjoy their music and sing with feeling in assemblies, often uplifting the cultural and spiritual dimension.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

120. Children are achieving satisfactorily and attaining standards in gymnastics by the end of Year 6 that are in line with national expectations. Progress throughout the school varies but is overall satisfactory for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Boys and girls and pupils from the different ethnic groups all achieve equally well. It is not possible to report on teaching, learning and attainment at the end of Year 2.
121. Both lessons seen, one for Years 3 and 4 and the other for Years 5 and 6 had similar objectives involving devising and performing fluent sequences of movement using the apparatus. Although the details of the learning objectives for the older ones contained more challenge, they did not totally reflect the increasing expectations from Year 3 to Year 6 to ensure good progress across all year groups. Pupils in Year 6 largely met the end of year expectations. They devised satisfactory and imaginative solutions to problems. For example, they incorporated rotation into their sequence. They practised and improved their performance and offered constructive criticism to each other. Pupils of all age groups sustained energy and effort over an appropriate period of time and, in response to the teacher's prompts, they paid good attention to the rules of safety.
122. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Pupils are managed satisfactorily. The level of noise from the gymnastics lessons is transmitted through the screens into the surrounding classes and causes some disturbance. In one class lesson, pupils found it difficult to listen carefully through the noise of pupils jumping and landing. A review of timetabling could help to solve the problem. Teachers include good warm up activities and cooling down sessions. The teachers explained tasks well and there was good emphasis on control. Pupils produced some interesting sequences with well defined beginnings and endings. Throughout both lessons seen, there were many instances where the teacher presented the pupils with new challenges that helped to promote progress within the lesson.
123. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 attend swimming lessons and all achieve the expected 25 metres certificate. Planning shows the curriculum includes a suitable balance of gymnastics, dance and games. Extra-curricular opportunities are satisfactory, usually taking place in the lunch hour. There is some participation in after school football matches and tournaments periodically take place. The internal space available for physical education is very small but the school uses it as well as it is able. Resources are satisfactory.