

INSPECTION REPORT

BROOKVALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Runcorn

LEA area: Runcorn

Unique reference number: 132195

Headteacher: Mrs Barbara Boden

Reporting inspector: Rajinder Harrison
RgI's OIN: 18059

Dates of inspection: 17th to 20th March 2003

Inspection number: 248933

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Northwich Road Brookvale Runcorn Cheshire
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Telephone number:	01928 711401
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Miss Jackie Bellfield
Date of previous inspection:	Newly amalgamated school – no previous inspection

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
18059	Rajinder Harrison	Registered inspector	Educational inclusion English as an additional language English	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements. How well are pupils taught? What the school should do to improve further.
19439	Doreen Shotton	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22398	Lynne Wright	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Design and Technology Geography	
31334	Barbara Atcheson	Team inspector	Mathematics History Religious Education	Pupils attitudes, values and personal development
22704	Garry Williams	Team inspector	Special Educational Needs Science Music Physical Education	
4262	Tony Taylor	Team inspector	ICT Art and Design	How good are the curricular and other opportunities? How well is the school led and managed?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in the 'new town' area of Runcorn, comprising mainly housing association dwellings with a small private housing development. It caters for pupils aged 3 to 11. There is a part-time Nursery, operating mornings only with 26 children, and there are 271 pupils of compulsory school age. The present primary school was formed in September 2000 by amalgamating the adjacent infant and junior schools. The school moved to a single site (the former junior school) in December 2001. Significant building work has been undertaken in the last two years and is still going on. The pupils are predominantly White-British with a very small number of pupils from various ethnic minority groups. Six pupils speak English as an additional language. A high proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals (40%) and a very high proportion of pupils has special educational needs (42%). Seven pupils have statements of special educational need and these include learning and behavioural difficulties and specific health issues. The background of pupils indicates well below average level of economic and social circumstances. The school is designated as 'high family stress' by the Borough Council and, as a result, receives extra funding. The number of pupils moving in and out of the school is high at around 18%. In addition, the school has had significant staffing difficulties.

The attainment of children on entry to the Nursery is well below national expectations and on entry to Reception it is below national expectations.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The headteacher's high aspirations for the community and her strong leadership and drive have enabled her to meet the many difficulties of managing change in order to establish this new school. With effective support from all the Governors and staff, her good management has ensured the school's satisfactory amalgamation. The environment in the school is warm and welcoming. Pupils are cared for well and receive a sound quality of education. The Nursery provision is good and this enables children to make a positive start to their learning. By the end of Year 6, overall progress is satisfactory, although attainment is below average in English, mathematics and science. Teaching, whilst satisfactory overall, does not always meet the needs of a small minority of pupils. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The leadership and management of the headteacher are good.
- Governors support the school well and funds and grants are spent effectively.
- The pupils are cared for well and the school works hard to encourage them to attend regularly.
- Most pupils have positive attitudes to school and form good relationships with everyone.
- Provision for pupils' social, moral and cultural development is good.
- The school works hard to ensure every pupil is included in all it provides.
- The school provides very good out of school activities, which pupils enjoy and benefit from.
- The school has good relationships with partner institutions and other community groups.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics, science, religious education, history and geography.
- The role of staff with management responsibilities in monitoring and supporting developments.
- Attendance, which is well below average, and punctuality of a significant minority of pupils.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

This is the school's first inspection since its establishment.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	N/a	C	D	B
mathematics	N/a	D	E	B
science	N/a	E*	D	B

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
lowest 5% nationally	E*

(Similar schools – those with a similar number of pupils requiring free school meals).

As this is a new school the data presented is limited in informing trends. However, the school performs above average when compared with similar schools. The school has a high rate of pupil mobility at around 18%. For pupils in Year 6 in 2001-2002 this rate was at 21%. Since its establishment in 2000, the school has experienced a high number of staff changes, and this has a significant impact on maintaining continuity in teaching and learning. The school has a high number of pupils with special educational needs. Attendance is well below the national average, although it is showing some improvement this year. These factors limited the standards pupils achieved in 2002 and continue to do so. The rate of progress in literacy, for a significant minority of lower attaining pupils, limits the standards they achieve in other subjects throughout the school. The school has worked at improving writing skills this year but the impact of this effort is yet to be realised because a significant number of pupils do not attend school regularly and their learning is interrupted.

Children enter Nursery with well below expected levels of attainment in all areas of learning. A significant minority is well below average in their speaking skills and personal development. Assessments show children make good progress. By the end of their Reception year, they are generally below average expectations in all areas of learning.

From the tests and assessments in 2002, at the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics were well below average compared to schools nationally, but broadly average when compared with similar schools. Teacher assessments in science showed a similar picture. A significant proportion of pupils achieved at the lower level 2C or below and very few attained the higher levels 2A or 3. The numbers attaining level 3 in mathematics, at 17%, was encouraging. Pupils currently in Year 2 are still below average expectations in reading and writing and their speaking and thinking skills inhibit the overall progress they make in literacy. Pupils' work in mathematics and science show standards to be below average. Overall progress is satisfactory for the majority.

Test results in English and mathematics in 2002, at the end of Year 6, show a decline in the standards when compared with the previous year, mainly due to the absence of four pupils when the tests took place. Two of these pupils were expected to attain the higher level 5 in the tests and, as a consequence, the school would have achieved its challenging but achievable targets. Standards in science rose significantly in the same year, although were still below the national averages. Greater emphasis was placed on developing investigation skills. The school performed well against similar schools, with the attainment of the higher level 5 in all core subjects having a positive impact on the overall performance that year. However, when compared with these pupils' attainment when they were tested at age seven, their achievements at the end of Year 6 were well below their prior attainment. The school recognises this to be a major area for improvement. The school's changing circumstances over the last three years have not been helpful in ensuring pupils achieve in line with expectations. Overall progress for the majority of pupils is satisfactory and the standards of pupils work in the current Year 6 is below national averages in English, mathematics and science.

Standards in geography and history, at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, do not meet national expectations, and standards in religious education do not meet the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. The school has not established rigorous planning strategies to ensure pupils build on prior learning when acquiring new skills and knowledge in these subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school are satisfactory, although a small number, in some junior classes, show little willingness to learn unless directly challenged.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The behaviour of most pupils is generally good but a significant minority finds it hard to sustain acceptable behaviour and disturbs the progress of lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Pupils work and play together well and relationships throughout the school are often good. There are a few pupils who find it hard to concentrate and sustain interest and they take little pride in what they do. A good number find it difficult to work independently and to use their initiative.
Attendance	Well below average. A significant minority arrives late regularly.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

From pupils' work, teachers' planning and lessons observed during inspection, the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Well over half of the lessons observed during the inspection were good or better. The majority of the rest were satisfactory. The few unsatisfactory lessons were in the Reception and Junior classes. In these unsatisfactory lessons, the weaknesses lay in teachers' planning that did not match pupils' abilities or build on previous work appropriately and behaviour management strategies that slowed down pupils' progress. Temporary staffing is an issue. For pupils with special educational needs learning is good when additional support is at hand to guide them. In many lessons this is not always the case and therefore progress is satisfactory overall. A significant number of pupils require continual attention to remain on task. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory, resulting in these pupils making sound progress.

Teaching in the Nursery is generally good. Children are eager to explore the good range of activities provided and many engage in conversation readily. As a result, learning is good and they make good progress in all areas of learning. Elsewhere, teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils. Where teaching is good or better, expectations of good work and good behaviour are made clear and work is matched well to pupils' needs. In these lessons pupils make good progress, because the work captures their interest and enthusiasm. In a significant number of lessons, judged to be satisfactory overall, the pace of learning is slow because teachers spend time managing unacceptable behaviour. In some instances, inadequate planning or poorly designed worksheets and activities limit overall progress. Some pupils find it hard to work independently because they have not successfully gained the skills or confidence they need to work without support or to think for themselves. Average and lower attaining pupils sometimes fail to make links to prior learning, and so only absorb isolated facts and information. Teaching in geography is unsatisfactory because insufficient time has been given to develop the subject appropriately to ensure pupils build up their knowledge and skills to the correct depth. Because pupils' overall literacy skills are below average, pupils' ability to interpret information and data limits progress. Planned opportunities for pupils to discuss, debate and reason out solutions are limited.

The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is generally satisfactory. Class, group and individual targets are identified, but sometimes the work presented in lessons is often the same for all ability groups. This limits progress for the higher and lower attaining pupils. If additional support is not available in these situations, some pupils fail to make sense of what they are learning and therefore progress for this small

minority of pupils is unsatisfactory. Teachers are beginning to incorporate the use of ICT in some lessons although the planning for this facility is not always evident.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good in the Nursery and satisfactory elsewhere, other than for geography where insufficient attention has been given to develop the subject. The teaching of literacy is satisfactory although there are insufficient planned opportunities to develop pupils' speaking skills. Extra-curricular activities are very good. Community links are good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory overall and good for pupils with statements of special educational needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory and as a consequence these pupils make progress that matches their peers.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good. Provision for their spiritual development is satisfactory. The school has achieved the Healthy School's Award.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good care of its pupils. Assessment procedures are sound but not always used effectively to check pupils' progress. Procedures to monitor behaviour are good. Attendance is monitored well.

The school has satisfactory links with parents and tries hard to engage their interest in the work of the school. Information provided for parents about their children's progress is satisfactory, although reports need to be improved.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher's good leadership and management have ensured the school's successful amalgamation. Staff with management responsibilities do not yet work consistently or rigorously enough to ensure standards are raised.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors support the school well. They carry out their statutory duties satisfactorily and are keen to consider strategies required to raise standards.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Effective systems have been introduced to gather information regarding pupils' progress and to monitor teaching and learning. These procedures are not implemented consistently across the school. The information gathered is not used by some teachers effectively to inform their lesson planning, or to set targets that reflect pupils' prior attainment appropriately.
The strategic use of resources	Specific grants are spent carefully. Principles of best value are applied soundly. Day-to-day administration and financial planning are good. The school gives sound value for money.

The school is adequately staffed, but five teachers hold temporary positions and this has a negative impact on the pace of learning for some pupils. Learning support assistants are not always used to maximum effect. The accommodation is clean, tidy and attractive. Resources for ICT are good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children like school and are expected to work hard.• Teaching is good and children make good progress.• The school is led and managed well.• The school helps children become mature and responsible.• Parents feel comfortable in approaching the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Behaviour in the school.• The amount of homework children receive.• The range of extra-curricular activities the school provides.

Teaching is satisfactory and pupils make sound progress. The range of activities outside lessons is very good. Homework is satisfactory but a few pupils chose not to do it always. The school tries to work closely with parents, but a few parents contribute very little to the work of the school and their children's learning. Most children behave well in and around the school. The few who do not always maintain acceptable behaviour are managed well.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. As this is a new school the data presented is limited in informing trends. The school has a high rate of pupil mobility at around 18%. For pupils in Year 6, in 2001-2002, this rate was at 21%. Since its establishment in 2000, the school has experienced a high number of staff changes, and at the present time five temporary positions depress the continuity in teaching and learning. Pupils transferred from two sites to the one building where extensive building work is still in hand. The school has a high number of pupils with special educational needs. Attendance is well below the national average, although it is showing some improvement this year. The low attendance of some pupils' and in a few instances parents' negative attitudes to learning are factors the school struggles to address. All these factors limited the standards pupils achieved in the tests and assessments in 2002 and continue to do so. The school has worked at improving writing skills this year but the impact of this effort is yet to be realised because a significant number of pupils find it hard to sustain interest and concentration and few work consistently to improve their skills outside school. The school achieves well at the end of Year 6, when compared with similar schools.
2. Children enter Nursery with well below expected levels of attainment in all areas of learning. For a good number of children, the Nursery is the only pre-school provision available in the locality. As places are limited and the provision is only part-time, only about a half of the children who subsequently enter the Reception classes have this Nursery experience. Assessments show children make good progress in the Nursery class and benefit from the engaging range of activities and experiences provided. School records show that the boys' attainment on entry to Nursery and Reception has been better than that of the girls until recently. Inspection observations show that boys have better speaking skills than the girls do, and are more sociable in their play. However, the school has not fully identified how the lack of this pre-school experience impacts on the overall progress of every child who then enters school in the Reception year. The school does identify the most able and more mature children from the baseline assessments carried out in Reception classes and these children are placed in the mixed Reception/Year 1 Class. But by the end of the Reception year, the majority of children reach generally below average expectations in all areas of learning. Overall progress in the Reception year is satisfactory.
3. From the tests and assessments in 2002, at the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics were well below average compared to schools nationally, but broadly average when compared with similar schools. Teacher assessments in science showed a similar picture. Pupils currently in Year 2 are below average expectations in reading and writing. For a significant number, limited speaking and reading skills inhibit the overall progress they make in literacy. Pupils' work in mathematics and science show standards to be below average. Test results in English, mathematics and science in 2002 show standards at the end of Year 6 to be below national averages. The school did not achieve its targets that year. This was due to the absence of four pupils, two of whom were expected to attain the higher level 5 in the tests. The school performed well against similar schools, with the attainment of the higher level 5 in all core subjects having a positive impact on the overall performance that year. The school's changing circumstances over the last three years have not been helpful in ensuring pupils achieve in line with expectations. Throughout the school overall progress is satisfactory. Progress for pupils of all ability groups, and for those who speak English as an additional language, is satisfactory. Provision for the higher than average number of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Pupils are identified early and have appropriate individual education plans, which enable them to achieve satisfactorily against their prior attainment. The progress of a small minority of pupils who have behavioural problems is unsatisfactory. These pupils find it hard to sustain interest and concentration and experience frequent interruptions in their learning.
4. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are well below expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Whilst many listen attentively to what they are required to do, a good number do not absorb new

