

# INSPECTION REPORT

**HEYGARTH PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Eastham

LEA area: Wirral

Unique reference number: 130324

Headteacher: Mrs A. Osborne

Reporting inspector: Mrs J. E. Platt  
11565

Dates of inspection: 4th – 7th November 2002

Inspection number: 248798

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Heygarth Road  
Eastham  
Wirral

Postcode: CH62 8AG

Telephone number: 0151 3271570

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr G. Peters

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs J. E. Platt 11565	Registered inspector	Music Physical education English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve?
Mr R. Watts 9399	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr J. Fitzpatrick 19874	Team Inspector	English Religious education Special educational needs Educational inclusion	
Dr S. O'Sullivan 31525	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History	
Mrs M. Leah 22740	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Art and design	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Mrs S. Heaney 5862	Team Inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology	

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>11</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>31</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Heygarth Primary School is a large school having 298 boys and girls on roll aged between 3 and 11 years. There are 11 children attending full-time in the reception class and 64 children attend on a part-time basis in the reception class and the nursery. On entry to the nursery, attainment is broadly average. Approximately 14 per cent of children have a free school meal, which is similar to the national average. Eight per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs. This is lower than the national average. Identified needs include severe and specific learning difficulties. Three pupils have formal Statements of Special Educational Need. Very few pupils come from minority ethnic groups and no pupils need help in learning English as an additional language. Socially and economically the area served by the school is varied, but overall is similar to the national picture.

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

This is a good school. Overall, progress is good and by the time pupils leave school their standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. Teaching and learning are good. The dedication of the headteacher has led to a shared sense of purpose and a clear direction for the future. A major strength in the school is the warm and welcoming atmosphere which pervades the school. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Standards by the time pupils leave school are above average in English, mathematics, science, music, history and physical education.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide purposeful leadership. They receive effective and well-informed support from the governing body.
- Teaching is good and leads to pupils being eager to learn.
- The curriculum is stimulating and enriched by an excellent range of extra-curricular activities.
- Relationships are very good and pupils enjoy coming to school.
- Opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good.

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

- The progress more able pupils make in Years 1 and 2.
- The use of information and communication technology to extend learning in all subjects.
- The use of day-to-day assessment to match work more closely to pupils' needs.
- The provision of a library in the school.

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

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

The school has made good progress in tackling the issues raised in the previous inspection in January 1998. Standards in English have improved in response to better planning and improved teaching. However, it remains a concern that higher attaining pupils in Year 2 are still underachieving. Standards in religious education and geography have improved because new planning guidelines have been successfully implemented. Progress in information and communication technology has been sufficient to raise standards, but more needs to be done to enable pupils to practise their skills in other subjects. Good attention has been given to developing the role of co-ordinators and most now lead their subjects effectively. Although assessment procedures have improved, the use of assessment information to match work to pupils' needs remains an area for development. Teaching has improved. Most lessons now include activities that are both relevant and interesting to the pupils.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	<b>C</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>B</b>	well above average A above average B
Mathematics	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>C</b>	Average C below average D
Science	<b>C</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>A</b>	well below average E

These results show a fluctuating picture of results in national tests but an improvement in all subjects in 2002. Results in 2002 in English and science were above the national average and compared with similar schools were well above average in science. This shows pupils have been making better progress than expected. A good number of pupils exceeded the level expected for their age. Results in mathematics were average compared with both the national average and similar schools. Higher attaining pupils did well, but the Year 6 group included a few pupils who had more difficulties in mathematics and did not reach the expected level. The current Year 6 pupils have continued to build on these successes and standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. Considering their attainment at the end of Year 2, the overall achievement of these pupils is good.

The overall pattern of results since 1998 has been broadly in line with the national trend. However, standards have risen since 2001 and targets for 2003 are challenging. The school is aiming for more pupils to achieve above average levels. In response to very strong teaching in Year 6 the school is likely to achieve their targets.

In 2002, the results of national tests in Year 2 were average in reading and writing and well below average in mathematics. Compared to similar schools results were average in writing, below average in reading and well below average in mathematics. In all subjects, few pupils exceeded the level expected for their age and this is holding down the overall performance of the school. This was also the case in 2001 when results were below average. Current standards show an improvement in the number of pupils reaching the level expected for their age and overall standards are average in all subjects. Overall, achievement is satisfactory, but the higher attaining pupils are not being sufficiently challenged and are underachieving.

Children in the nursery and reception class get off to a good start to their education. They benefit from a rich variety of activities and make good progress. By the time they move into Year 1 many have exceeded the level expected for them in their personal and social development and early literacy and numeracy skills. They reach the level expected for their age in their other work.

Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall. It is better in the juniors because work is more closely matched to their needs.

In response to more detailed planning guidelines and better teaching, standards have improved in information and communication technology, geography and religious education and are now satisfactory. In music, physical education and history, standards are above average in Year 6. In all other subjects, standards are wholly satisfactory.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very proud of their school and play a full and active part in all it offers. They are enthusiastic and keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. In whole school assemblies behaviour is exemplary and a real sense of belonging to a community is developed.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils in Year 6 are good role models for the younger pupils and are sensitive to their needs. Relationships are very good.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Pupils are punctual and lessons start very promptly.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. However, it varies between excellent and unsatisfactory. Teaching is consistently good in the nursery and reception class and the children receive a firm foundation to their school life. The best teaching seen was in Year 6 when teaching was often very good and in one music lesson teaching was excellent. As a result, much new learning takes place in pupils' last year in school.

The teaching of mathematics and English are good overall. It is better in the juniors because teachers set more challenging tasks and this accelerates pupils' learning. Numeracy skills are taught effectively. Lessons start with a lively opening that increases pupils' problem solving skills. In literacy, letters and sounds are taught effectively and pupils make good use of this information in their early reading. In Years 1 and 2, writing is not taught as effectively and pupils are not using the skills taught in literacy lessons in other subjects.

The needs of pupils with special educational needs are mostly met. Teaching is good when tasks are set that take into consideration their prior attainment and when additional adult support is available. However, this is not always the case and leads to some pupils marking time in lessons rather than enhancing their learning. The needs of higher attaining pupils are not met in Years 1 and 2 and teachers' expectations of these pupils are not high enough. This is much better in the juniors and is the main reason for the stronger teaching in these years.

In the best lessons the pace is brisk and learning outcomes are clear. This was not the case when teaching was unsatisfactory and pupils were unclear about the focus of their tasks and the pace of learning was slow. Teachers do not always give enough attention to pupils' progress and this leads to tasks not matching pupils' ability. This restricts their learning. Teachers are growing in confidence teaching information and communication technology, but are not yet making enough use of these skills to support pupils' learning in all subjects. A positive feature in many lessons is the variety of approaches that make learning enjoyable. Teachers also manage lessons extremely well so that pupils learn in an orderly atmosphere.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is varied and includes a good balance of academic, creative and physical activities. Visits, visitors and very close links with the community make learning more interesting. An excellent range of extra-curricular opportunities enriches the curriculum and makes school fun.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Pupils benefit from effective support from classroom assistants. When this help is not available pupils struggle when tasks are not closely matched to their individual needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Provision for spiritual development is very good. It is evident in pupils' appreciation of the talents of others and the feeling of belonging to a community. Moral and social development is very good. Pupils are friendly and courteous. Pupils have good opportunities to learn about their own culture and the customs and beliefs of major world religions.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Pupils are cared for in a safe and friendly atmosphere. Good attention is given to promoting attendance and monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour. Procedures to check on pupils' academic progress are good. More use could be made of assessment to support pupils' learning.

The school has a strong partnership with parents who have very positive views of the school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work together as a team with great determination and a clear vision for the school, which is shared by all. Subject co-ordinators have good plans to improve their subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are fully involved in all aspects of the school and provide effective and friendly support. They are well informed because they are regular visitors to the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school carries out detailed analysis of test results and evaluates progress in all areas of the school. Priorities for development are then agreed based on these findings.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school makes effective use of most resources. Information and communication technology resources are not yet fully utilised to support learning. Money is spent wisely with a clear link to identified need. Spending decisions are considered closely and evaluated to check they provide good value for money.

The school has a good number of teachers, although only a few support assistants. Accommodation and learning resources are good. However, the school does not have a library which pupils can use for research.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• They feel welcome in school and are comfortable approaching staff about any concerns.</li><li>• Teachers help the pupils to become mature in a friendly atmosphere. Their children enjoy school.</li><li>• The school is well led and managed and works closely with parents.</li><li>• Teaching is good.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parents had no major concerns.</li></ul>

One hundred and one (34 per cent) questionnaires were returned. Inspectors agree with the parents' very positive views of the school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

##### *Standards and progress in the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup>*

1. Standards on entry to the nursery are broadly average. However, in some aspects of language and communication, pupils are below average. In response to stimulating activities and good teaching, children make good progress during their time in the Foundation Stage. By the time they reach Year 1, their attainment meets the early learning goals<sup>2</sup> expected for their age and many are working at above average levels in their early literacy and numeracy skills. In response to very good teaching of personal and social skills many children exceed the level expected. They are very confident and eager to share their experiences. Teachers tackle the children's weaker language skills through a range of practical activities. As a result, children quickly learn their letters and sounds and enjoy spotting simple words in books. Children enjoy singing number rhymes and can count to 10 and beyond. Children are enthusiastic to learn more about the world around them because of the variety of carefully planned activities that encourage them to investigate and find out for themselves. Children increase their creative and physical skills through an imaginative range of practical activities and role-play experiences. During their time in the Foundation Stage, children are well prepared for the National Curriculum and they greatly benefit from the caring atmosphere which develops their confidence as well as their academic skills.

##### *Results and analysis of national tests for seven-year-olds*

2. In the national tests in 2002, pupils in Year 2 achieved average standards in reading and writing and well below average results in mathematics. When compared with similar schools, test results were average in writing, below average in reading and well below average in mathematics. Teacher assessments for science were average. These results show pupils are not doing as well as expected in mathematics. The school has been focusing on the needs of the lower attaining pupils and this has been successful, with more pupils now reaching the level expected for their age. However, few pupils are exceeding this level and this is holding down overall standards. For example, in mathematics all of the pupils reached the level expected for seven-year-olds. However, a few pupils had only just reached this level and very few reached above average levels. In writing and science no pupils reached above average levels. Trends in results have fluctuated very much since 1999, but data shows an overall improvement since 2000. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.

##### *Current standards and achievement of pupils in Year 2*

3. Current standards in Year 2 show that they have continued to rise, although higher attaining pupils are still not doing as well as they could. More pupils are reaching the level expected for their age in all subjects and standards are average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Considering many pupils start in Year 1 with average attainment, these standards represent satisfactory achievement for many, although the higher attaining pupils are underachieving. This was a concern at the last inspection and remains an area of development for the school. Standards in reading and writing have improved since the last inspection with the improved performance of lower attaining pupils. Most pupils read accurately. Standards in science and mathematics are similar to those identified in the last inspection.
4. Currently, pupils with special educational needs are making satisfactory progress because additional adult support is usually available to offer extra advice in literacy and numeracy lessons. However, such support is not always available in other lessons. Individual teachers vary in the use they make of these pupils' individual educational plans and the approaches they take to meet the needs of individual pupils. Teachers do not always plan with sufficient care to match the pupils' needs and this restricts their learning in lessons. These pupils benefit from additional literacy support in small groups which provides an extra boost so they can maintain the same pace of learning as their peers.

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<sup>1</sup> The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the Reception class. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning. These mainly refer to: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development and personal and social development, but also include: knowledge and understanding of the world and physical and creative development.

<sup>2</sup> Early learning goals are the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage.

#### *Results and analysis of national tests for eleven-year-olds*

5. In the national tests in 2002, pupils in Year 6 achieved standards that were above the national average in English and science and average in mathematics. Compared to similar schools, results were average in mathematics, above average in English and well above average in science. These results are much higher than in previous years and show that, in English and science, pupils are doing better than expected. Overall, trends in results have been broadly in line with the national trend since 1998, but have risen significantly since 2001. Improvements have been brought about by:
- a focus on improving writing;
  - booster classes in mathematics;
  - improved teaching in mathematics and teachers being more comfortable teaching the National Numeracy Strategy;
  - teachers making lessons more enjoyable;
  - teachers giving more attention to investigation in science and a more thorough preparation for the national tests.

These initiatives have reaped considerable success especially combined with the very good teaching observed in Year 6. The higher attaining pupils are now being fully challenged and every year more pupils are exceeding the level expected for their age. This has a very positive effect on the school's overall performance. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.