information well and struggle to make connections to their prior learning. Lack of sustained concentration and intellectual effort limits their overall 'listening' that then restricts their ability to talk about their work confidently or coherently. They remember isolated facts and other information that engages them during good lessons, especially, for example, from stories and practical tasks. They are less secure with work they have to think about, for example, retaining details and responding to questions which ask them 'why....?' Because insufficient emphasis is placed on time for discussions and debates, pupils in the juniors are not confident in engaging in these aspects and do not argue or reason confidently. They are happy to talk in unstructured situations and are interested in engaging with adults and each other for recreational purposes. Their levels of attainment in these skills restrict their progress both in reading and writing which are below average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. For example, because many pupils are not very articulate and find it hard to express themselves, they write as they speak and written work shows errors in structure, punctuation and spelling. Handwriting is also unsatisfactory with many pupils still working at writing letters accurately by the end of Year 2 and few having gained a fluent style by the end of Year 6. Standards in reading are average for the very few highest attaining pupils. For the majority, standards are below average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. A good number begin to read fairly confidently applying a range of strategies to sound out words but comprehension is a weakness. The skills of reading for meaning and of interpreting information carefully and accurately, in the junior classes develops slowly and only the highest attaining pupils apply these skills confidently when working on independent tasks and activities. However, a significant number do not practise their literacy skills regularly outside school and this slows down learning and achievement. Overall progress across the school is satisfactory.

5. Standards in mathematics are below average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Teachers work hard to introduce the basic skills of number and simple operations appropriate for Years 1 and 2, but only the highest attaining pupils, who apply themselves well attain standards that are in line with expectations. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a sound awareness of number operations. Applications remain hesitant for many pupils unless they receive sustained support and guidance and few find it easy to work independently. Hence standards are below average. Because the teaching of shape and space and data handling are weaker areas of the curriculum, in the infant classes pupils make slow progress in these aspects and by the end of Year 6 these remain a significant weakness. For a significant number of pupils below average levels of speaking and reasoning skills limit they progress they make in mathematics. For the majority progress is satisfactory.
6. In science, standards are below average at the end of both Years 2 and 6. Greater emphasis was placed on developing investigation skills since last year's tests and assessments and indications are that standards in science are improving. Throughout the school many pupils enjoy the subject and find investigation work engaging. The weakness continues to be that of explaining what they learn or understanding clearly what any information they gather from their investigations tells them about a specific topic. Overall progress is sound for the majority.
7. Standards in religious education, history and geography are also below expectations for pupils' aged seven and eleven. Pupils' progress in these subjects is particularly affected by their well below average literacy skills and also because the subjects have received limited attention in terms of developing work that matches pupils' needs. Insufficient time is given to teaching these subjects in some classes, especially in the case of geography. In addition, the school has not established rigorous planning strategies to ensure pupils build on prior learning when acquiring new skills and knowledge. As a consequence pupils are unable to make satisfactory progress. Standards at the end of Year 2 in ICT, art, music, design and technology and physical education are broadly as expected. Pupils make satisfactory progress in these areas because they enjoy practical tasks that demand less of them with regard to literacy and numeracy and thinking skills.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Most pupils have a positive attitude towards school. They generally apply themselves to tasks, sustain concentration and persevere with their work until it is finished. Most pupils say that they enjoy coming to school. During lessons, most pupils listen attentively to their teacher and answer

sensibly. Where teaching is particularly good and pupils are fully involved, they enjoy learning and make good progress. Practical activities engage their attention well and pupils produce good work, for example, in art and design tasks. However, there is a significant minority of pupils who does not like coming to school because they have to work. For example, in a literacy lesson taken by a very hard-working, skilled teacher, a debate on whether pupils should have homework, was largely thwarted by a good number of pupils with attitudes to learning that were both unsatisfactory and intransigent. There is also a significant minority of pupils who exhibit challenging behaviour. These pupils do not always settle down to learn, listen or respond appropriately to the teacher. Sometimes, in some lessons, a few pupils sit passively and do not actively engage with their learning unless given regular encouragement and attention. Some of these negative attitudes restrict the progress these pupils make.

9. Pupils' behaviour in and around school is satisfactory overall. There has been one lunch time exclusion this term, for a week, and one pupil went home for the day as the school sought to reinforce its values. Most pupils are friendly and polite and show consideration towards each other and to adults. They are mainly well behaved during lessons. There are occasions when a few pupils misbehave in lessons but the majority of pupils ignore this and remain on task. There is a sense of order as pupils enter assembly. Whilst there are some pupils who will run in the corridor or misbehave in a line, most pupils move calmly around the school. In less formal situations, for example, in the dining hall, the behaviour can be 'bubbly'. This is because they have enjoyed their playtime outside and take a little time to settle down.
10. Most pupils have a good understanding of how their actions make others feel but there are those who are not able to identify with the feelings of others and whose constant interruption to lessons interfere with the learning of others. The incidence of oppressive behaviour has reduced as a direct result of the school's good systems and procedures, which support both the child that is bullied and the child who perpetrates the bullying. Pupils say that there is very little bullying and any incident is dealt with both immediately and efficiently. The Year 6 'Buddies' know the procedures to use if they see any bullying. Reception children play in a separate playground and the Year 6 'Play Leaders' talk to them. Most infant and junior pupils play co-operatively on the field in good weather. If a child sits down on their own, other pupils will come up to them and are most attentive, learning such attitudes from the good examples set by the adults in the school.
11. Relationships are satisfactory. Most pupils relate well to their teachers and to each other, although there are occasions when pupils are reluctant to work in pairs and bicker over the use of resources. When relationships in the classroom are good, it gives a calm atmosphere and helps pupils to behave well. Overall, a caring ethos pervades and most pupils do work collaboratively, supporting each other effectively. Older pupils are usually caring of younger ones and are keen to look after them when the opportunity arises.
12. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory overall. The majority takes up responsibilities in their own classrooms and carry out their tasks efficiently. Those who do take up responsibilities, do so both sensibly and reliably. Examples include, pupils taking the register to the office, closing down computers at the end of the day and playing an active part in helping to run the school in their roles as school councillors, 'Buddies' and 'Play Leaders'. There is however a significant minority who is not keen to take on responsibility even so far as placing their own book back in the drawer. Pupil's ability to work independently or exercise initiative is sometimes limited and a few struggle to remain on task unless given direct support continually. Some of the lower attaining pupils, or occasionally, pupils with poor self management skills find it hard to concentrate at all times but especially so when teaching is not engaging enough to sustain their interest. Most children have poorly developed learning skills, when they start school in the Nursery. Many enjoy coming to school, and readily leave their parents and carers in order to join in activities. Some younger children are reluctant to be parted from their adults and are sensitively helped to do so by the classroom assistant and teacher. As a consequence, their personal development is good.
13. Most pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to school and respond well to the helpful support and guidance they receive from teachers and other adults. A few pupils who occasionally show quite challenging behaviour find it hard to contain themselves but respond

well to the school's strategies to manage these little outbreaks. Sometimes when teaching does not engage their interest fully, a few become distracted, disinterested or occasionally disruptive. This results in a slowing down in the pace of learning for themselves and for others.

14. Attendance is poor. During the last full academic year, the school's targets were not achieved. Attendance was well below the national average and unauthorised absence was much higher than that for similar schools. However, during the present academic year, the rate of attendance has increased and unauthorised absence has been significantly decreased, so that the targets set should be achieved this year and in two years' time, the school aims to achieve attendance at the national average. There are some pupils with medical problems, which prevent them coming to school and a few problem families, where their children's attendance record is of grave concern and they have been referred to the educational welfare officer.
15. Each day, two or three pupils are late for the start of school. This not only prevents them from making the most of their education, but it interrupts classes and affects learning and pupils' attainment. Otherwise classes start and finish on time and teachers encourage punctuality.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Of the sixty-seven lessons observed across the whole school, well over half were good or better. Most pupils are willing to work hard and do their best, managing to sustain this commitment more effectively when teaching is good and learning is made to be challenging and fun. Teaching overall is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage. It is strongest in the Nursery and it is here that children make the best progress. The good provision they receive here enables them to make a good start to their learning. Elsewhere in the school, the teaching is satisfactory, but good and very good lessons were seen across the school. Teaching in geography is unsatisfactory because insufficient time has been given to develop the subject in line with new guidelines or to teach the subject regularly in all classes for periods of time that would ensure higher standards. A few teachers are not confident with their expertise in teaching the skills required for this subject. Across the school, there are sometimes weaknesses in the effective management of pupils and planning to meet the needs of all ability groups. This is particularly the case where classes are taught by temporary staff. In a significant number of lessons insufficient use of day to day assessment is used to ensure the work teachers plan best matches pupils' needs and relates accurately to their prior achievement. This again occurs more frequently in classes where temporary staffing arrangements exist. In a significant number of the lessons seen, teachers do not plan sufficiently to promote independent learning and this limits the overall progress some of the highest attaining pupils make, for example, in non-core subjects. The five unsatisfactory lessons were in areas where temporary staffing arrangements exist at the present time.
17. Teachers ensure that pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language are fully involved in class activities. Learning support assistants, when available, help pupils effectively especially during literacy and numeracy lessons. The support assistants are committed, know their pupils well and assist considerably in creating a purposeful and calm atmosphere where these pupils learn effectively. There is less support for pupils, including those with special educational needs, during whole class teaching, where opportunities are missed to make better use of any additional staff to engage more actively during lesson introductions and presentations.
18. Children come from a diverse range of social backgrounds when they enter the Nursery class, and are settled quickly into the good routines in the Nursery. The Nursery teacher, who is in a temporary position, has created a busy and purposeful environment with high expectations of all children. For many this is their first time away from home and a few are slow to adjust. However, the teacher and the Nursery nurse work hard to engage children's interest in a wide range of attractive activities and quickly foster the good relationships required to help children make good strides in their learning. Good time is given to support each child and assess the progress made over the range of activities presented. For a good number of children, interactions with each other are difficult because they do not always have the appropriate social skills to

share, take turns or play together. The adults take time to show them what is acceptable behaviour and most respond excitedly to these interventions. With careful encouragement and guidance, these skills develop well. Assessments are used effectively to target learning, and it is at these early assessments that teachers identify children who may need additional specific support. Provision in the Reception and mixed Reception/Year 1 Class is sound and children continue to add to their experiences satisfactorily. Because organisation in these classes is not as lively or as well structured as in the Nursery, the initial good progress is not sustained. A significant number of children lack concentration skills and, as a result, learning for these children is sometimes very slow. Sometimes they move from activity to activity without sufficient adult intervention to guide them in their learning.