#### *Current standards and achievement of pupils in Year 6*

6. Current standards show the school has built on the results in recent national tests. In English, mathematics and science, pupils reach levels that are above average. Achievement for many is good especially in Years 5 and 6 where teachers have high expectations and much is achieved in these years. Standards have improved since the last inspection and the school has set challenging targets for the Year 6 pupils. The school is aiming for a higher number of pupils to reach above average levels in English and mathematics and with the very strong teaching observed in Year 6 they are on line to achieve these targets.
7. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in Year 3 to 6. However, this varies between classes depending on the support available. Pupils make best progress when they receive close support from one of the classroom assistants designated to support them. Pupils with formal statements of need have plans carefully designed to meet their needs. This is helping them to make good progress.

#### *Current standards in English*

8. Standards in speaking and listening are satisfactory in Year 2. Pupils talk happily to each other, although when talking to adults a few are less confident and responses are brief. Good progress is made and standards are above average in Year 6. Pupils ask astute questions to clarify their understanding. Most pupils read accurately in Year 2 and overall standards are satisfactory. Few are reading at a higher level or have favourite authors. However, teachers have been working hard to improve pupils' motivation for reading and, by Year 6, pupils are confidently accessing information from books and overall standards are above average. Higher attaining pupils are discerning readers with a love of books. Pupils achieve satisfactory standards in writing in Year 2. Many still need support in their efforts to write unaided and handwriting is uneven and not always easy to read. No pupils are working at above average levels. This improves considerably in Years 3 to 6 so that standards are good in Year 6. Higher attaining pupils write at length in grammatical, lively English that is accurately spelled and punctuated.
9. Pupils make good use of their literacy skills to support their learning in other subjects. For example, in history, pupils write diaries and factual reports. In religious education, pupils retell Bible stories in their own words.

#### *Current standards in mathematics*

10. Standards in mathematics are average in Year 2. Pupils are not always given work which enables them to make good progress. This improves as pupils move into Years 5 and 6 and standards are

above average in Year 6. Pupils enjoy the challenge of problem solving and are confident working in fractions and decimals using mental calculations swiftly and accurately.

11. Pupils effectively use their knowledge of numeracy in other subjects. For example, in Year 1 pupils have calculated their results of a pet survey and produced a graph in information and communication technology. Year 5 pupils understand co-ordinates and use them correctly to find places on a map.

#### *Current standards in science*

12. Standards are satisfactory in Year 2. Pupils enjoy investigation and understand the importance of creating a circuit to make a bulb light. They do not raise their own investigations. This is better in Year 6 and standards are above average. Pupils question their findings and can record their results in different formats.

#### *Standards in other subjects*

13. Standards in information and communication technology are satisfactory throughout the school. Teacher training and a better range of experiences have brought about improvement. Resources have improved, but classes do not have computers and this restricts the opportunity pupils have to extend their learning in other subjects. The school has recently purchased a number of laptop computers to compensate for this difficulty.
14. In response to good teaching, standards in history, music and physical education are above average in Year 6. Standards in all other subjects are wholly satisfactory. The previous weaknesses in religious education and geography have been resolved with more detailed planning guidelines.

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

15. Pupils have very good attitudes towards the school and their education. In the opinion of parents, virtually all pupils enjoy school and this is seen in their enthusiastic response when the teaching is very good. They clearly thoroughly enjoy the excellent range of extra-curricular activities provided. In the nursery, some children are rather tentative and unsure of themselves, but are starting to gain confidence. Both they and the children in the reception class enjoyed the visit of the fire engine and were keen to sit in the cab. Afterwards they used that experience in their play and were seen, all kitted up, putting out 'fires' with great gusto in the playground.
16. In the rest of the school, lessons start promptly and pupils are rarely late. During lesson introductions most are attentive and keen to answer questions. In the best lessons they are almost beside themselves to answer and contribute perceptive comments. Pupils generally concentrate well and work hard to solve problems. Pupils in the Year 6 classes entered into the spirit of their debates on the banning of 'unofficial' fireworks well and had clearly worked hard to prepare their contributions. Pupils are proud of the work they do and are keen to show it to others. Occasionally, when the teaching is uninspiring, goes on too long or their work is unclear or not challenging, pupils become restless and noisy. Pupils are enthusiastic about doing things outside the classroom and many take part in at least one of the many extra-curricular activities offered.
17. The behaviour of pupils is good. In lessons, pupils respond well to a combination of a quiet reminder to pay attention and encouragement and praise when they do so. Most teachers need to spend very little time on discipline and concentrate fully on their teaching; this contributes towards the good rate of learning seen in the majority of lessons, particularly for the older pupils. Their behaviour as they move around the school is also good and dinnertime gives pupils a good experience of social interaction. In whole school assemblies, behaviour is impressive and pupils play a full part in these occasions. Pupils have the opportunity to discuss the reasons behind school rules and fully accept their validity. They have a strong sense of what is right and what is wrong and some of the older pupils are starting to question how such judgements are reached. Pupils treat books, resources and the property of others with care. There have been no exclusions in the last year.
18. The personal development of pupils is very good. In the nursery and reception classes, children are gaining in confidence and maturity so that they each play an increasing role as part of the class. In the rest of the school, the good rapport between adults and pupils is very noticeable and pupils

respond well to the efforts of staff to build on this. Pupils are confident with their teachers and respond by giving of their best. There were only a few lessons where this good rapport was absent and the quality of learning suffered as a consequence. Pupils recognise that, although theirs is largely a mono-cultural school, there are other ways of life and they are used to discussing these. They accept that all are equal under the skin and, in discussion with inspectors, one pupil referred to a *smile is the same in any language*. Their understanding of the impact of their actions on others is very apparent and is reflected in the way pupils treat each other. Their social development is very good.

19. Pupils play happily together in the playground and respect the right of all to enjoy their playtime. There are very few even minor incidents of conflict, either deliberate or accidental. There is little or no bullying and no social exclusion was observed during the inspection. Pupils willingly accept responsibilities offered; for example, older pupils help supervise and play with the younger ones. However, in a few lessons where pupils might expect to have more independence, such as science and design and technology, they have insufficient opportunity to show this.
20. Pupils are gaining in maturity and developing good self-esteem. This is seen, for example, in the Year 6 debates and in the school council, where they are starting to become confident in standing up for their opinions. Participation in the wide range of activities also develops their understanding of their own strengths, talents and interests. While they understand, through religious education lessons, the concept of belief, they have not yet started to ponder the purpose of existence and their place in the greater scheme of things. Overall, their spiritual development is very good. They also show good cultural development, with awareness of music, art and good literature and they take part in activities that develop their own personal experiences. While they understand other cultures in the context of geography and religion and have good exposure to, for example, African music and dance at the nearby secondary school, they have little exposure to other cultures found in more ethnically diverse areas of Britain.
21. Overall, attendance last year was broadly in line with the national average for primary schools and there is little unauthorised absence. Pupils are very punctual. This allows all pupils to gain the most from the good quality of education provided.

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

22. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching has improved since the last inspection in response to better planning and additional training. In the lessons observed, teaching was good and better in 62 per cent of lessons. However, there is variation between the different years in the school. In the Foundation Stage the teaching seen was consistently good. In the lessons seen, 79 per cent of teaching was good and better and no teaching was less than satisfactory. In the lessons seen in Years 1 and 2, teaching and learning were satisfactory. Forty-one per cent of teaching seen was good but limited very good teaching was seen. Teaching is good in Years 3 to 6. The strongest teaching observed was in Year 6 where teachers consistently challenge pupils and much learning takes place in these classes. Excellent teaching was seen in music in Year 6. A small amount of teaching was unsatisfactory. This was spread across the school and subjects. Some of the weaker teaching was linked to temporary staff covering for long term absence and teaching lacked sufficient skills when teaching literacy.

#### *Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage*

23. Children enjoy the many experiences offered in the Foundation Stage and they get off to a good start to their school life. Activities are varied and exciting so children are eager to learn. There is close liaison between teachers and support staff so that all are clear about their roles. As a result, the day runs smoothly with children benefiting from the carefully organised classrooms. Early literacy skills are taught imaginatively through a range of practical activities and rhymes. As a result, children make good progress in their early reading and writing skills. They are introduced to books through listening to stories and many already have a favourite book. Numeracy skills are taught by number rhymes and games that make learning fun. Teachers are imaginative in the range of methods they use and this maintains children's interest. All staff know the children well. They know when to intervene and offer support and when to stand back and encourage independence. Relationships are good and children are willing to try out new ideas because they know their efforts are valued. As a result, children grow in confidence and are well prepared for the National Curriculum by the time they start in Year 1.

### *Teaching and learning in Years 1 to 6*

24. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subjects they teach. Teaching is good overall in English, mathematics, science, history, music and physical education. The last inspection identified teachers' lack of knowledge to teach religious education. This weakness has been rectified with more detailed planning guidelines and additional training by the local authority. Consequently, teachers are more confident teaching the subject and standards have improved. Teachers have also benefited from training in information and communication technology and are more confident when teaching pupils in the information and technology suite. Purposeful questioning extends pupils' learning.
25. The teaching of numeracy skills is good. Openings to lessons are lively and teachers use additional prompts when needed to ensure all play an active part in these sessions. In Year 6, the teacher is very quick to extend learning by getting pupils to check their answers and to describe how they have reached their answers. As a result, pupils learn from each other.
26. Literacy skills are taught effectively. Letters and sounds are taught thoroughly and pupils use these skills well in their early attempts at reading and writing. In Years 1 and 2, teachers are less effective teaching writing and pupils are not extending the skills taught in literacy lessons to their independent writing.
27. In the information and communication technology suite most teachers are confident teaching basic computer skills. However, these skills are not sufficiently promoted in other subjects and so pupils do not have enough time to practise the skills taught in these lessons.
28. Planning is satisfactory. Teachers are now making effective use of detailed medium term plans and this is leading to more continuity of learning as pupils move from year to year. Currently, there is no common format for lesson plans. Although most plans make clear the activities that are to be followed, they are not as clear about what the teacher intends the pupils to learn and this often clouds the purpose of the activity for the pupils. This was the weakness when teaching was unsatisfactory in a literacy lesson. Too much attention was given to the tasks being completed and pupils referred to learning about the Romans rather than learning about the features of report writing, which was the literacy focus for the lesson. As a result, little new learning took place. When teaching is very good in Years 5 and 6, teachers share the learning outcomes with pupils and revisit them at the end of the lesson. This was very effective in a physical education lesson seen when the teacher asked the pupils *what have you learnt* and pupils identified many new hockey skills.
29. Teacher expectations are the significant factor that separates the satisfactory teaching in Years 1 and 2 to the good teaching in Years 3 to 6. In Years 1 and 2, expectations of work are not high enough in many lessons and so higher attaining pupils are often marking time rather than increasing their learning. For example, the mathematics work set for the higher attaining Year 2 pupils was too easy and so was finished quickly and the next task repeats the work rather than extending learning. When teaching in English was less than satisfactory tasks failed to challenge pupils and little new learning was introduced. In the best lessons, teachers have very high expectations of pupils and push them on to try harder work. This is very effective in Year 6 and pupils are constantly striving to improve and much new learning takes place for pupils of all abilities.
30. A positive feature in many lessons is the variety of activities used to make lessons interesting. This is effective in the additional literacy lessons for the younger pupils when a puppet is used imaginatively and makes these sessions fun. In numeracy lessons, pupils write down their answers on small white boards that teachers can check quickly and this keeps all pupils involved in the task. Many lessons include group work that enhances social skills as well as speaking and listening. This is most effective in music lessons and pupils enjoy collaborating when writing short pieces of music to perform in front of the class. Standards in science have improved because teachers put more focus on practical activities and pupils in Year 6 are more confident predicting what might happen in their investigations. A weakness in design and technology is the lack of activities that enable pupils to come up with their own ideas and make choices about materials and tools.
31. A very strong feature is the happy atmosphere that pervades the school. This is very evident in lessons and the management of pupils is based on mutual respect for each other and very good

relationships. This is very beneficial for pupils with special educational needs because they are supported by their peers as well as staff. In Year 6, teachers stress the importance of self-discipline and pupils recognise the importance of good behaviour.

32. The school makes good use of time. The start of the day is very prompt and within minutes the register is taken and pupils are down to work. This enables a good range of experiences to be planned for the pupils. In the best lessons, teachers move quickly and smoothly from task to task and learning is effective. In Year 6, the teachers set time constraints and this leads to a buzz of activity as pupils strive to finish tasks in the set time.
33. Support staff play a full and active role in lessons. Teachers give them a clear role and they carry it out diligently. Their support for pupils with special educational needs is carefully planned and enables these pupils to play a full part in lessons.
34. The overall teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. However, their needs are not sufficiently met when support is not available. Most teachers ensure that these pupils are matched with simplified tasks and reading materials and also keep a close eye on them to check they are coping in lessons. A few teachers set the same work for everyone and this restricts the progress of these pupils. When teaching was unsatisfactory insufficient attention was given to these pupils, they were unable to complete the work and limited new learning took place.
35. Teachers often make their lessons interesting by using imaginative resources. For example, in religious education when a child's robe and other artefacts were used when learning about baptisms. Teachers go out of their way to arrange visits and visitors and this makes learning more relevant to pupils. A weakness is the under-use of computers to support learning. To some extent this is hampered by the lack of resources in classrooms. However, during the inspection the resources available in Years 1 and 2 and the information and communication suite were underused. Teachers now have access to inter-active screens, but as yet not all teachers are sufficiently confident to use this resource.
36. Marking is satisfactorily used to assist pupils' understanding of their progress and how they can improve. It is better for older pupils when teachers include comments to guide future work. There is an absence of rigorous assessment procedures to check on pupils' day-to-day progress and this leads to tasks not always matching pupils' ability. This problem is less obvious when pupils are grouped according to their ability in mathematics and literacy in Year 6. In these lessons, teachers have a clear picture of pupils' current ability and work is set that moves on their learning at a good rate. However, in other classes this is not always the case and, consequently, some of the work is repetitious or insufficiently challenging and does not move pupils on fast enough. This problem is more apparent in Years 1 and 2 when activities are generally geared to pupils attaining at levels that are average for their age group or who were working towards that level and there was little expectation that pupils would attain at above average levels.
37. Homework is satisfactory. It includes reading, mathematics and some tasks to extend work in lessons. Pupils enjoy it when an extended research topic is set to be completed at home.

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

38. The school provides a stimulating, broad and balanced curriculum that meets the needs of the vast majority of its pupils well. The provision clearly reflects the school's philosophy to provide a varied curriculum *founded in the key skills of literacy and numeracy with opportunities to experience all elements of the National Curriculum and beyond*. The high priority given to personal and social education both formally and in all aspects of school life is a particular strength. This is evident in the pupils' positive attitudes to school and their enthusiasm for learning. Statutory requirements are met in all subjects of the National Curriculum and in religious education. Since the last inspection, the school has made significant improvements. The curriculum for religious education and geography now fully meets requirements and the school gives more attention to the investigative aspects of science. The curriculum covers all aspects of information and communication technology and has been strengthened by the use of the new computer suite and improved teachers' expertise. However, there is insufficient use of information and communication technology to support learning in other subjects.



39. The rich range of activities in the nursery and reception classes is planned carefully to support the children's progress towards the nationally agreed goals in the areas of learning. Appropriate priority is given to personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. The provision of a wide range of interesting practical activities both in class and in the outdoor play areas gives children a good start to their school lives.
40. The school has good systems for teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. National strategies are thoroughly implemented in all classes. The particular emphasis on writing throughout the school and the provision of clearly focused shared reading sessions in addition to the literacy hour, are having a positive impact on standards. The successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has increased pupils' understanding of mathematical processes, improved mental skills and raised enthusiasm for the subject.
41. The quality and range of extra curricular activities are excellent. They greatly enhance the pupils' skills and the school's community spirit through the involvement of a high proportion of enthusiastic staff and pupils, as well as outside agencies. The many lunchtime and after school clubs include a variety of competitive sport and musical activities, drama, information and communication technology, Spanish, civic awards and school council. A wide range of visits and visitors, including a residential trip for older pupils, further enhances provision.
42. The school is committed to providing equal opportunities and is mainly successful in meeting the needs of different groups of pupils. Good arrangements are made to support lower attainers in English and mathematics through booster and additional classes. There is, however, some lack of challenge for potential higher attainers in Years 1 and 2. As a result, a below average proportion of pupils reach the higher levels in statutory tests at the end of Year 2. Resources are chosen with sensitivity to race, gender, age, disability and religion. Particular care is taken to provide a selection of books to catch the interest of boys and increase their enthusiasm for reading. The school welcomes all pupils and has made effective links with the nearby school for pupils with special educational needs. This includes arranging for pupils with disabilities to attend Heygarth and this is working very well for all parties involved.
43. The school has recently drawn up a register of gifted and talented pupils who are classified under a range of headings: academic, aesthetic, physical and social. A broad range of pupils has been identified under one or other of these categories, such as gifted footballers, high attaining Year 6 pupils and some promising artists. The school supports these pupils effectively and they make good progress in extending the skills in their specific activity.
44. Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is very good, in line with the importance the school attaches to this area. There is a well-organised personal, social and health education programme, which provides clear support for staff in teaching interpersonal skills. Sex and drugs education are carefully planned and sensitively taught. In weekly Circle Time<sup>3</sup> lessons and across the curriculum, teachers provide good quality opportunities for pupils to successfully develop caring and responsible attitudes. The school is a health-promoting school and pupils are encouraged to eat healthily and take part in sport.
45. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Individual education plans are drawn up by the class teacher in consultation with the special educational needs co-ordinator and any relevant outside agency for all pupils on the register of special educational needs. These set out specific targets which closely match the needs of the pupils concerned and the teaching strategies or methods that should be employed to meet the needs. They also record at set intervals how well the targets have been achieved. The use of these plans is variable between classes and on occasions tasks are set that do not take into consideration the pupils' identified needs and this hampers the progress they make.
46. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is very good and this greatly enhances the curriculum.

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<sup>3</sup> During Circle Time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and social issues. All pupils agree that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time can speak. Respect for each other pupils' views will occur at all times and therefore pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any form of interruption from other pupils.

47. Opportunities for pupils' spiritual development are very good. The school has a strong community spirit and a commitment to shared values across the school that leads to a healthy, welcoming and supportive atmosphere. Teachers provide ample time for pupils to appreciate their environment and to pause and reflect on their own experiences. Pupils respond well to such opportunities and show high self-esteem that is well balanced by their empathy towards others. There is a daily act of collective worship, held in class, with other classes, or as a whole-school assembly. In each of these settings, care is taken to arrange an appropriate atmosphere, often by playing carefully selected music, and time is given for reflection and personal prayer. Pupils are encouraged to contribute ideas, to discuss their feelings and to think seriously about many topics. A spiritual element is developed through singing, which is both tuneful and sincere. Lessons in religious education increase pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity and of other faiths, while also teaching pupils to appreciate individual differences and to respect the integrity of others, thus further enhancing pupils' spiritual development.
48. The school's provision for pupils' moral development is very good. This is guided by a clear policy that encourages a coherent approach to good practice across the school. The school provides an open and safe environment in which pupils can express their views and practise moral decision-making. Teachers adopt a consistent approach to discipline that is marked by the effective use of praise and encouragement. All pupils understand the code of conduct that guides their behaviour and they respond accordingly. Teachers, particularly through their relationships with pupils and colleagues, provide pupils with good role models of integrity, fairness and respect. Pupils are also taught to distinguish right from wrong and explain the impact of negative and positive actions in terms of the consequences for themselves and for others. Moral issues are also examined in a range of lessons including literacy, religious education and geography. Consequently, 11-year-old pupils are able to discuss dilemmas in a mature and sensible manner, showing their own personal commitment to a particularly positive and considered moral code.
49. Opportunities to extend social development are very good and pupils show high quality interpersonal skills. They work co-operatively with one another and amicably resolve minor conflicts. This was very evident in music when pupils often work in small groups and they are very good at exchanging their ideas and happily accept criticism from their peers. Older pupils take special responsibility for younger ones across a range of activities. They sit next to them in assembly and give them a gentle reminder if they start to get restless. Pupils in all years have an opportunity to participate in the school council. This gives them a real understanding of decision-making and the part the pupils can play in the school. Pupils extend their social skills in the many extra-curricular activities. They learn the need to work as a team and when they go on the residential visit they appreciate how they need to be tolerant and supportive of others. The school actively encourages pupils to develop an understanding of citizenship through participation in the local authority's civic awards scheme. Pupils also support many charities and were busy collecting boxes of Christmas gifts for Rumania during the inspection. This extends the pupils' understanding of the part they can play in the wider community.
50. The school's provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Many subjects celebrate the pupils' own culture and pupils develop a good understanding of their own cultural heritage. Music lessons often include listening to a range of music including classical composers. Pupils have enjoyed recognising the animals in *Peter and the Wolf*. In literacy lessons, pupils are introduced to classical texts and the school productions have included *Macbeth* and *Romeo and Juliet*. The school celebrates the school's local culture through a wide variety of visits to places of local interest, including museums, art galleries, and concert halls. Pupils are introduced to other faiths and cultures in religious education and these are displayed around the school. Visitors from local churches and other faiths share their experiences with the pupils. Pupils have visited a synagogue and a Sikh temple. Other languages are used to welcome visitors to the school and discussions with pupils show an understanding of racial harmony. The youngest children in the school celebrated Diwali, but the school misses opportunities to fully develop pupils' appreciation of life in a multi-cultural society.
51. The school has effective links with the community, which enrich the curriculum. Teachers make good use of the local environment to support, for example, work in history and geography. Visits to local places of worship extend pupils' spiritual development. Local visitors to school give drama presentations and broaden pupils' musical experiences. Visitors from the police and emergency services bring home to pupils the practical aspects of personal safety.

52. The links with other schools, both neighbouring primary schools and the local secondary schools, make a very good contribution both to teachers' expertise and the learning of Heygarth pupils. Through the cluster and other grouping arrangements, staff get the opportunity to gain from the good practice and experience of other schools. Links with a special school are mutually beneficial and pupils from there spend time in Heygarth and pupils learn to understand their challenges and how they can be supportive. Links with South Wirral High School are very beneficial and the 'Bridging Project' helps pupils quickly integrate into secondary education, as well as broadening their experience in their final year at Heygarth. The physical bridge, built by pupils from all the primary feeder schools on the secondary site, is impressive evidence of this enrichment.

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

53. The school is a very caring, harmonious community and both parents and pupils are very appreciative of the strong pastoral ethos. Pupils are well cared for because the school has good, practical measures to cater for any problems. All staff are trained in first aid and pupils are well looked after if they become ill or have accidents at school. Staff are sympathetic to pupils' needs, which often require close liaison with parents and carers. Health and safety risk assessments and equipment checks are carried out. However, procedures would be more secure if there was better documentation, for example a system of collating all identified risks in a single easily accessible record which would facilitate tracking of action. Child protection procedures are in place and the designated teacher and all staff have been appropriately trained in their use. Welfare agencies give the school good support in the cases encountered. Behaviour is monitored effectively.
54. Procedures for promoting good behaviour are very good. The discipline system emphasises praise and the pupils value the system of rewards, for example the 'smiley face' certificates and the achievement bricks in the infants' 'wall'. All staff, including teachers, classroom assistants and lunchtime supervisors, co-ordinate their approach to discipline. The absence of bullying is a consequence of the school's appropriate emphasis on a caring environment and encouragement of discussion amongst pupils.
55. Teachers complete registers punctually at the start of each school session and the few pupils who are late are recorded as they arrive. Pupils who leave during a session are also recorded, so that accounting for pupils for fire safety is secure. The school makes good use of the education welfare officer to support and chivvy parents of the few pupils who have the poor attendance records.
56. The school has good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. Thorough assessment of children in the nursery and in the reception class results in a well-rounded knowledge of children's abilities as they enter school. This acts as a baseline against which the pupils' further progress can be measured. In Year 1, this knowledge is complemented by the results of standardised tests in numeracy and literacy. All pupils in Years 1 to 6 are formally assessed by school examinations in English and mathematics in February and May each year. On the basis of information yielded by the standardised tests, school examinations and focused teacher assessment, targets for literacy and numeracy are set for individual pupils from Year 1 onwards. These are shared with parents and are a focus of attention at parents' evenings. In addition, the school analyses the results attained by pupils in national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 to check on the overall performance of the school. These judgements are supported by additional information from the local authority that allows the school to compare its performance with that of other schools in the locality.
57. The school makes satisfactory use of assessment information to guide curricular planning. Following the assessment offered by the last inspection report, it has made the quality of pupils' writing a priority. All members of staff have undertaken training in the teaching of writing and extra time is allocated to writing and standards have risen. Enough attention has not been given to raising the standards of the higher attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 and national tests have identified this weakness over several years. The school has been more effective identifying the needs of lower attaining pupils and a focus on their needs has been effective in raising the standards of these pupils. Every year more pupils are now reaching the level expected for their age in the national tests for seven-year-olds. Similarly, more attention has been given to investigation in science because test results identified this as a weakness.