19. Teaching is satisfactory across the rest of the classes. In some good and better lessons where expectations are high, teachers engage pupils in lively activities, and make it clear what is expected from them. Lessons are generally conducted at a satisfactory pace and activities, whilst sometimes challenging, occasionally fail to engage the interest of all the pupils especially those who find it hard to concentrate or to sustain good behaviour during long periods of listening. Most want to do well, so they listen hard and move to independent work eagerly. A few consistently show signs of being unable to work well independently unless directly supervised and ask for help immediately. In a good number of lessons, teachers work very hard to engage and involve pupils as much as possible. They take time to explain things repeatedly, especially when pupils demonstrate, for example, how little they have retained from previous work. For example, in a literacy lesson in Year 3, a significant minority failed to recall correct definitions of nouns and adjectives as parts of speech and how to recognise these in text. When teachers' expectations for good work and good behaviour are made very clear from the start, and pupils' efforts are recognised as teachers discuss their work with them in very effective summing up sessions at the end of lessons, teaching is good. In a very effective yoga lesson in Year 3, the teacher very carefully drew from the pupils what they had learned previously and at the end of the session asked them to consider if they had improved in the current lesson. The gentle but firm approach she adopted gave pupils the confidence to take time to review their performance and consider what they might do during the week to retain some of this learning. Such ends of lesson evaluations do not happen routinely throughout the school, and this limits teachers' and pupils' awareness of the progress that has been made.
20. Teaching is also good when teachers are secure about their subject knowledge and the subject matter captures pupils' imaginations well. For example, in a very good religious education lesson in Year 6, pupils recalled previous work on religious books confidently and enjoyed using the specific vocabulary they had learnt. The teacher worked hard to draw information from pupils using searching questions and tried to involve a wide range of responses especially from those who volunteered little. Progress in this lesson was good because, in essence, pupils found the contents interesting and 'different', a few reluctantly admitting they actually enjoyed learning about the subject. Pupils relate to new experiences best when teachers use resources or practical activities to explain things. For example, in Year 6, pupils visited a performance of the ballet 'Coppelia' and this gave them a visual context through which they could explore specific vocabulary and ideas beyond their normal experiences. For a significant number of lower attaining pupils, these 'hands-on' experiences are essential to enhance the progress they make. Sometimes some teachers do not explain things well enough in their presentations or use relevant resources to make sure pupils understand fully. This is the case more often in the junior classes. For example, in a history lesson in Year 4, pupils found it difficult to draw many pertinent observations from their study of pictures of Greek art and architecture because of their limited skills to observe or infer accurately.
21. In some lessons, there are weaknesses in the planning to ensure all pupils are working on tasks they can do. Here, insufficient attention is paid to assessment information or the quality of pupils' work from previous lessons. For example, both in a literacy lesson in Year 3 and a science lesson in Year 4, the teachers presented the same subject content at the same level to pupils of all abilities. The planning did not take into consideration pupils' individual ability to read the worksheets and progress was unsatisfactory. Not only were the worksheets too difficult for a significant majority of pupils but additional support was restricted and some pupils produced little or no work because they did not know how to do it. In these styles of lessons, too

much emphasis is placed on completing activities and tasks, often on worksheets at the lower end of the school and insufficient attention is given to developing pupils' thinking and reasoning skills. Teachers' marking also varies considerably from class to class. Very little of it is of a satisfactory standard, to identify for pupils, what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. In a number of instances pupils' work is not checked carefully enough and a few pupils consistently hand in work that is incomplete and untidy. The levels of homework pupils receive are satisfactory. However, a significant minority of pupils, particularly in the upper part of the school, regularly fails to do this work despite teachers' best efforts to encourage them.

22. Planned opportunities for pupils to discuss, debate and reason out solutions are generally limited, and because such activities require pupils to use their initiative and apply research skills, few make the gains normally expected from pupils aged eleven. In these upper year groups, very few examples of independent writing were found in pupils' books, and often some had just copied from books or worksheets and completed exercises involving missing words or phrases. The over reliance on published worksheets, sometimes aimed at levels inappropriate to pupils' ability, also limits progress. This approach restricts pupils' ability to explain what they understand in their own words confidently. Use of computers is still not given sufficient emphasis to ensure ICT skills are practised regularly. However, teachers have gained in confidence in their own ICT skills and progress is being made in this area.
23. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught satisfactorily overall and the majority of pupils make satisfactory progress. But, as pupils move through the school insufficient attention is given to support pupils speaking skills, many often only answering questions when they are directly asked to do so. Similarly, whilst pupils learn the basics of written language through carefully structured lessons, teachers do not always insist they practise these skills accurately in work in other subjects.

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

24. The appropriate statutory curriculum, including religious education, is in place. Overall, the quality and the range of learning opportunities for the pupils are satisfactory. The curriculum is, however, disjointed. There are weaknesses in the provision, particularly in some of the non-core subjects of the National Curriculum, and there are some strengths. In the Nursery the curriculum is generally good, but this better quality is not maintained in the Foundation Stage as a whole, or in the rest of the school. The geography curriculum is unsatisfactory because it is not planned in any logical manner to ensure pupils develop essential and appropriate geographical skills as well as knowing facts. Provision for the higher than average number of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Whether learning, medical or behavioural the school offers care and understanding and is sensitive in dealing with the many differing needs of these pupils. Pupils are identified early and have appropriate individual education plans and are supported appropriately in many lessons to make sound, and sometimes good, progress.
25. The curriculum is sufficiently broad and provides a satisfactory balance of activities, with the development of literacy and numeracy skills being emphasised. National strategies for literacy and numeracy have been adopted and some teachers are beginning to modify these to match pupils' needs more effectively, although this is not consistent practice across the school. The effectiveness of the strategies for literacy and numeracy are satisfactory overall, although insufficient emphasis is given to develop pupils' speaking and thinking skills. The school recognises these to be weaknesses. Effective application of literacy skills across other subjects is yet to be managed consistently. The development of pupils' numeracy skills is satisfactory and pupils have a sound awareness of how and when they need to apply these, for example, in recording information in science.
26. The reasons for the curriculum being disjointed stem largely from the inadequacy of the assessment procedures in many of the subjects and the lack of clear directional leadership from the subject co-ordinators. The concept of a whole school curriculum plan that incorporates regular assessment opportunities to ensure pupils develop knowledge and skills progressively is

not fully understood by some teachers. Assessment information is used well by the senior management team and governors to focus on overall aspects needing emphasis and improvement, but it is not developed efficiently or used effectively by individual teachers to monitor pupils' levels of skills and understanding. Teachers' awareness of where the pupils start from in their learning and what the pupils are expected to achieve in the various subjects by the time they leave the school does not underpin long-term and day-to-day practice. Consequently, the pupils do not make the expected long-term progress, although they often make good progress in specific lessons. As a consequence overall progress for most pupils is satisfactory.

27. In addition, the curriculum is not always made sufficiently relevant to the pupils' needs. For example, the pupils' speaking and listening skills have been identified as weaker aspects, but the emphasis given by teachers is too often to the listening element, the pupils spending long periods listening while the teacher speaks. The curriculum is based too much on acquiring knowledge when the pupils actually need skills for more independent learning, and understanding of their own capabilities – knowing what they can do and what they need to do to improve.
28. Provision for a subject often depends too heavily on the emphasis given to it by individual teachers. The subject co-ordinators are not taking a sufficiently high profile in identifying, for other staff, the requirements of the subjects they manage. They have not yet established the expectations in terms of pupils' standards of work at each stage, or ensured that the pupils' experiences are as continuous, progressive, and developmental as possible. However, there are good experiences for the pupils in many areas of the curriculum. For example, art activities, especially in the after school clubs, offer very positive opportunities for creativity, and the new curriculum for ICT is beginning to support the pupils' development well. In physical education (PE) curriculum dance and swimming are strong features and yoga has been introduced very effectively in supporting pupils' personal development, helping them to acquire helpful strategies to manage and modify their behaviour.
29. A further positive and significant strength of the curriculum is in the very good provision of extra-curricular activities. These are wide-ranging and very beneficial to the pupils' all-round development. They include a large number of sporting activities, cultural activities and events, visits from touring theatre and music companies, visits to places of interest, and residential trips. Much is made of events in the locality where the school joins in and even hosts activities.
30. There is good provision for personal, social and health education. The provision includes sex and drugs awareness. The equality of access and opportunity for the pupils is firmly established as a principle. The school serves its community well and there are many positive links. For example, the ICT suite is used on a weekly basis for parents and local people for adult education. These further education classes are led by local college staff and epitomise the school's desire to be involved and serve its community. Post-graduate and other students use the school to extend their experience, and the school assists in initial teacher training.
31. The school's efforts to develop the personal, social, and health education of the pupils are good. There is a very strong ethos of care, and the new school is continuously reviewing and extending its responses to the varying needs of the pupils as it develops a wide range of provision and support. Pupils are provided with many opportunities for personal development. The range of activities they experience is varied and often interesting and stimulating. In some lessons teachers provide challenges that help promote pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Pupils also benefit from additional help from support assistants and other adults who work in the school, and enjoy gaining praise for their good effort, behaviour, and kindness to others. Many opportunities are offered for the pupils to help in school. Routine features include being a 'buddy' by befriending and supporting younger pupils, supervising latecomers, and assisting with preparing resources. These, and the many other activities, such as membership of the school council, have very positive impact on their understanding of how to be part of a community. These experiences help pupils gain in their maturity, as they become increasingly self-reliant and confident.
32. Planned developments, such as the 'healthy eating' scheme, extend pupils' understanding of health issues well. The school does much good work to widen pupils' social awareness. The local area is a valued resource and many good links benefit pupils' social development. These

skills are extended on residential visits and by contact with schools elsewhere, such as links with South Africa. Charitable works feature as regular events in the school diary and pupils learn the importance of helping others in the locality and further afield by raising funds and supporting national activities such as 'Red Nose Day'.

33. A less positive feature of this aspect of the school's work is that sometimes, some pupils reject the good efforts of staff and the school to promote their well being. By showing inappropriate behaviour and unresponsive attitudes they turn down good opportunities. Examples of this are seen, for example, in the reluctance some pupils in Year 6 show to enter into sensible debate on pertinent issues like homework. Some actively reject supportive homework as an intrusion into their leisure time, and a significant minority demonstrates high levels of absence from school.
34. Contribution of the community to pupils' learning is good. Members of the local community support the school at its events thus providing valuable encouragement, such as at the Christmas production. They also help to run after school activities, which enhance pupils' learning opportunities. Two examples of this are the computer club and the football team. The school caretaker coaches the football team successfully, so that it has been proud to win the Runcorn Primary Schools' cup for two consecutive years.
35. Relationships with partner institutions are good. The school has a very constructive partnership with the Halton Healthy Living Centre. Recently the school has achieved accreditation under their Healthy Schools Project. To achieve this all aspects of children's development were considered, so that the school's provision for emotional as well as physical well being of the pupils reached a good standard. Through this scheme the school provides free fruit to all pupils at break times as well as salads at lunchtime. Emphasis is also placed on physical activity and mental health. Additionally, the Halton Learning Partnership, in conjunction with Halton College, enables a variety of sports equipment to be available on loan from them. This enriches the school's curriculum.
36. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. The school provides opportunities for pupils to explore values and beliefs, including religious beliefs and the way that they impact on people's lives. There are missed opportunities for quiet reflection both in the curriculum and in assembly, although whole school assemblies are very successful in helping pupils to understand that they are a member of a school community with shared values. This is seen in the way in which pupils participate in assemblies, as for example when the Chairman of Governors took a lively assembly, singing with a live rock group and delivered a short clear message, that we are judged by our actions. Celebration assemblies effectively encourage pupils to applaud the endeavours of others. The introduction of yoga lessons in Year 3 inspires pupils who are impressed with their own ability to relax and exercise self-control, for example.
37. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. The school provides a clear moral code in the form of class and school 'golden' rules. These are constantly promoted, and pupils are actively encouraged to take part in developing them and sharing them with parents. Staff set a good example to pupils in their caring attitudes and in the way they reinforce acceptable and non-acceptable behaviour. The school actively promotes values such as kindness to others and respect for the individual. These values are reinforced through satisfactory opportunities for pupils to express themselves and discuss issues that concern them either in circle time or with the school's learning mentor. Pupils are encouraged to develop personal qualities that are valued in society such as thinking of and acting in ways to help those less fortunate than themselves. For example, a collection around the school raised enough money to buy a television and video for a former pupil who is now brain damaged as a result of an accident. The effective introduction of a learning mentor has begun to help some pupils in considering how they might develop more positive attitudes and behaviour in and around school.
38. Provision for pupils' social development is good. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility and are developing a good understanding of living within a community. Pupils take on the responsibilities of play leaders and of being a 'buddy'. The learning mentor trains them over a six-week period so that they learn to identify problems and care for children who need support in the playground. They are shown strategies to deal with such situations sensitively. The school

council was trained and developed a year ago. They meet half-termly and discuss such issues as unacceptable litter, games for indoor playtime and the playground. They organised a raffle, which raised £120 for indoor games. The residential personal, social and health education course for the school council provides a particularly valuable learning experience for these pupils.

39. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. The art curriculum makes a significant contribution to the provision for this area of development. Pupils in Year 6 recently had the opportunity to work with the National Ballet. They also went to the theatre, met the dancers in costume and went into the orchestra pit. On residential visits such as the one to Tattenhall, pupils study the village of Chembakoli and compare it to the village of Tattenhall. Pupils visit local churches and the synagogue. They learn about Hinduism and Indian art as they print materials and take part in dance and music activities. The play leader has worked with pupils and trained staff in the introduction of traditional games. The school also widens pupils' cultural experience by inviting local artists to the school. They have recently had a visit from Galigew, a photographer who worked with the pupils. As a result the children are to present their work to a large audience from the local area. In one class pupils greet each other during registration in English, Welsh, French, Spanish and German thus adding to their awareness of life beyond Runcorn.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are good. The school uses the Local Authority's procedures and there is a child protection check list, which is useful and kept up to date. A suitably trained teacher is responsible for child protection. The Educational Welfare Officer has given training to all teaching staff and they, as well as the lunch-time supervisors, have responsibilities to record any concerns they have. The school has good relationships with the social services department for additional support and advice. Pupils' welfare is a high priority in the school. Teachers know the needs of individual children well and respond promptly to them. Whether pupils have learning, medical or behavioural the school offers care and understanding and is sensitive in dealing with the differing needs effectively. The staff show good understanding of any emotional stress among children as well as exercising good physical care and ensuring their welfare at all times. Parents are notified immediately if there are any health and welfare issues the school has concerns about.
41. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. Pupils who are late report to the office and the secretary contacts the parents of those pupils who do not arrive to establish why they are absent. Teachers are aware that pupils' attainment is affected by poor attendance and parents' co-operation is encouraged and appreciated. Weekly, a class award for attendance is given and celebrated in assembly. During the inspection a whole school assembly concentrated on the subject of attendance in order to promote a more positive attitude in some pupils. When a pupil's attendance falls below an acceptable level the school offers support, but if necessary, does not hesitate to report the matter to the Educational Welfare Officer for further action. The school does all it can to encourage a good attitude towards attendance.
42. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are good. The school operates a 'buddy' system. Pupils from Year 5 and 6 are trained to support others. Their duties are to look out for bullying and pupils are aware that they can talk to the 'buddies' if they are concerned. 'Buddies' are matched with both those who bully and those who are being bullied, so that problems can be talked through and education offered where necessary. The school's learning mentor monitors behaviour. She keeps a record of those pupils, whose behaviour is causing difficulty, observing them at different times of day, for example, at play time, in class and at dinner time. Sanctions are used if behaviour does not warrant reference to the learning mentor and include loss of golden time and staying in at playtime. The school uses a reward system for good behaviour as well as for good work, where pupils can win magazines and extra golden time. Because of this careful supervision and support system, oppressive behaviour is eliminated and no harassment was seen during the inspection.

43. Baseline assessments made when the children enter the Nursery and Reception classes, and at the end of the first term, are used satisfactorily to gauge the rate of individual progress. Children showing particular ability, or whose progress is giving cause for concern in early speaking, reading, writing and mathematics, are identified early and necessary action taken.
44. The school has satisfactory arrangements for monitoring the pupils' progress in their learning at particular points each year as they move through the school. In English and mathematics, the results of formal assessment are used to set future test targets for every pupil. Teachers regularly monitor the progress of pupils in their classes against these targets and revise them where necessary. The information enables the school to identify pupils who need extra support to help them learn more successfully. The school also uses this information to track the comparative progress of boys and girls, but not that of summer born children, of which there are a high proportion in some classes. The system is not used to provide other important information, such as the link between pupils' performance and the length of time they have been in the school, and their attendance rate. There are satisfactory assessment arrangements for science. These enable pupils to make satisfactory, and sometimes good, progress towards achieving their targets. The progress of pupils in the Nursery and Reception classes is tracked with similar regularity so that teaching can take better account of each pupils' learning needs. For other subjects assessment is informal, and therefore unsatisfactory, as the school has no way, yet, of ensuring the accuracy of teacher's judgements.
45. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early and have appropriate individual education plans. Sound assessments are made of pupils' individual needs, both learning and behavioural. External agencies are consulted where appropriate and the school works effectively with them. Pupils are tracked carefully so that particular progress towards targets of special educational needs as individuals and groups can be evaluated. The procedures are sound but require more rigorous and focused recording by support staff to raise standards further.
46. Assessment systems for supporting pupils in their day to day work are unsatisfactory. Targets for learning in English and mathematics are usually group targets. This means that individual pupils have little idea of what they, themselves, are aiming for to help them be more successful learners. Unsatisfactory marking of pupils' work gives the pupils little idea of what they are doing well or badly, and why, and what they need to do to improve their own learning. Teachers do not use their assessment information well enough to plan work that is suited to groups of different abilities or for individual pupils. The purposes of each lesson are often vague, or focus on activity rather than learning, so that they do not give the teachers enough direction in their teaching to help all groups of pupils to make better progress. This often disadvantages the more able pupils and those with special educational needs. Consequently teachers do not have an accurate measure of the progress pupils make within a lesson so that they can plan more effectively for the next step in the learning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

47. Overall, parents' views of the school are satisfactory and most of their children like coming to school. The eleven parents who attended the parents' meeting and nearly all those parents spoken with during the inspection were positive about the school.
48. The school works hard to maintain sound links with parents. The school prospectus and the annual report from the governors provide clear information. Regular newsletters keep parents well-informed about school events and staff changes. Annual reports describe in detail what has been studied, although reports for pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not cover all subjects. There are few individual targets outlined in the reports, although targets for the group in which the pupil is studying are issued to parents each term. Personal development is described well, but issues that arise are not always addressed by a home school partnership, which is not as strong as it could be in many cases. Regular parents' meeting are organised to inform parents what their children will be studying and to discuss their children's progress. Teachers are available at other more informal times to discuss any concerns or problems parents might have about their children. Parents are involved in the reviews that take place to support pupils who have special educational

needs. Every effort is made to encourage them to attend meetings and external agencies are invited in to add their support. A few parents fail to respond to this support. There is a small minority of parents who do little to support the work of the school, for example, in ensuring their children complete homework, attend booster classes prior to national tests, and arrive punctually at school and maintain good attendance. This prevents a few pupils from achieving well at all times.

49. Arrangements to introduce new children to the Nursery and Reception classes are satisfactory. Parents' meetings and home visits give new parents and carers a sound idea of what will happen to their children in school and help them to get to know the teachers, and daily routines. However, systems to give the children and their parents and carers experiences of school before they start are informal and the adults do not take full advantage of these. As a result, some children are not as familiar with new faces and routines as they might be. The temporary Nursery teacher is beginning to display information for parents about their children's learning, but this does not yet extend to the other Foundation Stage classes.
50. The school provides courses for parents to learn how to help their children learn, for example, in their reading. Several parents have completed this training and achieved national accreditation. A small number of parents come into school to help with reading, cookery, crafts and computer training and others help with events outside school, such as swimming and educational walks. The school appreciates the co-operation of these parents and is working hard to develop links. There is no Parent Teacher Association in the school, although some parents, teachers and the head teacher are keen to develop this. The school appreciates parents who are involved and make a valuable contribution to their children's learning and attainment and it does all it can to strengthen this co-operation and partnership.
51. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is unsatisfactory. Many parents do not involve themselves with the school. Some do not regularly hear their children read at home and others do not remind or encourage their children to do homework. A few parents rarely come to school to discuss their children's progress or problems. The low number of parents who attended the parents meeting and who returned the questionnaire indicates that there are parents who are not able or willing to place a high priority on their children's education and attainment.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. The initial two years in the development of the new primary school have been very challenging. The headteacher's strong leadership and drive has enabled her to meet the many demands and difficulties that needed to be overcome. She has led the school forward in a positive manner. She and her senior management team have worked hard to set up procedures and practices across a range of aspects. Many of these are now beginning to be implemented, although not always consistently, because of the various temporary staffing positions the school continues to face. There is much still to be done, but the headteacher is leading the school firmly along the road of continuous improvement. She has a clear vision and a strong sense of purpose. These are coupled with high aspirations for the school and for its pupils.
53. The major factors that impede the school's overall progress are, the significantly low levels of attainment of pupils on entry to school, the low levels of attendance of a significant number of pupils, some parental indifference, the high levels of pupil mobility and the higher than average numbers of pupils with special educational needs. Added to these challenges are, the uncertainties and complexities of staffing and the relative inexperience in leadership of staff with subject co-ordination roles. However, despite all these issues, the school provides satisfactory value for money.
54. Staff and governors have worked very hard to ensure that the school is a welcoming, safe, caring and inviting place to be for the pupils. The accommodation has been carefully organised, furnished and decorated to maximise the impact on learning and to create an environment pupils take pride in. Strong efforts have been made to address the problems of attendance. These

include the addition of a 'breakfast club', attendance awards, and 'first day' contact with home if pupils are absent without prior notice.

55. The headteacher and governors, some of them new to the role, have worked well together to create the new school and to place it on a firm footing in its development. The headteacher is a good role model for the staff and is well respected for her good management skills, insight and care. The senior management team and governors are committed to building an equitable and inclusive school. The co-ordinators, however, have not had sufficient time to undertake their roles effectively and their overall management skills are currently unsatisfactory. Teamwork is beginning to emerge, but the process is hampered by disruptions in staffing and lack of time for staff development.
56. Work has been done to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively, although more needs to be done to establish the greater involvement of all staff, parents and the pupils themselves in fostering better progress. Learning support assistants and a learning mentor have been employed to help with these vital developments. The support assistants, when available, are used effectively to help individual and specific groups of pupils. Support for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. However, there is insufficient monitoring of teachers' planning to ensure consistent building on prior attainment and in many lessons the involvement of support staff is not effectively thought through to make maximum use of their time. The procedures to monitor pupils' progress are sound but require more rigorous and focused recording by support staff to raise standards further.
57. The recruitment, retention and deployment of staff have proved a more intransigent factor that has impeded the rate of development in some areas. At the time of the inspection, the school had five temporary or part-time staff. Because of their particular needs, many of the pupils require a continuity of experiences and relationships with their teachers and this, in some cases has not yet been achieved. It is also difficult for the school to find supply staff to cover absence due to illness or periods of staff training. This makes the efficient development of staff training a complex issue. Procedures for identifying training are sound and managed effectively.
58. The governors ensure that the statutory requirements placed upon them are met. They are led well by a strong chair of governors and they fulfil their role supportively and enthusiastically. They act as 'critical friends' and are very keen for the school to be successful. They are aware of the strengths, and, to a lesser extent, the weaknesses of the school in this early stage of its development. They are determined to face the latter squarely and bring about improvement. However, because the school is new and there are only limited criteria available, such as the lack of any previous inspection findings, against which to make evaluations of performance, they rely on the headteacher and her staff to identify improvements. They express their determination to use the findings of this first inspection, as a guide to future action.
59. Day to day management of the school is good. Systems and routines are also well established and helpful. Administrative systems are good, and the supporting administrative staff are skilled and efficient. Finances are used purposefully, matched carefully to the priorities in the school's improvement plans. The principles of 'best value' are being increasingly used to ensure the maximum benefit from purchases and developments as, for example, with the ICT suite. Evaluative systems are being developed in relation to educational performance data, teaching quality, and performance management for staff. There is a very clear commitment to staff development. Newly qualified teachers are supported well and the school supports students undergoing initial training.
60. The quality and range of the learning resources are satisfactory overall so that this relatively new school has enough resources to teach all curriculum subjects across the expected range of learning. The school has worked hard to create a welcoming and stimulating environment through imaginative and stimulating displays in all shared areas. These celebrate the pupils' good work as well as presenting pictures, models and other work by adults to set the pupils high standards in their own work and extend their knowledge of other cultures. Comfortable seating areas, particularly in the library areas, encourage social occasions and independent working, and emphasise the priority the school gives to encouraging the pupils' good personal development.

The good number of computers is helping to improve standards in ICT, although those in the classrooms are not yet used enough to support learning across aspects of the whole curriculum. The school grounds are spacious, but uninteresting, and their improvement is planned for the near future.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

61. In order to provide pupils with an acceptable standard of education and to enable them to achieve well, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

1. Raise standards in English, mathematics, science, history, geography, religious education by:

- developing a curriculum plan that identifies skills and information pupils need to know as they progress through the school;
- ensuring all teachers have clear guidance regarding the curriculum content and receive additional training where necessary;
- ensuring effective use is made of assessment information to inform day to day planning that builds on pupils' prior attainment more accurately;
- ensuring support staff, where available, are used more effectively to support teaching and learning;
- improving opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning to enable them to become independent learners;
- improving the opportunities pupils have to talk about their work and practise their literacy skills;
- developing teachers' knowledge by providing training that will enable them to support pupils' thinking and reflection skills;
- making pupils better aware of the targets they are working at and ensuring they understand how to achieve these;
- encouraging more parents to support their children's learning at home;
- fostering more positive attitudes in those few pupils who do not always engage in learning.
(Paragraphs: 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 28, 33, 48)

2. Ensure staff with management responsibilities monitor and support developments by:

- implementing the procedures established for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school more rigorously;
- ensuring all co-ordinators have the appropriate training and time to carry out their duties;
- enabling subject co-ordinators to monitor the quality of teaching, learning and standards and take effective action where necessary to raise standards.
(Paragraphs: 20, 22, 28, 52, 56, 88, 106, 111, 116, 121)

3. Improve the attendance and punctuality of a significant minority of pupils by continuing to:

- Work hard with parents and carers of these pupils to ensure they arrive at school punctually;
- Impress upon parents the importance of their children attending school regularly.
(Paragraphs: 1, 14, 15, 33, 48, 51)

Minor issues:

- Improve marking to help pupils understand how good their work is and how they can improve it.
(paragraph: 21)
- Ensure planning for the effective use of ICT happens across the curriculum. (paragraph: 22)
- Improve the quality of the annual reports to parents regarding their children's progress.
(paragraph: 48)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	67
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	64