58. Assessment is also used to identify pupils with special educational needs and other pupils who are failing to keep pace with their peers. The pupils identified in this way are supported in a variety of ways. Those identified as having special educational needs have individual education plans drawn up by their class teacher in consultation with the co-ordinator for special educational needs. These plans include specific targets, which enable teachers to closely monitor their progress. Other pupils deemed weaker but not placed on the register of special educational needs also receive additional support. In English, this includes early and additional literacy support sessions. Progress is closely monitored in these sessions and enables pupils to catch up with their peers. There is also a system called 'Springboard' in use in Years 5 and 6 to assist pupils requiring additional support in numeracy and this has led to improved standards in Year 6.
59. The use of assessment information to track pupils' individual progress is satisfactory. Information is being used to set pupils' individual targets, to track their progress and to identify early any problems that may be developing. In practice, however, interviews with pupils indicated that other than in the case of pupils in Years 4 to 6 in literacy, pupils generally had only a vague idea of their targets and often had little grasp of the measures required to attain them. The best use of targets is in literacy in Years 5 and 6, where the good practice is resulting in improved standards of attainment. In many other cases day-to-day assessment and the results of data analysis are not sufficiently informing teachers' planning or teaching. On some occasions, teachers do not adjust teaching materials or approaches to meet the needs of lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. This restricts their learning in lessons, especially when additional adult support is not available.

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

60. Parents are generally very satisfied with what the school provides and achieves. The parents who attended the meeting before the inspection were supportive of the school and had few concerns. They felt that standards are good and that it is a very friendly school. A few parents thought there was too much homework. The school takes appropriate action over their concerns, for example, about the discipline procedures. About one third of the parents returned a questionnaire and the views expressed there were also very positive. Parents are comfortable about approaching the school with worries, feel that the school has high expectations for their children and is helping them to become mature while making learning enjoyable. There were no areas of even minor concern. The details of the questionnaire responses are given in the table in Part C. These positive views are generally confirmed by the inspection.
61. The school's links with parents are very effective and the school has done well to earn the confidence of parents shown in these views. The quality of information about the life of the school generally is good, with regular and detailed newsletters. When children start in the nursery and reception classes, parents have the opportunity to see the school and meet staff and other parents. In all classes, parents have the opportunity to meet the teacher at the start of the year to learn about what and how their child will be taught. In addition, they are invited to discuss their child's targets with the teacher twice a year. Pupils' annual reports meet statutory requirements and give good information about the progress in all the subjects taught. They differentiate well according to the ability of the child and the pupil has the opportunity to record their own opinion of their progress. The comments on the pupils overall and on their personal development are good and reflect the teacher's close knowledge of the class. The school has taken several opportunities to consult parents about the direction the school should take, for example changing the discipline procedures.
62. Parents of children with special educational needs are well informed of their child's special needs and the targets set for improvement. They are invited to attend all review meetings and contribute to their children's learning.
63. Parents play an effective role in supporting the school and their children. Most parents hear their child read at home and encourage them to do homework. The school issued a Home-School Agreement after consultation, but by no means all have been returned and the benefit is uncertain. A small group of parents give much valued help in lessons and around the school; support for educational visits and at school functions is very good. The Friends of Heygarth School Association is very hard working and organises social and fund-raising activities. The school relies on them for additional resources, such as new staging in the hall and clipboards for fieldwork.

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

64. The overall quality of leadership and management by the governors, headteacher and key staff is good. The headteacher leads the school with great dedication and enthusiasm. She is well supported by the hardworking deputy headteacher and as a team they have led the school successfully since its amalgamation. Many new initiatives have been successfully introduced and these have led to stability in the school and a clear vision for the future.
65. A weakness in management identified in the last inspection was the management role of subject co-ordinators. This has been given considerable attention by the headteacher who is eager to strengthen the role of co-ordinators by delegating responsibility to them. This has been particularly the case for the recently appointed staff with management roles for the overview of the infants and the juniors. These leaders have made a good start by defining how the role can develop to best meet the needs of the school. Subject co-ordinators have attended training to update their skills where a weakness was identified. This has been most effective in the management of the Foundation Stage where a team approach has led to joint planning between the nursery and the reception class. Other co-ordinators have had time to observe lessons and check on standards in their subjects. Audits have been carried out and action plans drawn up to tackle identified concerns. Some of these are being more effective than others. For example, in music the additional planning guidelines provided and extra resources have led to improved standards. The action plan for science has a specific focus on raising standards of the higher attaining pupils, which is closely linked to current needs. In a few subjects, priorities are not as effective because they lack a focus on raising standards.
66. Management of special educational needs is effective in checking all the procedures of the new Code of Practice<sup>4</sup> are in place. The school documents are efficiently maintained and all statutory requirements are met. Outside agencies such as educational psychologists are involved as appropriate and parents are kept well informed of developments. The special educational needs co-ordinator and the governor with responsibility for these pupils are well informed about the needs of the individual pupils. The school is committed to including these pupils in all activities the school provides. The school has established links with the local school for pupils with special needs and welcomes these pupils into the school.
67. As at the time of the last inspection, the governors play a full and active part in the school. They have established close links with subject co-ordinators and often visit lessons to extend their own understanding. They attend school celebrations, accompany the pupils on the residential visit and meet regularly. As a result, they are well informed about the school's strengths and areas for development. Governors ensure all statutory requirements are fulfilled.
68. The school has made great strides forward in evaluating its own performance. Staff and governors follow the local authority's guidelines on self-evaluation and this has provided the school with a clear list of priorities for development. Other priorities are gleaned from the subject co-ordinators audits and the school's performance management targets. The school is using these priorities to lead the school's plans for improvement. This is good practice, but is leading to a lengthy school improvement plan and a lack of clarity about the main focus of development for the school. The headteacher is developing this system so that the identified priorities merge together into a more concise document.
69. Current identified targets are relevant to the school and especially the focus on information and communication technology and assessment. However, it is a weakness that the needs of higher attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 did not have more prominence other than in the setting of targets for year groups.
70. As part of monitoring the school's performance the school analyses information gained from assessments. The deputy headteacher is very meticulous in compiling this data and it is used effectively to set future targets for the school as well as monitor progress. It is also used to identify areas for improvement. This has been effective in improving the progress of the lower attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 and in mathematics all of the children reached the level expected for their

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<sup>4</sup> Code of Practice – this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities, duties and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help and support to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.

age. Sufficient attention is not given to raising the standards of higher attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 which has been identified by test results over recent years.

71. The headteacher and key staff regularly monitor teaching. This has led to teaching improving since the last inspection as teachers share experiences to improve aspects of their teaching. However, there is still an inconsistency in the quality of teaching and weaknesses identified in the previous inspection remain. This is particularly the case with the lack of challenge seen when teaching was less than satisfactory. There is scope for sharing the very good and excellent teaching seen in some lessons to raise the overall quality of teaching.
72. Procedures for performance management are in place. The school places great emphasis on staff training and is in the process of applying for Investors in People Status in recognition of the school's commitment to the development of all staff. Induction procedures for new staff are effective. Newly qualified teachers receive very good support from the school as a whole and from assigned mentors. The school, with its strong collegiate, supportive ethos, is a suitable establishment for the training of teachers.
73. The school has a good understanding of budgeting and planning for the future, linked well to audits of the school's needs, and actions required. The most recent financial audit found that financial procedures are sound and the few actions required have been completed. All designated funds are used for their stated purpose. The school makes good use of modern technology in the office and is starting to introduce more recent developments such as video projectors and an interactive whiteboard into its teaching. The principle of 'best value' has been put into practice. For example, the decision to buy support for information and communication technology so that advice is more readily available. The school consults widely when making any major decisions. Parents are involved in this process and this leads to them supporting changes, such as the change of entry to the school. Governors consider the spending on classroom assistants to be value for money because their observations in lessons show this support is having a positive effect on pupils' learning.
74. The accommodation is good. The building has large classrooms, a good hall for physical education and extensive playing fields. Outdoor play facilities for younger children allow them to explore and develop physically. Wall spaces are made interesting and instructive with displays and standards of cleanliness are high.
75. The school has a good number of experienced staff. The pupil-teacher ratio is currently better than average, as a result of a decision by the school to keep class sizes for older pupils down. However, the number of classroom assistants is barely adequate and this leads to occasions when pupils with special educational needs do not receive the support they need.
76. Learning resources are generally plentiful and of good quality. The school now has a good number of computers in the information and communication technology suite. However, most classrooms do not have computers and this is restricting pupils' access to information and communication technology to support their learning in all subjects. The current purchase of laptop computers is leading to improvement. The school lacks a dedicated library, which would allow pupils to extend their independent library and research skills.
77. The school's lengthy aims are not very prominent in the school prospectus. The overarching statement refers to creating an environment where pupils can develop, socially, spiritually, culturally, emotionally, morally, intellectually, physically and aesthetically. The good quality of leadership and management enables the school to reflect these aims in its daily life.

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

78. In order to raise standards and improve the quality of education the governors, headteacher and staff should:
  - (1) raise the standards of the more able pupils in Years 1 and 2 by presenting them with a greater level of challenge in their work;  
paragraphs 3, 10, 26, 29, 36, 42, 57, 69-71, 92, 95, 98, 101, 103, 109, 112-3, 115, 117 and 123

- (2) further develop the use of information and communication technology by:
- making greater use of the available resources;
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their information and communication technology skills in other subjects;
- This issue is identified in the school's improvement plan  
paragraphs 13, 27, 35, 38, 69, 76, 102, 109, 115-6, 123, 134, 142, 144-5, 148, 167 and 170
- (3) make better use of day-to-day assessment in order to match work more closely to pupils' needs;  
paragraphs 36, 59, 69, 84, 98, 109, 117, 130, 136, 140 and 147
- (4) provide a school library to extend:
- pupils' library skills;
  - pupils' ability to research and investigate independently.
- paragraphs 76, 94, 102 and 142

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	82
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	37

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	1	13	33	28	3	0	0
Percentage	1	21	40	34	4	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 slightly more than one point.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	19	279
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	NA	43

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	22

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.2
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
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	19	8	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	24	25	27
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	89 (80)	93 (80)	100 (90)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	23	26	25
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	85 (80)	96 (83)	93 (95)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

\* numbers not included because the number of girls is below 10

**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	15	26	41

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	13	13	14
	Girls	23	20	26
	Total	36	33	40
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	88 (69)	80 (64)	98 (94)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	12	11	14
	Girls	21	21	26
	Total	33	32	38
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	80 (69)	78 (78)	93 (89)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

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

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

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
285	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
3	0	0

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.5
Average class size	25

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

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	163

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32
Number of pupils per FTE adult	9.5

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	650,107
Total expenditure	646,149
Expenditure per pupil	2,140
Balance brought forward from previous year	27,365
Balance carried forward to next year	31,323

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Results of the survey of parents and carers**

**Questionnaire return rate 34%**

Number of questionnaires sent out	298
Number of questionnaires returned	101

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	39	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	49	4	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	52	43	2	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	52	9	2	4
The teaching is good.	51	46	2	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	45	10	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	30	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	28	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	55	40	3	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	59	38	1	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	33	3	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	53	25	9	0	13

**Summary of parents' and carers' responses**

Parents have very positive views of the school.

**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

79. The school follows the local education authority procedures in its admission policy. Children start nursery part-time soon after their third birthday. Most children spend three terms in nursery before moving into the reception class in the September of the school year before their fifth birthday. There are currently 11 full-time and 64 part-time children on roll in the Foundation Stage.
80. The school promotes good initial links with families through a range of pre-start visits, welcome meetings and gradual admission procedures. Parents are involved with staff in assessing their children's attainment on entry to school. These links enable children to settle quickly and confidently into school life.
81. The reception and nursery classes follow the early learning goals, the nationally recommended curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage. This consists of six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy development, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. Each area of learning is made up of four stages or *Stepping-Stones* from which progress and standards can be measured.
82. While standards of attainment vary from year to year, results of tests given to children soon after they start school confirm that overall attainment is similar to that found in most schools. However, standards in communication skills are often below average. The vast majority of children in the nursery are presently working on the first *Stepping-Stone*. This is the expected level for their age. Most reception children are working securely on the second *Stepping-Stone* with many working towards the third *Stepping-Stone*. Overall, the children achieve well over the Foundation Stage due to good teaching and an interesting well-organised curriculum. Almost all are likely to reach the early learning goals in each of the areas of learning by the time they start in Year 1. In personal and social development and in some aspects of communication, language and literacy and mathematical development, children are making particularly good progress and standards of attainment are above average. The school makes good provision for children identified as having special educational needs and they make good progress. There are no children who are learning through English as an additional language.
83. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. This is an improvement on the satisfactory standards seen in the previous inspection. Inconsistencies in provision between the two reception classes have been fully resolved by careful and thorough joint planning. Teachers use their secure knowledge and understanding of the way young children learn to plan an interesting curriculum based on lively practical experiences. Good use is made of the attractive outdoor space to promote purposeful learning across the curriculum. All staff work closely together so that children benefit fully from the considerable individual strengths of teachers and classroom assistants alike. Relationships between staff and between staff and children are very good and children are managed very well with praise and encouragement. This promotes their self-esteem and helps them become confident learners.
84. Staff make day-to-day assessments of children at work. While this information is used satisfactorily to plan further work for the majority, it is not always used effectively to pinpoint specific targets for individuals in particular to ensure the good progress of potential higher attainers.