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	12	26	24	5	0	0
Percentage	0	18	39	36	7	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	13	271
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	108

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	8	110

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	25
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	26

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.9
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	20	21	41

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	14	18
	Girls	18	17	19
	Total	32	31	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (75)	76 (63)	90 (83)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	18	17
	Girls	17	19	17
	Total	32	37	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (75)	90 (83)	83 (80)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	26	27	53

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	18	24
	Girls	16	14	18
	Total	37	32	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	70 (81)	60 (67)	79 (67)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	21	22
	Girls	12	16	15
	Total	33	37	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	62 (67)	70 (58)	70 (58)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

*Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year*

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	230	5	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes**Financial information****Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	25:1

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	217

Qualified teachers and support staff: Nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	15
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial year	2001/2
	£
Total income	825815
Total expenditure	7555033
Expenditure per pupil	2484
Balance brought forward from previous year	6309
Balance carried forward to next year	77091

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	300
Number of questionnaires returned	53

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	38	0	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	58	38	0	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	49	7	4	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	57	7	4	7
The teaching is good.	58	38	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	40	45	9	0	6
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	30	2	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	38	0	0	6
The school works closely with parents.	38	49	6	4	4
The school is well led and managed.	57	38	0	4	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	51	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	51	15	6	7

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

62. Twenty-six children attend the Nursery class for five mornings each week. There are thirty-eight children in the Reception year. Of these, thirteen share a class with a group of Year 1 pupils. These pupils have been selected for this mixed age class because of their ability to learn in more formal situations. At the time of the inspection there were two temporary teachers who had been in post a few weeks. The permanent teacher had recently moved to an all Reception class from a mixed age class. As a consequence, every teacher and all the children were adjusting to new circumstances. Unsatisfactory management and leadership of the Foundation Stage means that planning is not sufficiently effective in giving children a seamless, good quality experiences as they move from Nursery to Reception. When children enter the Nursery class their attainment is low, particularly in communication and social skills. The attainment of boys is better than that of girls. Through good teaching, in an interesting and imaginative learning environment, children make good overall progress in the Nursery, giving them a good start to their school life. However, this progress slows in the Reception class, where teaching is not so effective, and the proportion of children achieving the expected levels of learning is below national expectations in all areas by the time they enter Year 1.
63. Most children have poorly developed learning skills when they start school. Many enjoy coming to school, and readily leave their parents and carers in order to join in activities. Some younger children are reluctant to be parted from their adults and are sensitively helped to do so by the classroom assistant and teacher. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. It is better in the Nursery and mixed Reception / Year 1 class. Teaching seen in the Nursery, by the temporary teacher, was good overall. She has quickly improved opportunities for the children to be more independent in their work and play and is providing imaginative and interesting experiences to support learning. In the main Reception class, teaching is satisfactory, but its quality diminishes where lessons lack a rigorous structure and purpose and the teacher's management skills are not strong enough to promote consistently good behaviour and concentration.
64. The Foundation Stage curriculum is satisfactory, overall. The learning environment in the Nursery is good. This promotes good quality learning across the breadth of the curriculum through some well-planned, imaginative and interesting learning experiences. The curriculum for children in the Reception class is satisfactory but there are missed opportunities to provide a stimulating and imaginative environment to promote the children's early literacy and numeracy skills. Reception aged children in the mixed Reception / Y1 class experience a curriculum that is geared more for the Year 1 pupils, and it does not totally suit their needs. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is appropriate, and often of good quality. However, these children do not have the same opportunities for play that the rest of the Reception year children have. Arrangements for them to work and play alongside their peers in that class are not flexible enough, and so they do not always have full experience of the Foundation Stage curriculum.
65. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are both unsatisfactory. There is no overview of aims for the Foundation Stage curriculum or teaching, and so there is no strategic plan to raise achievement and promote consistently good progress throughout the stage. Although the need to raise standards in speaking and listening is acknowledged as a priority, there is no overall plan of how this is to be achieved and no consistent approach in planning and teaching for it to happen. Leadership and management lack the drive to bring about improvement in such areas as helping parents to support their children's learning. In the absence of the co-ordinator, the teachers are left without a clear idea of how they should work together, or with the rest of the school. Permanent staff have not had recent training in any aspect of Foundation Stage education and this impedes them in developing their skills and knowledge to the necessary level to bring about better improvement.

Personal, social and emotional development

66. Standards in personal and social skills are below average at the end of the Foundation Stage, and a significant number of children do not reach the national Early Learning Goals. Children enter the Nursery with poorly developed personal skills. Good emphasis is given, in all formal teaching and informal learning activities, to develop appropriate awareness of other children through, for example, taking turns when choosing toys or when speaking. Some children quickly learn to talk to others when they are playing alongside them and a few spontaneously help others with their coats. The Nursery nurse works hard to encourage the children to work and play together sociably. This good provision enables the children to make good progress in this aspect. Provision and teaching in the Reception year is satisfactory overall. In the mixed Reception / Y1 class, the temporary teacher works hard to develop the children's confidence and social skills through establishing a calm and orderly working environment each day and re-establishing friendly relationships and a social atmosphere within the classroom. In the Reception class, some sessions designed to deepen the children's understanding of their actions, such as behaviour in the playground, are unsatisfactory as the teacher has no strategies for maintaining discipline, thereby presenting a poor role model, and the ethos becomes one of distraction and disorder.

Communication, language and literacy

67. Standards in communication, language and literacy are below the expectations of the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception year. Children make good progress in the Nursery, where experienced staff place much emphasis on speaking and listening skills through such activities as role-play in the 'post office'. They are sensitive to children with significantly delayed speech and give them consistent and gentle individual support as they play. They constantly encourage pupils to offer views and extend their replies with carefully focused questions. There is a comfortable area where the children read and write independently and they enjoy doing this. Children enjoy new letter sounds and are proud when they recognise some initial sounds. In one lesson, the children re-enacted the story of 'Handa's Surprise'. To do so they had to listen carefully to the story and sequence the events as the different animals stole the fruit. The teacher's enthusiasm and very good use of her voice engaged the children totally so that they were successful in their learning.
68. Chances to extend these skills in the Reception class are limited. Books are not displayed imaginatively in the reading area, so that the children feel enticed to explore them. The classroom presents a bare literacy environment with few labels and captions to stimulate the children's interest in reading. Children look at books more formally in the literacy lesson, and in this they are guided supportively by the teacher and the classroom assistant. They are given enough time to make marks and practise writing. Although some copy-write unaided, the children are sometimes unaware of the point of the activity and they lack the stimulus and experiences to make learning more effective. Few children write with the expected levels of independence or confidence by the end of the Reception year.

Mathematical development

69. By the end of the Foundation Stage standards are below those expected nationally, as a below average proportion of children reach the national Early Learning Goals. Children make good progress in the Nursery, where practical activities and games help them to begin to count and order numbers. They begin to recognise and create very simple patterns, such as animal stripes and spots. Some work on shape recognition takes place in both the Nursery and Reception year and the children know the names of a few simple shapes. Children enjoy chanting number sequences, but are not particularly excited by the chance to learn about and manipulate numbers.
70. In the Reception class some children know that counting begins with zero and order 0-10 in a group activity. Some total two numbers accurately, but there is no extension work to develop the learning of these more able children. Although children are willing to join in most mathematical activities there is little to excite or extend them. Learning is unsatisfactory in lessons where children move around a series of activities, as the teacher is busier organising the groups rather than sustaining their learning.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

71. Standards are below expectations at the end of the Foundation Stage. Children make good gains in their learning in the Nursery; progress is satisfactory in the Reception year. Children enjoy using the computer and use the mouse to make colourful repeat images, but little is planned in Reception year to challenge those children who can work at a higher level. Children in all three classes enjoy using small world toys to help develop their understanding of what goes on around them. Role-play areas contribute effectively to this, with a 'post office' in the Nursery and a 'travel agent' in the Reception class. The travel agency is resourced well with brochures and posters, but sparsely equipped for writing; the computer is broken which denies the children the opportunity to take 'customers' requirements' in another way. Children in the Nursery have initial experiences of other cultures and ways through reading and enacting, for example, African stories. The Reception class children are given an initial introduction to the Christian tradition through the story of Noah's ark. Construction equipment is freely available in the Nursery class, giving children many opportunities to design and build. Sand and water-play offer many chances to experiment with pouring, filling and emptying. These experiences are more limited in the Reception year. Although the Reception class has the space and resources, classroom organisation and unsatisfactory use of a classroom assistant do not give the children enough good opportunities to investigate and experiment. This disadvantages children who learn best in this way.

Physical development

72. By the end of the Foundation Stage children are below average in their physical development. There is a satisfactory range of opportunities for physical play planned in the Nursery. The outdoor equipment gives enough scope for pushing and pulling and for playing games with hoops and balls. The play space is bleak, as yet, as there is nothing in the area, or on its surface, to stimulate the children's imagination. The Reception children have fewer chances for physical development as they do not have independent access to the outdoor play area, and the courtyard leading from the Reception area is only used in the summer. Lack of structured teaching in the Reception class sometimes results in organised games sessions breaking down in confusion.
73. Children develop their fine motor skills satisfactorily through playing with soft dough and sand and in manipulating jigsaw pieces and shapes. They handle construction equipment confidently to build fairly complex structures. Learning, overall, is satisfactory.

Creative development

74. By the end of the Foundation Stage children are below average in their creative development. They make good progress in the Nursery, where opportunities for individual to explore and experiment are planned and organised well. Children paint, make mosaics with transparent paper and weave confidently. Children swirl the paint around to mix it on the paper and enjoy the effect. Interesting artefacts and toys, such as African rattles and drums engage the children in imaginative games, where they sometimes work co-operatively to make up a story. Slower progress is made in the Reception year, where chances to experiment are fewer and creative work is narrower, with less effective organisation. Children sometimes paint on pieces of paper that are too small to give them freedom to try out different techniques, and there are not enough opportunities to mix their own colours or choose their own media. Children enjoy playing with water and sand, but lack of sufficient and effective adult support to develop their language and creative skills minimises the benefit to their creative development.

ENGLISH

75. Standards in English are below the national average for pupils aged seven and eleven. From inspection evidence, it is clear that a significant minority of pupils in the current Year 6 is working at low levels and very few at the higher Level 5. These levels of achievement limit pupils' progress in some other subjects. Overall progress in English, throughout the school, is satisfactory.

76. Pupils enter Year 1 with all elements of the English curriculum being below expectations, but especially weak are writing and speaking skills. However, particularly in the junior classes, a few pupils do not always work as hard as they might, especially with regard to using their prior learning to support new work. In some instances, the behaviour of a small minority of pupils slows down the pace of learning. In a significant number of lessons, teachers' planning is not matched well to the capability of all pupils. Planned opportunities devoted to developing pupils' speaking skills are limited, and this restricts the progress they make not only in English, but also in other subjects. The need to give pupils time to practise their speaking and thinking skills when they discuss ideas in history or science, for example, is identified as a key area for improvement. A small number of lower attaining pupils find it difficult to sustain concentration or work independently unless teachers or other adults support them consistently, and additional support is not always available to do this. Another limiting factor affecting progress is the restricted levels of vocabulary pupils acquire from their experiences outside school. Only the most able readers have the confidence to apply a wide range of vocabulary to their creative writing. For a small group of pupils, disrupted attendance or moves from one school to another depress their overall rate of progress. A very small number actively dislike learning and receive little support from home to dissuade them of this negative attitude. Therefore, for a small but significant minority of pupils, standards by the end of Year 6 remain particularly low in reading, writing, speaking and listening skills.
77. Pupils with special educational needs and the few that speak English as an additional language generally make satisfactory progress. Progress for some of these pupils is sometimes unsatisfactory in lessons where additional support is lacking and where teachers' planning is not precise enough to meet their individual needs. In a number of lessons seen, teachers' presentations were the same for all ability groups. Sometimes where support staff are available they are not used efficiently in all parts of the lesson to help these pupils make the best progress possible. For example, they observe the teacher's introduction and presentation, contributing little to nearly half the lesson other than possibly supporting the behaviour of one or two children.
78. Pupils' listening skills are generally satisfactory, but a few pupils find it hard to stay attentive, and these pupils drift off task when work becomes challenging, and they are not closely supervised. Listening is often noticeably better when teaching is lively and activities are planned well to suit pupils of all ability groups. In these lessons, pupils fully understand or can quickly work out, what is being communicated, for example, when they listen to lively, exciting stories or factual information they can follow. For example, in a literacy lesson in Year 2, pupils sat totally engrossed as they listened to a well-told story and were keen to suggest what might happen next. When information centres on things they learnt some time ago, or is outside their experience or interest, they find it hard to remain involved. For example, in a science lesson in Year 4, many pupils failed to recall work they had covered the previous week about flower parts and their names and functions. Similarly, pupils in Year 6 listened attentively to diverse views about the pros and cons of 'homework in schools, a subject about which many had quite definite feelings. When asked to explain these views, few expressed ideas other than repeating what they teacher had said but omitted the pertinent arguments she had explained in detail. In a number of lessons, it was evident some pupils found it hard to sustain concentration and interest, and often these pupils seek immediately help when asked to complete tasks, having failed to listen carefully enough to instructions.
79. Pupils' skills in speaking fluently are well below average by the end of Year 6. In lessons, teachers regularly ask pupils direct questions, and encourage them to express ideas and views, for example, about the books and poems they read, or their feelings or the feelings of others, for example, as seen in the 'Circle Time' lesson in Year 1. However, regular, planned opportunities for pupils to practise speaking confidently, in a wide range of situations are limited. Pupils perform in assemblies and concerts, but there are limited opportunities for pupils to take part in regular debate, drama and role-play. When such an activity was observed in a literacy lesson in Year 6, only a few of the most articulate pupils contributed with any sense of seriousness. The rest of the group preferred to remain detached and some were rather immature in their comments. Often single word answers or short responses are accepted when pupils reply to questions. Individuals are hesitant, for example, in giving sound reasons for their opinions and seek the security of written tasks or worksheets that demand simple structured responses. This hesitancy

reflects the fact that pupils are not sufficiently challenged to think about what they learn, nor how it might relate to what they already know. Teachers are often anxious to move the lesson on to avoid long pauses where some pupils might lose interest or concentration.