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

85. Almost all children enjoy school and leave their carers willingly. All children are becoming aware of the school's expectations and are settling quickly into the carefully established routines. With help, they learn to accept the needs of others, for instance, when waiting their turn in small group games. Many are just becoming confident to select an activity independently, but several of the younger children tend to hover on the edge of groups. Most play alongside rather than with others. They are keen to take responsibility as when chosen to be special helpers or recognised as the best tidier. Children in the reception class are confident learners. They are independent in choosing tasks and persevere to complete their work. They enjoy co-operating with others, for instance, in role-play in the dentists or in making music together. They are unafraid to demonstrate their skills to the rest of the class. Almost all display good awareness of the boundaries set and respond very positively to the staff's clear expectations. They are becoming aware of cultures and religions

beyond their own day-to-day experience through celebrating festivals such as Diwali. Teaching and learning are very good. Consequently, children achieve very well in this area. All staff set high standards and make their expectations clear. They use incidents throughout the day to reinforce the children's positive attitudes to one another and to learning. They tell stories to good effect to explore feelings and raise children's awareness of relationships. Children are taught to appreciate the care and contribution of others in the wider community through welcoming visitors like fire-fighters. A good range of tasks provides pupils with opportunities to make choices and consider options for themselves. In the nursery, particularly good opportunities are planned for individuals to take responsibility as helpers. While there are some opportunities, this area is less well developed in the reception class.

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

86. Almost all children in the Foundation Stage enjoy listening to stories. However, a significant minority of nursery children have difficulty sustaining concentration and frequently disturb others by calling out. Their responses often indicate that they have not understood. They communicate simply with adults using familiar words and vocabulary based on their experience. Many are interested in books and are learning to handle them with care, although their concentration span is short. Children in the reception class listen with understanding to stories in large and small groups. They are becoming aware of letters and their sounds and many can make up rhyming lists. Higher attainers can identify the initial letter in a word by sound, but don't always recognise the written letter. Most children are becoming aware of the idea of a word. When playing in the opticians they 'take telephone messages and make appointments' using some recognisable letter shapes. Teaching and learning are good overall. Imaginative role-play such as at 'the dentists' is used successfully to promote speaking and listening skills. Teachers use their secure knowledge and understanding to plan small steps of learning which enable the children to make good progress in the basic skills of reading and writing. All staff display positive attitudes to books and choose stories carefully which heighten children's interest and enthusiasm. Children are encouraged to take books home and enlist parents' support in reading. In the reception class, the short daily sessions which concentrate on letters and their sounds are well planned and have an especially beneficial effect on learning. However, there is not always enough attention given to linking sounds to the actual written letter shapes. Elements of the National Literacy Strategy are appropriately incorporated into the teaching programme.

### **Mathematical development**

87. Children in the nursery and in the reception classes join enthusiastically in number rhymes. Nursery children copy the actions, but cannot reliably count on their fingers to match the numbers. They enjoy sorting and matching with a range of interesting equipment. Most reception children recognise numerals to 12 and together count to 10 and beyond. They count and accurately match one to one with objects. Higher attainers confidently put numbers to 10 in the correct order and add one to the previous number in their heads. Most children recognise two-dimensional shapes such as circles, squares and triangles and with help describe them in terms of sides and corners. They are less sure of three-dimensional shapes, but are becoming aware of their edges and surface shapes. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan for the step-by-step development of skills through a good range of interesting practical activities which motivate children well. For instance, children enjoy using their sense of touch to explore unseen three-dimensional shapes inside a 'feely bag'. Teachers provide purposeful clear explanations and demonstrations so that children are confident to take on tasks and know how to succeed. This enables children to make very good progress in some elements of number work. Occasionally, the pace in group sessions is slow. For instance, not all children get the chance to take an active part in a shape game when too long is taken in introducing the activity.

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

88. All of the children are enthusiastic and curious to find out about the world around them. They use their senses to investigate the properties of wet or dry sand, or explore unseen items by smell or touch. They are becoming increasingly adept at using the computer and most can control the mouse to move characters on screen. With help, they use a drawing and painting program to fulfil their own purpose. In the reception class, children are beginning to sort and classify by identifying properties such as hard and soft, rough and smooth. Teaching and learning are good. All staff use questions skilfully and language precisely to increase children's understanding and enable them to begin formulating their own questions. Lessons are planned carefully and resources prepared so that children learn through a wide range of exciting experiences which catch their interest and encourage their curiosity both in the classroom and beyond.

### **Physical development**

89. Nursery children manipulate large and small blocks to build walls and pathways. They show reasonable control and co-ordination when balancing along a low plank or climbing over boxes. Most operate the seesaw by pushing and pulling and successfully negotiate space with a pushchair. Their control over small tools like pencils or paintbrushes is just beginning to develop. Reception children handle a range of tools competently. For instance, when rolling and shaping dough, when painting or when cutting and sticking. They demonstrate good fine motor control in picking out tiny plastic ants and spiders hidden in sand and small stones. When taking part in a physical education lesson in the hall or playing outside, they explore large spaces with confidence. There is an appropriate emphasis on developing skills and children demonstrate their increasing co-ordination by balancing a beanbag while moving around the room. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Consequently, children make sound progress. Teachers manage children well with appropriate attention to safety aspects. A range of informal activities is well organised to enable pupils to extend their physical skills both indoors and out. These are not always clearly focused in terms of exactly what children are expected to learn. Some lessons proceed at too leisurely a pace and teachers' expectations are not always high enough to provide sufficient challenge to enable all pupils to make good progress.

### **Creative development**

90. Children become increasingly confident in responding to imaginative role-play situations. In the nursery, children express their own ideas spontaneously when pretending to be astronauts. They improvise props such as colanders as helmets and a box for the rocket. Following a visit from the fire service, reception children dress up and play co-operatively to act out emergency situations. In nursery and reception classes, children experiment with a variety of media to explore colour, shape and texture. Reception children, for example, use paint in 'fiery' colours, glitter and sequins to good effect in creating firework pictures. Reception children explore the sounds of different percussion instruments to imitate the noise of fireworks. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers take special care to promote pupils' creative development through the provision of well planned role-play areas like the 'dentists' and 'opticians' and also by stimulating visits and visitors, which fire the children's imagination. Teachers usually intervene effectively to help children extend their play, but occasionally over direct and inadvertently prevent individuals developing their own ideas. Attractive resources are carefully prepared to enable children to make their own choices as when assembling collages or creating particular effects in their pictures. Staff respect the children's efforts and provide encouraging feedback to individuals, which promotes their confidence in developing their own ideas.

## **ENGLISH**

91. Pupils' standards at the end of Year 2 are at the level expected for their age. At the end of Year 6, standards are above average. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards in Year 2 were below average and in Year 6 were average. Improvements have been brought about by:
- in Years 1 and 2 a focus on the needs of the lower attaining pupils so that more pupils reach the level expected for their age;
  - additional group sessions for pupils identified as falling behind so that they can catch up with their peers;
  - teachers' growing confidence with the literacy hour which has led to continuity in learning as pupils move from class to class;
  - more challenging teaching in Years 5 and 6 and the focus on extending the learning of the higher attaining pupils.
92. Current standards are confirmed by the results of the national tests for 2002, which indicate that the school's results in English are in line with the national average for pupils aged 7 and above the national average for pupils aged 11 years. These results indicate that pupils, who enter school with attainment levels close to the national average, achieve soundly in Years 1 and 2. However, few pupils exceed the level expected for their age in both reading and writing and the higher attaining pupils are underachieving. This is not the case in Years 3 to 6 and achievement of pupils of all abilities is good. Every year more pupils reach standards which are above average because of the high expectations of teachers, especially in Year 6. It is to the school's credit that the achievement

of boys is equal to that of girls. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in the infants and good progress in the juniors.

93. Standards of speaking and listening are satisfactory in the infants. Pupils take part eagerly in classroom discussions, listen with good levels of attention to the teacher and each other and most can express their ideas with a satisfactory level of clarity. Pupils answer questions willingly and, in most cases, correctly and they competently share their ideas in pairs and small groups. Their answers tend to be fairly short, although some are capable of more extended contributions when conditions are right, and they rarely initiate discussions. In Year 6, pupils can express their views on relatively complex issues with a good level of clarity and higher attaining pupils can conduct an argument with well-marshalled evidence and reasons. These pupils often show a sophisticated appreciation of character and dialogue in their responses to their reading and they are sensitive to humour and irony. While the range of attainment in this year group is wide, the general standard of speaking and listening is good.
94. In Year 2, standards of reading are average. Most pupils reach the level expected for their age, but few attain higher standards. Teaching of letters and sounds is good and so most pupils read texts from books from the school's reading scheme with satisfactory levels of fluency, accuracy and understanding. Weaker readers often hesitate when they encounter unfamiliar letter combinations or longer words. A few read with little expression or pause in the wrong places. Stronger readers make good use of their knowledge of the story when tackling unfamiliar words and read at a faster pace and with better expression. Very few pupils, however, are capable of reading longer and more demanding texts. Higher attaining pupils know how to find information in a book by consulting the index or the contents page, but others have not yet reached this level of skill. In Year 6, standards are good. All pupils read relatively simple texts with good understanding and higher attaining pupils can cope well with demanding texts, including the stories in the reader *Seven Strange and Ghostly Tales*. Pupils in this year keep well presented 'reading logs' in which, supported by guidance in worksheets, they set out their responses to the books they read. Higher attaining pupils are confident reading between the lines and predicting what might happen next in a story. By this stage, pupils are thoroughly familiar with terms like 'character', 'plot' and 'setting' and know how to scan texts to obtain information or skim in order to locate a point they wish to investigate. They use indexes to locate and retrieve information and a good proportion can use the Internet to research a topic. However, the absence of a school library means that their general library skills are underdeveloped.
95. Standards of writing are average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. Teachers are less secure in teaching writing and tasks are not extending pupils' writing skills. As a result, in Year 2, a relatively large proportion of pupils still require support and close guidance in order to produce a fairly short piece of writing. More able writers can re-tell a well known fairy tale or folk tale in their own words with a reasonable command of spelling and punctuation. Pupils are not using the skills taught in literacy lessons in their independent writing. A good many produce spelling that is phonetically plausible but inaccurate and handwriting tends to be laboured and uneven. At present, very few pupils are capable of producing writing of a standard higher than that expected nationally. Writing is taught effectively as pupils move through the school with more focus on sharing writing and planning work. Consequently, in Year 6, pupils write confidently in a wide variety of genres: story, biography, poetry, letters, reports and newspaper articles. They also create play scripts and draft questions for interviews. Stories show good attention to word choice and atmosphere and non-fiction writing demonstrates a good command of the relevant vocabulary. Higher attaining pupils occasionally produce extended pieces of writing which show a good command of spelling and punctuation as well as a sound grasp of the techniques they have studied in their analyses of fiction and non-fiction texts. In the relatively few pieces of writing that were word-processed, pupils showed a good appreciation of the possibilities of different fonts. Teachers mark pupils' writing conscientiously, indicating errors and providing encouragement and instruction on how improvements might be made. In Year 6, the teacher's comments show a deep involvement in the pupil's efforts alongside an honest appraisal of the merits of the writing, which often takes the form of listing its strengths and weaknesses. Expectations are suitably high and higher attaining pupils, in particular, are encouraged to extend their efforts.
96. Pupils make use of the language skills they develop in English lessons in many subjects. There is, for example, a good range of writing produced by pupils in history and religious education. However, many of the pupils' books contain a disproportionate amount of writing in the form of lists



or brief notes or sequences of bullet points; while writing activities of this kind have their uses they are no substitute for the production of continuous prose by pupils in their own words. Pupils do not remember the skills taught in their literacy lessons when writing in other subjects.

97. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in the infants and good progress overall in the juniors. The individual education plans which are drawn up for all pupils on the register of special educational needs indicate that most have difficulties in reading and writing. In most cases, teachers are sensitive to their needs and show familiarity with the targets set out in their individual plans. They ensure that the pupils are well supported in lessons and include them in class discussions and activities. Pupils with special educational needs make better progress when a classroom assistant is present who is able to keep them abreast of the lesson and give them support when it is needed. Some pupils receive additional support to help them overcome their language difficulties in small groups or through individual tuition. The materials used in these sessions are well matched to the pupils' needs and accelerate their progress. In a few classes, work is not matched with care to the needs of the pupils with special educational needs, nor are the pupils provided with the close support and guidance they need to carry out writing activities. When this happens, the pupils make little progress and they fall further behind their peers.
98. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. In the lessons observed it was satisfactory in the infants and good in the juniors. However, unsatisfactory teaching was seen across the school. A contributory factor to the weaker teaching was staff covering for teachers absent through ill health who were less confident teaching the literacy hour. Satisfactory teaching was characterised by clear learning objectives, sound management of the pupils and appropriate expectations. In one lesson where teaching was satisfactory, Year 1 pupils had to recognise the season of the year from a drawing on their table and later had to match a photograph to their particular season. The lesson had been planned with care and materials were to hand and appropriate for children of this age. Both the class teacher and the classroom assistant made sure that weaker pupils, including those with special educational needs, received the support they needed in order to achieve some measure of success. The pupils carried out their tasks willingly, albeit a little noisily at times, and enjoyed the 'game' quality of the lesson. Learning was satisfactory, although insufficient attention was given to on-going assessment. Consequently, the task for higher attaining pupils was not sufficiently challenging and these pupils could have achieved more.
99. Good quality teaching was characterised by high levels of enthusiasm by teacher and pupils, challenging tasks, good use of question and answer routines and ambitious expectations of what pupils could achieve. In one very good guided reading session in Year 6, the organisation and range of activities led to very effective learning. One group of about six pupils worked co-operatively, 'translating' a scene from their class reader into a film drama, while another group wrote responses to some short stories they had recently read, guided by a work-sheet prepared by the teacher and yet others read on their own or in pairs. Work was well matched to the needs and abilities of the pupils and all worked productively. The teacher interacted vigorously with each group in turn, the pace of the lesson was very good and there was a buzz of excitement in the classroom. The quality of pupils' learning was good and some of the writing produced was of a very high standard.
100. Drama is used effectively in many lessons. As a result, by the time pupils reach Year 6 they are confident with many drama skills. In a very good lesson in Year 6, pupils moved quickly into group shapes representing beach activities and then worked together presenting their ideas about special family celebrations. This lesson was concluded in an excellent way by encouraging pupils to reflect and the pupils experienced a very spiritual moment.
101. When teaching was unsatisfactory the lesson lacked structure and direction and tasks were relatively undemanding for the majority of the pupils. Insufficient attention was given to shaping work to the needs or abilities of pupils and, as a result, little new learning took place for many pupils. For example, a pupil with special educational needs was unable to cope with the work and, as no additional help was available, struggled during the lesson.
102. Management of the subject is good. Co-ordinators provide good quality guidance and through regular moderating exercises ensure teachers have a good understanding of National Curriculum levels. The provision of books in a variety of genres is very good and the National Literacy Strategy is well supported with resources. However, the lack of a school library curtails the pupils' ability to

develop skills of research and investigation and habits of independent study. Information and communication technology was not seen in use in any lessons, except in the computer suite, although a small number of the pupils' pieces of writing had been word-processed, including some extended pieces by Year 6 pupils.

## **MATHEMATICS**

103. Pupils' standards in mathematics are in line with the national average in Year 2 and are above average in Year 6. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, but few higher-attaining pupils attain the standards expected and are underachieving. This is partly due to under-expectations of what pupils are capable of in Years 1 and 2. This was a weakness in the last inspection that has not been fully resolved. In Year 6, the proportions of pupils reaching and exceeding the level expected for their age are well above average and this is a considerable improvement since the last inspection. Achievement in Years 3 to 6 is good and accelerates in Years 5 and 6 where teaching is challenging and much is achieved in the pupils' final years in school. Improvement has been brought about by:
- the effective implementation of the Numeracy Strategy;
  - improved teaching in response to monitoring and effective sharing of expertise;
  - data from national and other tests being analysed and findings shared with other teachers;
  - the mathematics curriculum working group meeting regularly to discuss and disseminate issues.
- Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 and good progress in Years 3 to 6. They make better progress in Years 1 and 2 when additional help is available in lessons. However, when help is not available progress is hampered especially in lessons where teachers have not closely matched the work to their needs.
104. In the 2002 national tests, results for seven-year-olds were well below the national average and the average for similar schools. The school has given considerable attention to the needs of the lower attaining pupils and this has been effective and led to 100 per cent of Year 2 pupils reaching the level expected for their age. However, few pupils exceeded this level and this held down overall standards. In Year 6, results of national tests in 2002 were average compared with both all and similar schools. Every year more pupils are exceeding the level expected for their age and this is leading to higher standards. There are no significant differences between the achievements of boys and girls.
105. In Year 2, most pupils are gaining an understanding of number patterns. They sequence the days of the week and numbers to 20. Most pupils can order by size three figures in measures of centimetres, but cannot apply this to measures of kilograms. Higher-attaining pupils sequence numbers to 100, count forwards and backwards by one and count in tens to 100. They are less secure in solving problems and checking their answers. Most pupils correctly order values in pounds and pence. Pupils use visual aids, such as clocks and games, confidently and are beginning to recognise some relationships in number.
106. In Year 6, all pupils work confidently with number. They enjoy solving problems mentally and can explain different methods to reach the correct answer. They recognise and order simple fractions in terms of size, using mental calculation quickly and correctly. They are learning how to find equivalent fractions and solve challenging problems. Pupils correct their errors when these are identified. Higher-attaining pupils solve difficult problems mentally and are quick to recall and use previous knowledge. They are beginning to convert fractions to decimals to two decimal places. Written work shows that most pupils handle data effectively. They understand mode and range when describing data sets, make predictions and are familiar recording their results on bar and line graphs.

107. Numeracy skills support learning in other subjects. In music, pupils are encouraged to count the beats in a bar of music and combine these into a sequence. In science, pupils record their findings in different formats, which include using their numeracy skills to calculate their results.
108. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. However, there is considerable variability between years. Teaching is best in Years 5 and 6 and the rate of learning is faster in these classes. All teachers implement the National Numeracy Strategy successfully. The lively start to lessons, the use of games and practical activities balanced by expert direct teaching, and the summary of what has been learned at the end of the lesson all contribute significantly to pupils' enjoyment and success. Pupils work with concentration and effort and respond well to their teachers. The setting of pupils by ability in Years 4 to 6 helps teachers to focus effectively on each group's needs and work is more closely matched to their prior attainment.
109. The best teaching is characterised by very skilful management of pupils' learning, informed by good subject knowledge. In a Year 6 group of lower-attaining pupils the teacher required pupils to explain their reasoning when solving problems. In this way misunderstandings were identified and pupils were challenged to find the right solutions. Learning was very good with all pupils consolidating their understanding and skills. In a Year 5 group of higher-attaining pupils the teacher amended her planned 'starter' in order to go over homework that showed too many errors. She ensured that pupils understood the problem and gave them a second opportunity to get it right. In the main work of the lesson the teacher's clear explanations and well balanced tasks helped pupils to recall and use work on axes and plotting co-ordinates. The lesson was very well structured and the teacher made good use of pupils' previous knowledge, and errors, to lead them on to more challenging work. Learning was very good and pupils showed keen interest in the work. Where teaching is less successful, teachers are not giving sufficient attention to the day-to-day progress pupils are making. Consequently, expectations of what pupils, especially higher-attainers, can achieve are too low. As a result, pupils do not have the opportunity to work at higher levels and extend themselves. On occasion, teachers' subject knowledge is insufficient for them to make best use of the Numeracy Strategy by tailoring it to individual needs. The use of information and communication technology to support learning is underdeveloped because of the lack of resources in classrooms.
110. The mathematics co-ordinators provide good leadership across the school. The numeracy governor is closely involved with the work of the school and ensures that the governing body is well informed. She presented the prizes for a recently organised Maths Challenge in which over half of pupils took part. Enthusiasm was high. Numeracy is an important part of the school's work and contributes well to pupils' personal and academic achievement.

## SCIENCE

111. In Year 6, standards are above the national average and in Year 2 pupils reach the standard expected for their age. Improvement since the last inspection has been good in Year 6 because:
- the science curriculum is better focused with more attention being given to investigation;
  - planning has improved;
  - teaching in Years 3 to 6 has especially improved.
112. Overall, achievement is good. It is much better as pupils move through the school and in Years 5 and 6 because teachers challenge the pupils and much is achieved in these years. Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory, but higher attaining pupils are not being sufficiently challenged and are underachieving. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress especially when additional help is available to ensure they understand the tasks to be completed. They enjoy the focus on learning through practical activities and the range of ways to record their results, which means any literacy difficulties do not restrict their learning.
113. In the 2002 National Curriculum tests, the standards attained by 11-year-old pupils were above the national average and well above the average for similar schools. Pupils performed better than expected. The percentage of pupils achieving above average standards was higher than the national average. Over the past four years there has been a rising trend in the attainment of 11-year-old pupils, with a marked improvement between 2001 and 2002. Teacher assessments for the attainment of seven-year-old pupils in 2002 were broadly in line with the national average, but the percentage of pupils reaching above average levels was well below the national average. This underachievement of the more able pupils is holding down overall standards in Year 2.
114. Across the school there is no difference between the attainments of boys and girls in science. All pupils are given equal opportunity to participate and contribute during lessons, especially when teachers plan to question particular pupils during the introductory and concluding phases of lessons.
115. By the age of seven, most pupils recognise and name the main parts of the body, describe basic patterns of growth in humans and explain what constitutes a healthy diet. Similarly, they name the main parts of a plant, explain conditions necessary for healthy plant growth and have examined plants and animals in the local environment. Pupils describe the visible features of selected natural and man-made materials. They note the effects of heating and cooling on common materials, such as ice and chocolate, but don't always identify which of these changes are reversible and which are not. Most pupils understand that a complete circuit is needed to light a bulb, can prepare drawings of circuits and note some of the dangers as well as the uses of electricity. Pupils show some appreciation of the importance of a fair test in investigations. However, pupils are given few opportunities to find information from simple texts or to make choices when raising questions and planning their own investigative work. Planning boards are used to structure investigations and these offer good opportunities for pupils to describe their observations and to use simple or non-standard measures when recording their work. However, much of the work completed by pupils in Years 1 and 2 is in the form of pre-prepared worksheets and this limits pupils' skills of suggesting different ways of recording and explaining their observations and findings in their own words. Pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to use information and communication technology to support the development of their understanding of concepts, nor for the presentation of their findings. The setting of the same task for whole classes in lessons gives limited challenge to the higher attaining pupils who could make better progress. Pupils with special educational needs generally can cope with the level of work because they receive additional attention from the teacher or classroom assistants.
116. Standards in Year 6 are above average. Most pupils have a good knowledge of the major organs of the human body and name the parts of a flower, using scientific vocabulary to label prepared diagrams. They prepare a key in the form of a simple flow-chart based on observable features and demonstrate relationships in a habitat by placing arrows and labels on a food chain. Pupils understand the main differences between solids, liquids and gases and know how to separate simple mixtures, but many do not understand that matter is not lost during physical and chemical changes. They know about the characteristics of materials and about those that conduct electricity. However, their work shows limited evidence of the use of conventional symbols to represent the specific components of electrical circuits and pupils do not often use circuit diagrams to construct

models that are powered and controlled by electrical switches. Most pupils are able to prepare simple force diagrams to show the effects of gravity, air resistance and upthrust and know that force is measured in Newtons, but are less secure in understanding that objects have weight because of the pull from the centre of the earth. By the age of 11, pupils are well experienced in using planning boards to support their scientific investigations. They use appropriate measures to collect data, consider how best to improve the accuracy of their measurements and present data well using tables and graphs. A few pupils find it difficult to explain their findings in relation to their evidence and to the question under investigation. Pupils are not yet provided with sufficient opportunities to increase their understanding of scientific concepts using secondary sources such as CD ROMs and there is limited scope for them to use databases to record and present findings.

117. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. It is good in the juniors and satisfactory in the infants. A strength in lessons seen is the management of lessons and the focus on making lessons enjoyable. Consequently, pupils are eager to learn, enjoy practical lessons and work very sensibly in pairs and small groups. Overall, planning is satisfactory. However, the teaching of science in Years 1 and 2 is often marked by the lack of precise learning objectives and a failure to give sufficient attention to pupils' on-going progress when planning lessons. This creates two problems. Firstly, it is difficult for teachers to use the conclusion of their lessons to check on pupils' learning. Secondly, teachers do not always adjust their planning when a weakness is identified and tasks in lessons are not matching the learning needs of individual pupils. This is especially noticeable for the higher attaining pupils who are not making enough progress. There is a similar weakness in the marking of pupils' work. Although work is regularly marked, comments fail to give pupils advice about what they should do next in order to improve.
118. Where the teaching of science is good, especially in Year 6, teachers share with pupils what they will learn from the lesson. As a result, pupils have a clear understanding of the purpose of their tasks. Expectations are high and pupils work at a good pace and persevere to complete their tasks. Teachers use questions effectively to direct and challenge pupils' thinking and learning takes place in a stimulating atmosphere. The best teachers extend pupils' learning most effectively because they give pupils scope to make decisions and to research their enquiries. Furthermore, in the best lessons, teachers plan tasks to match the ability of all pupils so that all can play a full part in the lessons. Marking is thorough and includes targets to guide pupils towards achieving increased knowledge, understanding and skills in science.
119. Management of the subject is good. Teachers' planning, resources and standards are monitored and used to draw up an action plan to further develop the subject. The school's identified priorities for improvement include:
- providing more challenge for higher attaining pupils;
  - ensuring that the planning boards supporting investigative work do not require pupils to spend too much time writing;
  - increasing pupils' use of secondary sources;
  - increasing pupil's use of information and communications technology;
  - giving pupils increasing responsibility for their own learning.
- These show a clear understanding of the current position in science and the subject has a good direction to further improve.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

120. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 meet national expectations for pupils of these ages and remain the same as those reported in the previous inspection. Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall, although progress is uneven and accelerates in Year 6 where it is good. The school organises the curriculum so that all pupils are fully included and are given suitable opportunities for learning. Pupils with special educational needs receive appropriate support in class and make satisfactory progress alongside their peers.
121. In Year 2, pupils carefully record first-hand observations, for instance, from photographs and from local buildings. Having identified the shapes of roofs, doors and windows as triangles, rectangles and squares they add detail and interpret their observations in pencil sketches. They explore the textures of shapes and patterns in the environment through rubbings and prints. Pupils use this experience to produce panels of colour by tessellating regular shapes in primary colours to emphasise shape and pattern. They work alone as well as collaborating with others. In discussion,

pupils in Year 2 show sound knowledge of how to create specific effects by mixing colours. Evaluation of their own work is superficial and their ability to suggest improvements is underdeveloped. Their knowledge of the work of famous artists or crafts people from different times and cultures is weak.

122. As they move through the junior department, pupils study artwork in two- and three- dimensions from diverse civilisations and cultures, from Roman amphorae to Tudor patterns and portraits and Aboriginal art. However, pupils in Year 6 display limited knowledge of famous individuals or movements and their influence on art and design. In Year 6, pupils design and make Caribbean head-dresses suitable for a carnival. Their collages successfully reflect the intention to create a sunny relaxed atmosphere through their choice of shape, colour and texture. By looking at designs for stage costumes, they begin to formulate designs for their own head-dresses. Pupils take particular care in choosing materials to fit their purpose. They work with coloured paper, straws, sequins, feathers and paper streamers to produce colourful head-dresses which show good imagination as well as ingenious effects. Pupils are thoughtful in evaluating their work and are interested in exploring the ideas of others.
123. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall with consistently good teaching in Year 6. Teachers plan lessons with clear objectives which build steadily on earlier work. There is a strong emphasis on the promotion of designing and making skills. Relationships are very good and teachers use praise and encouragement successfully so that pupils are confident in expressing their own ideas. Teachers' expectations are not always high enough. For instance, in one lesson infant pupils were allowed to rush their drawings producing several in a short time but sacrificing quality for quantity. While there are good examples in Year 6, plenary sessions are not always used constructively. Insufficient opportunities are provided in some classes for pupils to discuss and evaluate their own work or that of others. Not enough use is made of information and communication technology to support learning in art. In Year 6, the teachers' enthusiasm and secure management skills create a purposeful working atmosphere where pupils take a particular pride in their work and try their best to succeed.
124. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The curriculum co-ordinator is beginning to check on standards by monitoring teaching and learning in class, but this has not yet led to higher standards.
125. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. For instance, pupils respond to music and to Bible stories through painting, and enjoy cultural visits to art galleries. Opportunities are missed to develop significant regular links with literacy and numeracy.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

126. The standards achieved by pupils aged 7 and 11 in design and technology are in line with the level expected for these ages, as was the case at the time of the last inspection. Achievement is satisfactory.
127. By the age of seven, pupils use levers, hinges and simple pulleys to build playground structures and moving vehicles and they have made puppets. Pupils have worked with paper, card, textiles, construction packs and food technology. They use simple tools effectively to assemble materials and components. Pupils understand the need to design their model and use pictures, simple diagrams and labels in their original plans. These plans are a good link with English. The projects on which these pupils work offer limited opportunities for them to make choices about materials, techniques and tools. As a result, pupils are less confident with the skills of planning and evaluating their finished work and suggesting how it can be improved.
128. By the age of 11, the range of materials pupils have used has increased to include clay and the range of mechanisms now includes gears, cams, and pneumatics. Models are more sophisticated and include torches and alarms that are controlled by switches and vehicles that are controlled through a computer program. Their constructions show that pupils use tools and equipment with care when cutting, fixing and shaping their models. Within the design process pupils show an awareness of the ways in which the finished product will be used and amend their plans to show where adaptations have been made during construction. However, the choices that pupils make when selecting materials and tools are often too restricted and the ways in which they record the

progress of their designs are often too tightly prescribed so that pupils have limited scope for independence in their work.

129. To ensure all pupils have full access to the subject, teachers and support assistants often provide additional support in lessons. This enables pupils with special educational needs to make the same progress as their peers. These pupils benefit from working in small groups and so sharing the knowledge of the other pupils.
130. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers offer pupils interesting and motivating stimuli at the start of lessons and remind pupils about working carefully and safely. Pupils respond well, particularly while building their models. Organisation of lessons is clear and lessons are carefully managed so that behaviour is good. A weakness in teaching is the lack of challenge for pupils to build more complex and intricate constructions. This leads to some more skilful pupils not making as much progress as they could. Teachers do not always give sufficient support to pupils to develop their understanding of the ways in which mechanisms actually work. Pupils are not always encouraged to revisit the initial design to test and evaluate products in the making process. When work is marked the completion of tasks is acknowledged and comments concern qualities of neatness and attention to detail in drawings, diagrams and writing. However, assessment is not sufficiently focused to guide pupils towards improved competence in and understanding of the planning, making and evaluation of products.
131. The subject is soundly led. Lesson plans, teaching, standards and resources are monitored and an action plan drawn up. However, this monitoring has not been effective in adjusting the curriculum to give more attention to extending pupils' skills of choice and evaluation. Nor has it formally identified the potential for cross-curricular links with pupils' learning in other subjects.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

132. Standards in geography are in line with the levels expected for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. Overall, achievement is satisfactory. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when the standards of pupils in Year 6 were below average. Improvement is due to:
  - much more detailed planning of the geography curriculum;
  - the greater allocation of time now given to the subject in Years 3 to 6.
133. Pupils in Year 2 are making satisfactory progress learning about the locality of the school. They have looked at local housing and drawn pictures of different styles, with observations relating to the materials used and the different kinds of roofs and windows. They have followed a plan in walking round the school, noting features, and are learning about addresses and their uses. They ask and answer questions about people and places in the locality. They respond well to tasks and materials provided but, have little opportunity for independent enquiry.
134. In Year 6, pupils show understanding of some of the causes of pollution and suggest thoughtful solutions. They extract geographical information from maps on different scales, for instance, in their current work on the island of St Lucia. Year 6 pupils identified mountains, rivers and towns on their map and are beginning to understand how to interpret knowledge, for instance in relation to climate and patterns of settlement. They use geographical terms, such as equator and tropics. Although pupils carry out independent research drawing on books, brochures, CD ROM encyclopaedia and the Internet in order to produce 'Fact Files', the work produced shows that pupils are not fully challenged. They gather relevant information and present it attractively. They do not sufficiently apply the information to draw conclusions about human and physical features and to develop understanding of physical processes. Pupils develop good skills of enquiry and are familiar with atlases and globes. Their map reading skills are less well developed.
135. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with some good features. Lessons are carefully planned and draw effectively on medium-term planning. Teachers manage time and resources well and provide pupils with a good range of activities, visits and resources. Teachers focus on developing geographical skills and knowledge and, in response, pupils work with enthusiasm and good effort. Pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in lessons and make sound progress as they move up the school. Their learning is enhanced by the practical approaches to the subject. Teachers do not always provide sufficient opportunities for open-ended research or

time for pupils to discuss the significance of what they are learning. This particularly hampers the learning of the higher attaining pupils.

136. The leadership of the co-ordinator is good and the co-ordinator has a clear view of strengths and areas for development in the subject. Fieldwork and visits to places in the area are organised to contribute breadth to the curriculum and to the quality of pupils' learning. Assessment of pupils' work is undertaken against national criteria and informs the pupils' annual reports. However, pupils are not clear about their own standards and how to improve them. On-going assessment of progress is an area for development.



## HISTORY

137. Standards in history are average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6, especially for higher-attaining pupils. This is good improvement since the last inspection and is partly due to the detailed revision of the curriculum undertaken by the co-ordinator.
138. Pupils in Year 2 are gaining understanding of the past through learning about major figures and events. They know simple facts about Florence Nightingale and the Great Fire of London and can sort these into 'then' and 'now' categories. Higher-attaining pupils are beginning to understand the use of different sources of evidence, such as diaries, newspapers and artefacts. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making satisfactory progress in learning about the past and in beginning to compare it with their own lives.
139. In Year 6, pupils show good knowledge of the topics they have studied in Years 5 and 6. Work seen on 'Drake's Voyages' showed that pupils had identified key events and famous people and had a good understanding of the hardships of life at sea. Literacy skills are used successfully in history and pupils have written about life in Tudor times and compared this with life today. In their current work on Ancient Greece, pupils have knowledge of several aspects of life then and of key events, such as the battle of Salamis. Pupils present their work in interesting ways, such as 'sea-stained' letters from Drake's sailors, items for a classical version of 'News at Six', diaries written in character, as well as 'Fact Files'. Their work is lively and imaginative and draws well on their knowledge. Some pupils apply their knowledge with mature understanding, as in the political 'Manifesto for Athens' written by a higher-attaining pupil. By Year 6 all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making good progress.
140. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 to 6 it is good. The best teaching is characterised by good subject knowledge and a wide range of strategies. Teachers' enthusiasm for the subject is reflected in pupils' enjoyment of learning and in the effort they put into their work. The strong focus on the development of historical skills of investigation makes lessons interesting. Pupils use well the opportunities given to them for independent research. In some years, pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to reflect on the consequences of events and changes over time. Annual assessment of standards reached is satisfactory, but the ongoing assessment of progress in knowledge, skills and understanding needs to be shared more with pupils so that they know how to improve their work.
141. The study of history is enhanced for pupils by visits to museums and old houses, such as Erdigg, and by visitors to the school. Pupils found that a 'Tudor Day', during which they looked at artefacts and tried out Tudor recipes, brought the period to life. All pupils enjoyed dressing up in national or period costume for a fund-raising 'Humanities Day'. The broad range of activities contributes very well to pupils' cultural development.
142. Management of the subject is good and has led to better planning of the curriculum. Resources are satisfactory, but the lack of a reference library and the limited use of information and communication technology inhibit independent research, especially for older pupils.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

143. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are in line with the level expected for the ages of these pupils. This shows a marked improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be unsatisfactory. Improvements have been achieved because:
- the curriculum is now focused on the skills, knowledge and understanding required by the National Curriculum;
  - resources have been upgraded. The recent investment in building a computer suite, together with the purchase of an interactive white-board and laptop computers, now make it possible to teach the ICT curriculum effectively;
  - teachers have attended training which has increased their subject knowledge so they feel confident in using information and communication technology.

144. By the age of seven, many pupils are confident users of the computer. They are aware of technology around them and often listen to taped stories in other lessons. They have satisfactory keyboard skills and enjoy using the computer for word processing. They record and amend their ideas using text, data and images. Pupils understand that the menu allows them to select what they want to do and they can save and retrieve their work. They understand a computer can be used to produce graphs and have presented pictorial graphs on their favourite pets. Pupils in Year 2 have used art programs and created pictures by selecting spray and fill tools on the menu. However, pupils have limited experience of using information and communication technology in other lessons and are not confident about reviewing their own work to improve it. There is also insufficient attention given to the incorporation of sound when pupils are developing ideas.
145. By the age of 11, pupils use information and communication technology to present information in a variety of forms relevant for intended audiences. For example, in Year 5, pupils designed a poster for a holiday island and were confident extracting pictures from different programmes and inserting them in their own text. In Year 6, pupils are confident writing straight on to the screen. When creating a newspaper article they know how to change the size and style of their text and use the spell checker correctly. A review of work and discussion with pupils show they know how to control events in predetermined ways. They use sensors to measure physical processes, such as the transference of light through materials. Pupils have limited understanding of the ways in which computer-based methods of gathering information, communicating, modelling and controlling events compare with non-electronic methods.
146. In the information and communication technology suite, there is additional support provided by teachers and support assistants to ensure equal access for all. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from this extra support and make satisfactory progress in these lessons. Teachers often set up partner work and this enables less confident pupils to learn from their peers.
147. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Management and organisation in the suite is effective and pupils behave responsibly. They are enthusiastic, keen to improve their skills and, generally, work productively when sharing the use of a computer. Resources are handled with great care because teachers remind pupils of safety issues at the start of lessons. Teachers plan lessons in the suite which draw from a coherent long-term plan and this is now effectively developing pupils' computer skills. A weakness in teachers' planning is the lack of assessment of individual pupil achievements and so tasks are not always pitched at the correct level. This restricts learning as pupils have to wait for more support.
148. Most of the teaching of this subject takes place in the school's information and communication technology suite. In these lessons most teachers show confidence in supporting pupils as they work. Teachers have started to use the suite to support learning in other lessons. This was effective in a literacy lesson in Year 6. However, these resources are not fully used in this way. Similarly, computers in some Years 1 and 2 classes and the recently purchased laptops are not yet fully utilised in other lessons. This means that pupils gain skills in using a range of different programs but have limited scope to use these skills while learning in other subjects. Teachers are not yet using programs to enhance the learning of pupils with special educational needs in other subjects.
149. Management of the subject is good. A recent audit has been carried out based upon a review of resources, standards and teachers' planning. Additional guidance has been provided when needed. The school has a clear plan to continue with the improvement now evident in the subject and the development of the subject is identified as a priority in the school's improvement plan.

## **MUSIC**

150. Standards in Year 2 are as expected for pupils' ages. Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. Standards are higher than expected in Year 6. Achievement is good because teaching is effective in extending pupils' musical skills and knowledge. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy the practical aspects of music and make good progress. They especially benefit from the support of other pupils as they collaborate and work in small groups.
151. Improvement since the last inspection is good and has been brought about by:

- a more flexible approach to planning which allows teachers to select elements which they feel confident teaching;
  - more detail in the guidance provided to teachers so that the less confident have good support;
  - assessment at the end of each topic and the provision of extra time so that when a weakness is spotted it can be revisited;
  - more emphasis on singing with teachers giving sufficient attention to teaching pupils how to improve their singing.
152. In Year 2, pupils understand loud and soft as they whisper or roar in response to their teachers' requests. They listen carefully and follow a rhythm by repeating a given number of claps and clicks. When selecting musical instruments, pupils explain how they can be played by shaking, scraping and tapping. Early composition skills are imaginatively introduced through the use of simple picture cards. As a result, pupils understand symbols, can represent sounds and play their instruments in response to a given symbol. However, pupils are not giving enough attention to the sound they are actually producing with some playing too loudly rather than maintaining a steady beat. Pupils enjoy singing, although some find it difficult to maintain the tune. Pupils did not suggest improvements to their music because the teacher did not provide opportunities for evaluation.
153. Much is achieved in Years 3 to 6 because teaching is more challenging and in the lessons seen teachers had a good knowledge of the subject. Pupils in Year 6 are working at standards above those expected for their age. They rise to the challenge to compose their own music and share their efforts with the rest of the class. Through very effective teaching they recognise that music can be built up of different layers and this makes the overall piece of music more interesting. They follow musical notation and confidently beat out rhythms and patterns recognising the significance of a pause in their playing. When working in groups they show great confidence planning and evaluating their efforts. One pupil identified that the beat pattern included a pause and this was making it difficult for the other players and so the group adjusted their composition. Pupils listen respectfully to the efforts of others and have good critical analysis skills. For example, one pupil identified the group were losing the beat and starting to follow the rhythm part of the composition. Many recognise the importance of their part in the overall playing of their composition. They are clear about the importance of maintaining a steady beat and know that this is important in ensuring all play together at the same speed. Most of the pupils are confident using musical terminology in their explanations.
154. Teaching and learning are good overall. The teaching seen was stronger in Years 3 to 6 and the teaching in Year 6 was excellent. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and in the best lessons have very good musical expertise. This allows them to participate in the lessons by singing and playing instruments which capture pupils' enthusiasm and desire to extend their own skills. In response to a weakness in the last inspection teachers give due attention to singing. Lessons include exercise to warm up the voice and these are enjoyed by all. In hymn practice, pupils are reminded about the importance of careful breathing. This leads to tuneful singing. Teachers plan for pupils to work with a partner or in small groups and this is very effective in encouraging collaboration and extending pupil's social skills. Lessons follow detailed planning guidelines and so the pupils have listened to a wide range of music. They have been encouraged to record their feelings to different types of music. Pupils link *Pomp and Circumstance (Elgar)* to ceremonial occasions and suggest suitable words for the different animals in the *Carnival of the Animals (Saint Saëns)*. When teaching was excellent the pace was brisk with pupils being given time constraints so that they knew how much time they had to complete their compositions. This led to a frenzy of practice, discussion and adjustments as pupils prepared their work for the rest of the class and much new learning took place.
155. Leadership of the subject is good. An effective audit of the subject has been carried out. This revealed a lack of confidence by a few teachers and so more pre-recorded music was obtained to provide that extra support. Resources have improved and are good in quantity and quality.
156. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' cultural development. Not only do they listen to a range of music they also benefit from musicians visiting the school. This includes learning about music from other cultures as well as other ages. One visitor played Tudor instruments and music as part of their study of music through the ages. Older pupils have also attended a concert by the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. In school assemblies music contributes to pupils' spiritual development and they enjoy singing in a large group. This was very clear in the school's

achievement assembly when all combined to sing *Colours of Day* and the feeling of community, which is a strong feature of the school, was very evident.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

157. Satisfactory standards in Year 2 have been sustained since the last inspection. Standards have improved in Years 3 to 6 and are now above average. Many of these pupils benefit from the extra coaching in the school's excellent range of extra-curricular activities and have skills that are higher than those normally seen of this age range. Overall, achievement is good. This includes pupils with special educational needs. Teachers are very aware of the needs of their pupils and are quick to provide the extra advice when it is needed.
158. Pupils have the opportunity to learn to swim and the school's records show that by the time they leave school most can swim 25 metres.
159. In Year 2, pupils have satisfactory control when making different shapes with their bodies. They can combine movements to make a simple sequence and alter the level of their actions to make their movements more interesting. On the gymnastic apparatus pupils find different ways of moving. They crawl and pull themselves along the benches and climb on the agility tables and jump off safely. Few pupils give thought to planning their movements and many hover around their favourite piece of apparatus rather than making full use of the space available. A few more agile pupils transfer the skills they practised on the floor to the apparatus. Pupil demonstrations are used to celebrate achievement, but pupils are not yet suggesting improvements to their work.
160. In Year 6, pupils show above average standards in games because teaching gives due attention to coaching specific skills. In response to very good teaching in Year 6, pupils quickly learn how to grip the hockey stick correctly and know it is important to keep the ball near the stick if they are to keep it under control. They dribble confidently round an obstacle course. When passing, pupils know it is important to look up and aim carefully. Many find stopping the ball more difficult, but with effective advice are learning the importance of being in the correct position and trapping the ball between the stick and the ground. Teachers use their own and pupils' demonstrations more effectively than in Years 1 and 2 and press pupils to provide evaluations on the work they see. As a result, pupils are more aware of how to improve their own skills and many show great determination to improve. When playing small games, pupils understand the need to follow simple rules and the importance of fair play. When given the opportunity they suggest a scoring system for their games and the more skilful introduce tactics to increase their score.
161. Throughout the school pupils have a good knowledge of the benefit of exercise on the body because teachers explain the importance of warming up and pupils know this makes the heart beat faster.
162. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. It is better in Years 3 to 6 and is often very good in these years. Lessons are structured well and always include a warm-up. Teachers do not always remember to enable the pupils to cool down or sometimes the chosen task is too rigorous and fails to calm the pupils down sufficiently. Teachers have a secure subject knowledge and this enables them to coach skills effectively. Effective use is made of pupils' demonstrations to celebrate achievement. In Years 5 and 6, teachers extend this to develop skills of evaluation and pupils are encouraged to suggest ways to improve. Teachers do not always allow pupils time to practise following a demonstration and this weakens the impact of this process on pupils' standards. Teaching is stronger in Years 3 to 6 because teachers have higher expectations of pupils and tasks and the pace of lessons is brisk. This makes pupils more responsive and they maintain a good level of physical activity throughout the lesson. In other lessons tasks are less imaginative and pupils' interest wanes. This is a weakness in gymnastic lessons when the choice of large apparatus is limited. For example, in lessons seen in Years 2 and 4, teachers used similar apparatus and this failed to capture the enthusiasm of the older pupils who could have achieved more in the lesson. Teachers do not always allow the younger pupils sufficient independence when putting out the apparatus and this makes the process too long and slows down the pace of the lesson. A positive feature in all lessons seen was the management of pupils. This is firmly based on very good relationships, which enables pupils to learn in a safe secure atmosphere.

163. Management of the subject is satisfactory. More detailed guidelines have been introduced and training provided to support these. This has been more effective in games than in gymnastics where the progression in skills is less clear. The co-ordinator has observed lessons and this has resulted in a review of pupil groupings to avoid the dominance of boys in lessons. This has been effective and good practice is now shared and this makes a positive contribution to pupils' social development.
164. Teachers give willingly of their time to provide an impressive range of after-school activities. The focus is strongly on providing for everyone. Activities are available at lunchtime as well as after school and are open to boys and girls and all abilities. The commitment to these activities is evident in the success that the school has had in many competitions including cross-country, athletics and rugby. The residential visit to Barnston Dale includes team building exercises, abseiling and orienteering. The focus is very much on fun and team participation and in learning tolerance of others as many pupils experience their first holiday without the close guidance of their families.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

165. The standard of religious education attained by pupils aged 7 and 11 is in line with the expectations of the local agreed syllabus. This is an improvement since the last inspection when the standards attained by 7 year old pupils were below expectations. Standards have risen because:
- the quality of teachers' knowledge of the subject, criticised in the last inspection report, has improved;
  - the new guidelines issued by the local authority give teachers a clear framework for their planning.
166. Achievement of pupils of all abilities is satisfactory. Pupils in Year 2 know some of the main characters and events in the Christian gospels. Their exercise books contain writing of sound quality on John the Baptist, the Last Supper and the Christian festivals of Christmas and Easter. One pupil re-told the story of Zacchaeus in her own words, showing sound insight and understanding of the characters and events involved. Pupils reflect on their responsibilities in response to the story of the Prodigal Son. Toward the end of Year 2 pupils begin to explore the religion of Islam.
167. Standards in Year 6 are also satisfactory and most pupils have made satisfactory progress. Pupils' books in Year 6 pupils show some mature reflections on the Temptations of Jesus as well as some well-presented and extended pieces on Buddhism and Islam. About once a year pupils visit the local Church of St Mary's to improve their knowledge of Christian worship and about once every two years a group visits Chester or Liverpool Cathedral. In the past, Year 6 pupils have visited a local synagogue and a Sikh temple. Pupils use their literacy skills effectively when they write up the information they research on Islam. Pupils in Year 6 have used information and communication technology to write the Christmas Story and have inserted pictures to make this work more attractive. However, there is limited evidence of information and communication technology being used in other years.
168. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In two lessons, Year 1 pupils explored the notion of celebration and preparing for celebration. Teachers made the lessons more relevant by encouraging pupils to bring in artefacts from home that had associations with family celebrations, such as christening gowns and photographs of family christenings and weddings. The pupils enjoyed sharing their own experiences of celebration with each other and the teacher involved all the pupils by skilful commentary and attention to the needs of those with special educational needs. In another very good lesson involving older juniors the teacher explored the notion of prayer. Through a variety of strategies, including pupils reciting the Lord's prayer together and hearing it being sung, as well as the teacher reading aloud the story of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector in the Temple, the pupils deepened their understanding of prayer. In the second part of the lesson the teacher created a soothing, peaceful atmosphere by lighting candles and playing Buddhist chants on the tape recorder. Pupils listened to the teacher's gentle commentary with rapt attention and enjoyed an experience that would stay with them for a long time to come. This was a good example of pupils not only learning about religion but also learning from religion.
169. Management of the subject is good and the co-ordinator has played a leading part in the introduction of new planning guidelines and assessment procedures that have led to improved standards.
170. The subject extends pupils multi-cultural experiences as they learn about aspects of Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism and Judaism. There are some attractive posters around the school illustrating features of these various religions. The subject also makes useful links with the work covered in personal, social and health education. For example, when pupils study the Ten Commandments and the importance of rules. It also provides opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in writing. However, although some of the pupils' written pieces have been word-processed, no use of information and communication was observed in any of the lessons. Book resources are adequate and there are some good collections of religious books on display in some of the classrooms. The school does not, however, have a collection of religious artefacts, but these are occasionally borrowed from the collection held by the local education authority.