80. Standards in reading throughout the school are below national expectations. There are able readers in each year group. There are also a high number of pupils who read well in terms of technical ability, but demonstrate a lack of understanding of what they have read. Overall progress in reading is satisfactory.
81. The teaching of reading is satisfactory in the infant classes. Pupils begin to grasp the strategies required to sound out words and use contextual clues and other information to make sense of what they are reading and to explore fiction and non-fiction books. Big books are used effectively to engage pupils' interest, and develop their awareness of punctuation and speech. In Years 1 and 2, sufficient emphasis is placed on the learning of letter sounds and time is given to develop this in literacy sessions. Most pupils have a reasonable knowledge of phonics, although a good number of the lowest attaining pupils struggle to retain this information from day to day. While many parents, siblings and other members of the family are happy to hear their children read, a significant number do not, and this cannot be relied upon as an effective means to support their progress in reading.
82. As pupils progress through the junior classes, their ability to predict or infer from their reading remains limited. This relates directly to their overall lack of confidence in speaking and sharing ideas. When asked questions about characters and situations, individual pupils find it hard to go beyond the literal. Only the most able readers talk about what they read with any level of accuracy. Teachers use appropriate opportunities to continue to expand pupils' reading experiences, both through fiction and non-fiction texts and poetry, introducing these in the formal literacy sessions, and through other lessons. Few opportunities were seen of pupils retrieving information independently and pupils' skills of skimming and scanning texts for information are limited. The guided reading sessions, and other reading activities, give all pupils regular, although still insufficient, opportunity to read and be heard reading. Time for individual reading practice is satisfactory, and most pupils who need additional support are heard reading regularly. However, the emphasis is focused more on the technical skills rather than extending pupils' ability to discuss what they read. There is a distinct lack of interest in reading for pleasure for a significant number of pupils, especially as they move through the school. In addition, few reading activities outside school limit the progress many pupils make. A significant number read little at home nor are they actively encouraged to do so by their parents. The school has recognised the need to address these issues. Good library facilities have been created to tempt pupils to explore reading materials and to nurture the love of books and literature. Few pupils use these to maximum effect although generally engage well when read to by adults.
83. Standards in writing are well below national expectations by the end of Year 2 and below average for the majority of pupils at the end of Year 6. A good number of pupils struggles to recognise letters and sounds, and lack the basic strategies to blend sounds, and write sentences that have correct structure, punctuation and spelling at the end of Year 2. For a small minority this continues to be the case by the end of Year 6. The school has focused on the teaching of writing in the recent months and overall progress, for the majority is satisfactory.
84. Effective use is made of time in the literacy hour to set pupils' writing tasks that consolidate new skills and vocabulary. In the infant classes, there is good emphasis on developing form and structure to ensure pupils recognise the main elements of writing and how to use punctuation correctly. Pupils are usually eager to settle to written tasks, but often because they have not listened carefully enough or they do not fully understand, a significant number seek help and reassurance immediately. This is particularly the case when additional support is not available to support particularly lower attaining pupils. When teaching is good, the highest attaining pupils enjoy the challenging tasks set and are happy to work hard and gain approval. However, in a number of lessons, the work is not always matched accurately to pupils' abilities and sometimes the progress of the highest and lowest attaining pupils is restricted by the level of work they are asked to do. For example, in a literacy lesson in Year 3, all pupils were given the same text to work at selecting nouns and related the adjectives. The highest attaining group did this task

successfully despite not being able to read the text because they recognised these parts of speech accurately and then had no further work to do. The lower attaining pupils failed to engage with the task at all, coloured in words at random and made very little progress. Pupils in Year 6, working on applying persuasive language to structure an argument produced some effective ideas when directly led by the teacher but few were successful in putting these thoughts coherently on paper. A good number reverted to simple, short sentences that lacked the clarity and complexity that might normally be expected from pupils of this age. Paragraphs are used correctly by only a few of the higher attaining pupils, and some examples of good practice were seen from pupils' creative and factual writings in Year 5. Pupils' range of vocabulary is very limited and many are hesitant to explore new words confidently. Some teachers also fail to insist on pupils' applying their writing skills accurately in work in other subjects. So although pupils are aware of the basic requirements, few produce good quality written work unless directly reminded to do so by their teachers.

85. Handwriting is taught regularly throughout the school but practice from class to class is not consistent and there are a significantly high number of pupils who are still 'drawing' letters in Years 1 and 2. This limitation extends to a significant minority at the upper end of the school, who still mixes capitals with lower case letters. Standards in spelling and punctuation are unsatisfactory for average and below average attaining pupils. Pupils learn to use punctuation in Years 1 and 2, and know that capital letters are used, for example, when denoting names of people, places and special celebrations. Pupils in Year 6 are not clear of when to apply apostrophes or speech marks, nor are they always confident in placing full stops, commas and other punctuation accurately in their written work.
86. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. In some lessons observed, it lacked rigour in its pace and challenge, resulting in slow progress for a significant minority of pupils. Some teachers try to ensure pupils understand what the purpose of each lesson is but few examples were seen where teachers checked whether pupils recognised this had been achieved. Teachers' marking is unsatisfactory, however, because it rarely shows pupils how to improve their work further. Throughout the school, groups are set by ability. This helps teachers plan work better suited to the needs of each group. However, this does not always happen in every class. Because some teachers do not take into account fully the accurate analysis of each child's ability when planning lessons, work is not always matched well to individual need. Teachers' subject knowledge is sound, and they ensure all supporting staff are appropriately involved in the planning for individual and small groups of pupils who need additional help. However, they do not always involve additional staff well enough in the delivery of the lesson and valuable time is lost when assistants observe presentations for long periods. In the best lessons, the pace of teaching is not so challenging that it overwhelms pupils, but expectations are high enough for pupils to make real effort. Learning for the majority therefore is sound.
87. In most lessons, teachers generally manage pupils well, and, when appropriate, support individuals sensitively to ensure they understand what is required. Pupils are not regularly reminded of teachers' expectations of high quality written work when tasks are set, and in the junior classes, a significant minority operates at a minimal level. A few pupils are reluctant to put pen to paper, feeling even more insecure with this activity than with discussion work. These pupils do not take time to plan out their work as carefully and as seriously as necessary, often settling for quick, short and low quality written work. A significant number rush to spell words without using dictionaries or seeking help and fail to check for simple errors they recognise when these are pointed out to them. In both infant and junior classes, satisfactory use is made of ICT in the drafting process and with language games and tasks that help extend pupils' language skills. This use is not always planned for and it is not clear how often different groups of pupils practise skills they have acquired in their ICT lessons to improve the quality of their writing. Provision of extra support classes for target groups, prior to the National Curriculum Tests, has a positive impact on raising standards. In Year 6, this provision is outside school hours and a significant number of targeted pupils fail to attend, some being actively discouraged by parents. As a consequence many struggle to achieve standards in line with national averages.
88. The subject co-ordinator, who has valuable expertise in the subject, recognises there is still a great deal to put into place in order to raise standards. She has identified good monitoring

procedures to ensure pupils' progress is reviewed at the end of each term, in order to re-group sets and consider additional support pupils might benefit from. Results of the school's internal assessments and external tests are analysed and recorded against each pupil's profile. The information is used to group pupils in ability sets. However, some teachers are not using this valuable information to match work accurately to pupils' needs and challenge each of them more urgently. The school is still working through amalgamation issues including establishing consistent practices across the school. As a consequence management of the subject is currently unsatisfactory. The monitoring of literacy lessons has been limited. The co-ordinator acknowledges that, as in Year 3 for example, too much reliance is placed on worksheets. This approach does not help pupils recognise their own progress and in some instances the work is inappropriately matched to pupils' needs. She also recognises that opportunities for speaking and discussion work do not begin early enough to ensure pupils reach satisfactory standards by the time they reach Year 6.

MATHEMATICS

89. In the 2002 national tests for pupils aged seven and eleven, standards were well below average compared with all schools. Performance of pupils at the end of Year 6 is good when compared to similar schools. Standards of work seen in the current Year 2 and Year 6 classes shows that pupils are below the national average. This is because a significant number have interruptions in their learning because they do not attend regularly, and a few of these pupils do not work hard when they do attend. Overall, the rate of progress for the majority of pupils is satisfactory.
90. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. As a result of the effective support that they receive from teachers and support assistants, they achieve in line with their peers. Boys achieve at a higher rate than girls do. Girls are often passive and there is often a significant minority of boys who claim constant attention and disrupt concentration. Pupils in Year 6 are set for mathematics and the good teaching they receive in this year group ensures that work is appropriate to the learning needs of the pupils. Higher attaining pupils are identified but in most classes they are not faced with challenging tasks consistently.
91. The scheme of work, based on the national numeracy strategy, provides teachers with a sound framework on which to base their planning for pupils as they progress through the school. Day to day planning for lessons however is often a list of activities with lack of clarity about what the purpose of individual lessons is. Assessment information is not always used accurately enough to inform planning for the different levels of ability within the sets. Teachers' marking of pupils work is also not careful enough to identify how well pupils' have achieved and why, nor what they might do to improve the quality of their work further. Limited time is given at the ends of lessons to assess how well pupils have learned during the session and this is another factor that hampers accurate planning for subsequent lessons. In a number of instances, teachers use worksheets that ensure skills are practised regularly. But these worksheets do not always measure how secure pupils' understanding is of the operations that they apply to solve specific problems. In some classes, there is over reliance on worksheets to keep pupils on task. Direct teaching to ensure pupils are always working to their full potential is therefore sometimes limited. This is particularly so with regard to the higher attaining pupils who are not always fully challenged. There is a need for far more accuracy to match work to meet the needs of individual pupils in order to raise attainment. However, where teaching is good or better, the teachers make it clear to pupils what is expected of them and spend time well in supporting pupils to achieve their targets. For example in a good lesson in Year 6, the teachers' expectations of good work and behaviour and her sensitive support for the pupils who struggled to work accurately, resulted in these pupils achieving well. The teacher insisted pupils applied thinking skills to explain their reasoning and a number were pleased with the success they achieved.
92. Due emphasis is placed on the acquisition of knowledge skills and understanding relating to number and in using and applying mathematics, particularly in the infant classes. In a Year 2 class this was clearly exemplified in the well-developed question and answer sessions and individual tasks. However, work in pupils' books shows that the areas relating to shape, space and measures and handling data are in need of further development throughout the school.

Furthermore, insufficient use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) to support the pupils' work in the mathematics.

93. Teaching is always satisfactory in infant classes and sometimes it is good. In a Year 1 class a few pupils struggled to recognise odd and even numbers to 20, and identify the rules for the addition of odd and even numbers. Only the higher attaining pupils, who make up a quarter of the class, recognise that $\text{odd} + \text{odd} = \text{even}$, $\text{odd} + \text{even} = \text{even}$, and $\text{even} + \text{even} = \text{even}$, and subsequently understand how the pattern works. Average and below average pupils recognise pattern but only about a quarter of the class are in line with national expectations. In Year 2, pupils know some mathematical vocabulary length but a significant number have difficulty in remembering the vocabulary associated with measurement, for example. Whilst a quarter of the class, who are the higher achieving pupils, achieve accurate measurement with their arms, only two pupils from the lower achieving pupils manage the task.
94. Teaching in junior classes is satisfactory overall, with good and very good teaching seen during the inspection. As a result of this quality of teaching, pupils achieve standards that are in line with similar schools, despite the high number of pupils with special educational needs. Most teachers display confident subject knowledge, and conduct lessons at a brisk pace. In a good lesson, in Year 5, most pupils completed factors of numbers up to 40. The work was planned appropriately for the lower achieving pupils. In a lesson in Year 4/5, the majority of pupils successfully use the mathematical facts that they know in an investigation into the number of squares they would need to cut out of a hundred squared to make ninety-nine squared. In Year 4, the majority of pupil accurately draw a grid on their whiteboards and enter even numbers to twenty, recognising numbers from the 2 times table. Higher achieving pupils within the group recognise and write doubling problems with good accuracy and confidence. Pupils in the lower set in Year 6 seek a great deal of re-assurance and support to work effectively. They find it difficult to apply the knowledge and understanding that their teacher works very hard to help them learn. When they try to explain their methods many confuse place value. For example, two pupils found it difficult to understand that both two centimetres and two pence were equal to $\frac{2}{100}$ ths. These pupils show little retention of number facts. In many lessons a significant minority of pupils listen passively and take a while to react to teachers' questions. The majority of pupils in the top set in Year 6 read and write imperial and metric units and accurately convert from one measure to another.
95. Most pupils respond well to their work. They are eager to contribute but pupils in the junior classes often find it difficult to explain, for example, what method they have used to arrive at a particular answer. Their ability to articulate their thoughts stems from weaknesses in their overall speaking skills. The pupils who have most difficulty in mathematics however do not have a positive attitude to learning. Some have very limited concentration spans whilst others are passive and are not motivated to interact with even the most hard working of all the teachers this means that the rate of progress for these pupils is slow. The standard of presentation of work is unsatisfactory at all stages and this shows few pupils take pride in their work.
96. The co-ordinator has made a sound start to managing the subject. Assessment procedures are applied to identify targets for individual pupils. The information is used to group pupils appropriately in order that teachers can provide work that matches pupils' ability appropriately. However, limited time has been given to monitor teaching, learning and standards and as a consequence curriculum areas that need further development are not always identified.

SCIENCE

97. Standards in science are below national expectations for pupils aged seven and eleven. Pupils make sound progress and indications are that standards are improving. The school is effective in the inclusion of all pupils with special educational needs. In scientific investigations, they receive good levels of support to help them carry out their tasks effectively and in order to make satisfactory progress.

98. Inspection evidence confirms that investigation and 'hands on' approaches are particular strengths throughout the school. For example, in Year 1, pupils discover that blowing or directing air at an object enables it to be moved at different speeds depending on the force that is applied. They conduct the investigation using small boats in water and are excited by their discoveries. Pupils recognise air as a source of power. In another lesson in the infants, pupils discover that plants come from seeds. They write down and follow instructions on how to plant seeds in soil and understand that certain factors such as water and sunshine are essential in promoting growth. In Years 4 and 5, pupils learn about the structure of flowering plants by dissecting the flowers, examining the parts carefully and drawing and labelling each feature. In Year 6, through carefully planned investigations, pupils gain a sound understanding of how air resistance slows movement down. In this lesson pupils made spinners from different materials, and devised appropriate 'fair tests' to measure the time for each spinner to fall. They carefully recorded and tabulated their results. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of what constitutes a fair test and most work well collaboratively to test out their ideas and predictions. Pupils enjoy this practical approach to learning and when such opportunities are presented, most work enthusiastically and sensibly.
99. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. The teaching observed in lessons was never less than satisfactory and some was good or better. As a result, most pupils make satisfactory progress. Teachers generally plan relevant work in year groups, and this planning is often linked to work in other subjects and to pupils' prior learning. Teachers identify objectives at the beginning of the lesson and clearly set appropriate and realistic expectations. Occasionally opportunities are missed to round sessions off with evaluations that help pupils and teachers sum up progress in learning. Technical language is introduced and applied well as pupils explore new work through some well-planned investigations. In some classes, there is an over use of worksheets to ensure curriculum coverage. A significant minority of pupils cannot always understand these worksheets. As a consequence, they learn isolated facts and do not always relate these to what they already know. This limits their ability to transfer knowledge and understanding confidently to new work. For example, in a lesson in Year 4 on plant structures, the teacher failed to take pupils' reading ability into account when presenting worksheets. As a result, a significant number found it difficult to produce satisfactory responses and progress was restricted for the majority of pupils. This indicates a weakness in the way some teachers fail to use assessment information carefully enough to ensure the work they plan matches pupils' previous attainment accurately.
100. Teachers and support staff help individual pupils in consolidating and extending skills, thus making satisfactory progress. However, support assistants are not always available and sometimes they are not used effectively enough throughout the whole lesson to help pupils more efficiently. Many teachers use questioning effectively. Most pupils respond confidently and are not reluctant to seek help and guidance when they do not understand. However, not all pupils offer responses to questions unless directly asked to do so and a few struggle to sustain interest and concentration. A few pupils demonstrate unsatisfactory behaviour. Because teachers have to spend time managing unacceptable behaviour, the pace of learning is interrupted and this results in slow progress being made in some lessons. A significant minority of pupils struggles to explain their work accurately because of weaknesses in their thinking, speaking and writing skills.
101. Leadership and management of the subject are sound. The two co-ordinators work well together to monitor planning. They acknowledge that the time given to monitoring teaching, learning and standards is currently inadequate to identify aspects of the curriculum that need developing further in order to raise standards. Assessment procedures are used effectively to analyse test results. End of topic tests identify how well each pupil achieves and accurate targets are set to raise each pupils' performance and standards overall. Whilst resources are generally satisfactory, limited use is made of ICT to support teaching and learning.

ART AND DESIGN

102. The quality of the art and design work is satisfactory overall. There are many good features in the school's provision for art, and there are numerous outstanding examples of very good work. As with many of the non-core subjects in the school, however, the quality of the provision varies too much from year group to year group, and even from class to class, for the pupils to achieve consistently high standards and sustain good progress. Teaching is satisfactory overall.
103. In Year 1, pupils are given good opportunities to record, from direct observation, and to explore processes using different media and materials. As they move through the school they engage in a wide range of activities, in drawing, painting and textile work, using three-dimensional media such as clay, and studying the work of other artists. The results of some very good teaching are seen in, for example, texture collections and camouflage paintings in Year 2, or the 'Dream Scenes' and drawn comic strips in Years 4 and 5. The walls of the school display lively work. Many displays are of very good quality. Some examples of the most outstanding are fabric prints based on Asian art, portraits in the style of Picasso and plaster figures showing good shape and form. Effective use is made of ICT to offer a further dimension to pupils' experiences, as in the exploration of computer-assisted images in the style of Mondrian.
104. However, it is evident that much of the best quality work seen stems from the after school art club where much of the really exciting, lively and interesting work takes place, and from other extra-curricular opportunities available to the pupils. Visiting artists have contributed effectively to pupils overall satisfactory progress. The work done on residential and other visits illustrate high standards and good creative development. While this is very encouraging and highlights the potential of some pupils, the pupils' classroom experiences vary a great deal. In some classes the quality and range of the art curriculum is limited. Too much depends on the individual confidence and expertise of the class teacher rather than on the planning that outlines what is desirable in terms of experience, knowledge, skills and understanding at each stage. Learning objectives for lessons are sometimes too vague and planning is often too simplistic. Sometimes, insufficient support is given in terms of how a task might be tackled to ensure pupils' success. Conclusions drawn at the end of lessons are not sufficiently evaluative. They do not focus on the levels of success and how work might be improved. When teaching is good, the support provided promotes pupils' creativity to explore and experiment with ideas rather than simply 'completing' a task. Pupils are given a range of limited but appropriate choices. These challenge them and encourage thoughtful, carefully produced and imaginative work. Pupils' ideas are then modified and encouraged and much of the ensuing work is strikingly good. Some staff are very skilled and knowledgeable, and most are enthusiastic about the subject. Pupils show good creativity and lively eagerness to do well.
105. The curriculum is fully inclusive, and the pupils who have special needs are supported effectively. Their involvement and effort matches that of their peers. Higher attainment is encouraged in those who show exceptional abilities, but more needs to be done to encourage individual interpretations of ideas and images.
106. Two members of staff co-ordinate the subject and both are aware of the subject's strengths. Limitations in the monitoring and assessment procedures mean that they have less awareness of the weaknesses, for example, the lack of continuity and progression in the subject throughout the school. Much is based on subjective overviews of the good quality art rather than on finding out what individual pupils can do, and what they should do next to move forward in their skills' development. Overall management is therefore unsatisfactory.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

107. Standards in design and technology match national expectations at the ages of seven and eleven. Teaching is satisfactory and pupils of all abilities make overall sound progress.
108. The youngest pupils use malleable materials, such as play-dough to create shapes, which they mark carefully with designs applying a satisfactory range of tools. They use of a wide range of

construction kits and cutting and joining techniques. Pupils in Year 2 draw go-karts on the computer, design and make their own models with rotating axles and fixed wheels and design an obstacle course for the models to navigate. Their sawing skills are fairly accurate and the go-karts show some individual features and decoration. Pupils in Year 3 design and make a fridge magnet, describing the basic stages in the process. They shape the magnets competently and decorate them colourfully and appropriately for the person they have decided to give it to. They suggest suitable alternative designs. Pupils in Year 6 use books and diagrams, but not CD ROMs, to research shelters and structures. Their own designs show some imagination and thought. The shelters are stable and fit for their identified purposes, such as a tent or a hotel. The finished bridge structures are of particularly good quality, being very sturdy and well constructed to bear heavy loads. Both themes result in attractive and functional products. To achieve these ends the pupils investigate, practically, complex and abstract structures based on cuboid and pyramidal shapes. These are carefully constructed and joined accurately.

109. Pupils enjoy their work in technology, because it is interesting and they say it is easy. In fact the work is correctly matched to their abilities and interests. The teachers are very precise in their instructions and demonstrations and plan the work carefully. For example, pupils in a Year 6 class were making paper patterns in order to develop their slipper designs. There were many opportunities, in the small stages of the process, for the pupils to achieve success at each stage and almost all pupils, from all ability groups, did. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in class discussions and supported sensitively so that they achieve at the same level as the rest of the pupils. Because pupils like the practical nature of this subject, most work carefully and quietly, with sound concentration and co-operate sensibly with each other when sharing resources.
110. Teaching concentrates mainly on the more simple design and make tasks, and there is not enough emphasis, in the upper juniors, on scale diagrams and dimensions of products. Although there is some self-evaluation of the products, this tends to be rather simplistic because it is not taught in a structured way throughout the school, thereby missing opportunities to develop the pupils' literacy skills in other contexts. Teachers' expectations of standards are realistic and 'comfortable' rather than stretching. Assessments of the pupils' attainments in design and technology are informal, and therefore unsatisfactory as the teachers have no evidence on which to base further learning in order to promote better learning.
111. The co-ordination of design and technology is unsatisfactory. The co-ordinators give support and encouragement to their colleagues where they can, but it is on an informal basis. They have no planned opportunities to determine standards or provision and so have no firm evidence for their judgements of how effectively the subject is being delivered.

GEOGRAPHY

112. Children enter the school with very limited experiences of life outside their immediate home area. Standards remain below those expected nationally at the ages of seven and eleven and pupils of all abilities fail to make enough progress. Teaching, therefore, is unsatisfactory.
113. The geography curriculum does not take sufficient account of the pupils' limited experiences of places outside Runcorn and too much attention is given to colouring in of maps and listing facts about distant places. Time allocated termly to geography is limited and in some year groups very little is planned, the emphasis being on history. Despite this, the school makes good efforts to help the junior pupils experience visiting other places, through residential trips for each year group. Pupils clearly look forward to these visits, and enjoy them very much. The primary purpose of these visits, to aid their social development, is achieved successfully and the geography, necessarily, has a limited profile.
114. Curriculum planning does not take enough account of the integration of geographical skills, themes and real places. Where this is done, as in a Year 1 walk around the immediate area of the school, pupils begin to form views on what their home environment is like. They look at houses, gardens and open spaces to see what makes a place attractive (flowers) and what spoils it (litter).

They begin to get an idea of place by drawing the routes they take. In a very good lesson in the Year 2/3 class, the teacher's clear understanding of her pupils' experiences and learning needs drew out their wide experience of their home area and a good quality discussion on Runcorn's bus-ways ensued. Although the concept of physical and natural features is fairly abstract, the pupils coped well and enjoyed the lesson. One pupil ventured that 'sky' could not be a local natural feature because 'it is all over the World'. At the outset of the lesson it was apparent that these pupils had a very shaky idea of what geography is, but thought it might be about 'the Romans'. The development of Runcorn was the theme of a very good lesson seen in Year 6. The teacher's clear initial discussion and her high expectations helped pupils of all abilities to make very good progress in their awareness of their own locality. Good quality local maps and aerial photographs, showing various stages of urban development, enabled the pupils to identify changes over time, and the reasons for them. Despite this, the standard of the work was still below national expectations.

115. Work in the pupils' folders and books shows that much geography is taught in a more formal and less exciting way. Much of the work at the end of the upper juniors is listing countries, rivers and mountain chains with little evidence of opportunities to interpret the information and consider its importance in everyday life. Work on co-ordinates and positional language is covered in mathematics lessons, but not developed in geography. Very little work in geography is recorded. Much of it consists of dictated work, or filling in missing words. This prevents more able pupils from developing their communication skills, and less able pupils often do not finish the work, as it is not suited to their particular needs.
116. The co-ordination of the geography curriculum is unsatisfactory. The co-ordinators do what they can, informally, to support their colleagues, but do not have an overview of curriculum coverage and standards, as no time is allocated, or training given, to aid them in their management role.

HISTORY

117. Standards of attainment at the ages of seven and eleven years are below national expectations. With the priority given to literacy and numeracy, the time spent on history means that pupils have an insufficient opportunity to complete topics in any depth for progress to be any better than satisfactory overall. However, pupils generally enjoy what they do especially in lessons where teachers use a good range of artefacts and materials that capture pupils' interest. Teaching is satisfactory overall in history. Pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs make satisfactory progress in line with their peers. Some boys play a more dominant role in some classes and this sometimes impedes the progress of those girls who tend to be rather passive in their response to work in the history unless directly encouraged by teachers to contribute more.
118. In the infant classes, pupils develop a satisfactory awareness of the differences between the past and the present. They know the main elements of the story of Guy Fawkes and recount the details confidently. They know that methods of transport in the past differ from those of today but struggle to explain why. They are unsure about how we know about things that happened in the past. Pupils recount when the Romans came to Britain and they know that they wore different clothes. Few understand the long-term impact those settlers and invaders have on the country to which they move. They know in great detail about the story of Grace Darling. Discussion with pupils shows that pupils apply the correct terminology because they have been introduced effectively to the technical language, for example 'invaders'. Reference to the time line shows that they have a sound awareness of chronology.
119. In a good lesson in Year 3, the teacher used a child-sized suit of armour, borrowed from the museum, to good effect. She used well-framed questions to structure the pupils thinking about the reasons for each piece of clothing. The teacher's good subject knowledge and understanding, her use of real artefacts and good questioning skills enabled all the pupils to learn effectively. All of them remained totally absorbed in the lesson. In a good lesson in Year 4, on Greek theatre, culture and buildings, although pupils struggled to follow the long explanation, they remained attentive and interested. They found it difficult to interpret the pictures that they were given

because their language skills were weak and the pictures were not very clear. The teacher worked hard to help them explain their ideas, although for the majority, verbal responses were minimal.

120. Pupils in Year 5 use clay to model Greek vases, some representing Medusa's head, and others the musical instruments played by the gods. This, linked closely with their work in literacy on myths and legends, has brought the period alive for the pupils and enriched their cultural development well. They know the key people and main events in the story of the Trojan horse and posters show that the teacher has prepared well to help pupils explore the characteristics of the Minotaur. In a lesson in Year 6 on using sources for evidence, to understand the life and times of children in the Victorian era, the teacher's good subject knowledge engaged pupils' interest well. Pupils used census information to gather their findings and whilst a good number struggled to make sense of this information they enjoyed the task. Good quality resources are used effectively to make most lessons interesting. Pupils' skills of historical enquiry and investigation are satisfactory overall. They gain a sound information base but a significant number have difficulty in expressing their ideas and reflecting on what they have learnt and what this tells them about changes over time. Sometimes, some lower attaining pupils fail to make connections between new and prior learning confidently and this limits the overall progress they make.
121. The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator has held the post for two years but has not yet been able to find appropriate courses to support her professional development. At present published guidelines are used as a scheme of work. There are no assessment procedures in place to inform teachers' planning and the co-ordinator has yet to have the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in order to ascertain and improve standards. Planned opportunities to use ICT to support teaching and learning are beginning to increase.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

122. The quality of the pupils' work and their application of information and communications technology skills (ICT) varies from unsatisfactory to very good. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress and most develop good skills by the time they leave the school. However, the rate of progress is variable from class to class because teachers' planning does not incorporate regular practise of the skills pupils learn.
123. Despite the informative curriculum plans and scheme of work, the development of the pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding is not continuous. The reasons for the variability are twofold. The pupils' experiences and learning opportunities depend too much on individual teacher's expertise and enthusiasm year by year, and within parallel class groups. For some pupils the activities provided are challenging and lead to a substantial increase in their skills. For some the opportunities are too thin on the ground to make the necessary advances. Too little use is made of ICT to support work in literacy and numeracy at all stages. Some good work goes on in subjects such as art and design, design and technology and history, but the resources readily available in each classroom are not used to support learning as a matter of course. In some classes computers are rarely switched on.
124. Additionally, while the subject co-ordinator is both enthusiastic and able, and involved in important developmental activities outside the school, insufficient attention is being given to ensuring that the essential activities and standards are being appropriately promoted in every classroom. The monitoring, assessment and evaluative procedures are not sufficiently advanced. There is insufficient information available about individual pupil's ICT experiences, their overall range and level of skills and their rate of progress, to show teachers what needs to be done next and what targets to set. There is no collection of comparative examples of what pupils are expected to achieve at each stage to help teachers determine appropriate standards.
125. Most pupils learn to use a computer efficiently and effectively. For example, pupils at Year 1, working voluntarily at a computer, show good competency in controlling a mouse when using a drawing program. Pupils in Year 2 design 'buggies' they are going to make in design and technology. Pupils at Year 3 have very good skills in the use of mouse and keyboard to move

items on the 'desk-top'. They use programs such as 'PAINT' or 'DAZZLE' readily, deleting and reworking sections of images as necessary. They change colours, size, and fonts commenting on what they are doing as they go and what impression they are trying to create. The majority, in this instance, works at a level above expectations. During the inspection, pupils in Years 4 and 5 were learning to use 'branching databases'. Here, they use the equipment efficiently and effectively, fluently following program instructions and entering the program quickly. They set up data, follow lines of enquiry, add relevant questions, and save data. Pupils in Year 6 decide upon and create forms of imaging for graphs on various topics, such as 'cone charts' or 'bar charts' depending on what data they are working with. Overall attainment is as expected for pupils of this age.

126. When teaching is good, lessons in other subjects often include ICT as a supplementary resource to good effect. Sessions given over to teaching ICT skills specifically in the well-appointed ICT suite encourage pupils' interest and enthusiasm, and advance their skills well. These lessons maximise pupils' knowledge and understanding and ensure good progress. Pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively so that they make substantial advances alongside their peers. Almost all pupils respond well. They are greatly interested in using technology and usually work very hard. They share equipment maturely and help one another effectively in order to complete the required tasks. The outcomes are often good. It is the inconsistencies in provision, including less confident teaching, weaker lesson planning, lack of evaluation, that deflate the overall standards and hinder the pupils' from making better progress.
127. Resources for ICT are good. They are not always used effectively. However, a very positive aspect is the use of the ICT suite by parents and other people from the local community on a weekly basis. Computer courses led by the local college staff are run in partnership with the school. This provides good links within the locality and encourages adults to take up useful learning experiences alongside pupils. It also helps pupils appreciate that learning can be a life-long and communal experience.

MUSIC

128. Standards in music are in line with national expectations at the ages of seven and eleven. Music makes an important contribution to the spiritual and cultural development of pupils.
129. Pupils sing clearly and confidently during assemblies applying good pitch, rhythm and melody. Pupils in Year 2 create their own graphic composition to follow different symbols to a regular beat. In a lesson in Year 4, pupils use tuned instruments to identify and record the correct notation of a known song. When talking to Year 6 pupils, they clearly understood how high and low notes are achieved on stringed and brass instruments. Pupils make satisfactory progress in this area. Singing overall is above that expected of pupils of this age. Opportunities are provided for pupils of all ages to listen to appraise music. For example, during the inspection pupils listened to a live rock band in assembly. The session created a sense of fun and excitement and pupils responded with delight. Pupils were moved by this experience and enjoyed and appreciated the opportunity to join in the singing and clapping. Composition and appraisal are satisfactory overall, but the school acknowledges that this remains an area requiring further development.
130. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teaching during the inspection ranged from satisfactory to good. Teachers have satisfactory knowledge and are gaining confidence in promoting pupils' interest and enjoyment of music. Planning is clear and takes account of the requirements of the National Curriculum in performing, appraising and composing. Musical achievements are celebrated at Christmas and at the end of the summer term, when pupils perform for their parents and other guests. The scheme of work is well balanced and covers all the relevant elements. It is designed well, and supports teachers who lack confidence in teaching music particularly well. The school is involved in a good range of music activities outside school. The school choir has sung to a local playgroup and pupils in Year 2 sing in the local music festival. To extend and widen their experiences, pupils in Year 5 have visited Bridgewater

Hall to listen to a concert performed by the Halle Orchestra, and pupils in Year 6 enjoyed National Ballet Company's performance of Coppelia.

131. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The headteacher is currently assuming responsibility for this subject, due to staff absence. There is a good scheme in place to support teachers' planning and opportunities for extra-curricular provision are used effectively to enrich the curriculum well. Assessment and monitoring of the subject to assess the individual progress of pupils and the monitoring of teaching, learning and standards are limited at present. Resources to support teaching and learning are satisfactory but very little use is made of ICT. Pupils have opportunities to learn musical instruments but no child has indicated an interest to do so in the current year.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

132. Standards in physical education are in line with those expected at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils' overall progress is satisfactory. Every opportunity is provided for pupils who have special educational needs to take a full and active part in all aspects of the subject and these pupils make progress that matches their peers.
133. Pupils in Year 2 work enthusiastically to improve the way they co-ordinate and control their bodies. They work energetically on their personal warm up exercises, using space effectively and create individual movements in time with the music. They thoroughly enjoy their dance activities and display enthusiasm when simulating the rhythmic beat, for example of a pump engine. During the yoga session in Year 3, pupils' concentration improved and breathing exercises became more relaxed as the teacher demonstrated very good self-control techniques. Pupils enjoyed the lesson, including those few, who in other situations, find it difficult to sustain good behaviour and attention.
134. Physical education opportunities are extended through a very good range of extra-curricular activities, which include residential experiences for all four junior year groups. On these visits, pupils' acquire skills in orienteering but also gain in their self-confidence and independence as they learn to work with others in teams and take responsibilities. They are introduced to many sporting activities ranging from 'Kwik Cricket' to cross country running. The skills they develop in extra-curricular activities provide opportunities to further hone the specialist skills required in football, netball and basketball. The pupils have good opportunity to use these skills in competitive sport and enjoy considerable success. The school works hard to promote pupils' physical development and any success they achieve is celebrated regularly in assemblies.
135. Swimming is taught well and is an important feature of the physical education programme. All pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 receive swimming lessons. The effect of this is impressive and the majority of pupils achieve the 25 metres unaided swim and many achieve higher awards in swimming achievement as well as water safety. Dance is an important feature of the curriculum and boys and girls alike enjoy the challenge of developing movements in pairs to respond to the mood of the music. They work well collaboratively to achieve a panorama of combine harvesters thudding mechanically in convoy simulating a clockwork ballet.
136. Pupils evaluate their work and the performance of others well and offer suggestions as to how it may be improved. They participate in athletics in the summer months using new equipment to develop their athletic skills safely, such as the javelin, discuss and shot. The broad range of the curriculum promotes opportunities for pupils to participate in many sporting activities in an endeavour to promote enthusiasm. Because most pupils enjoy physical education, they respond well to their teachers' high expectations and listen carefully to instructions. They enjoy the creativity they experience in interpreting dance music and performing for others. They understand why warm up and cool down exercises are necessary and are eager to participate. Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject, dress appropriately, respond positively and participate enthusiastically; all of which are helping to raise the profile in physical education.

137. Teaching is satisfactory overall with some good and very good lessons seen during the inspection. The school uses the accommodation and resources well. However, the lack of fixed apparatus does restrain opportunities to develop some gymnastic skills, such as climbing using different parts of the body. Assessment and monitoring are currently unsatisfactory in order to establish an accurate fix on pupils' individual attainment. Overall management of the subject is satisfactory.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

138. By the age of seven and eleven pupils attain standards that are below those expected by the Locally Agreed Syllabus but overall progress is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs and those who come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds make satisfactory progress. As a result of effective support that they receive from teachers and teaching assistants they achieve in line with that of the rest of their classes. The likelihood of girls achieving their full potential is occasionally thwarted, especially in the upper junior classes, as a few of the boys sometimes take a stronger role in question and answer sessions, and the girls become reticent. Skilful teaching draws the girls into the lesson by ensuring they have the opportunity to answer questions or present their views, and this ensure they make satisfactory progress.
139. Pupils in the infants are given opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of what it means to follow a faith. Pupils in the junior classes explore, more closely, the specific features of Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism and Islam and how these faiths impact on the lives of the people who follow these religions. This gives pupils insights into the values and beliefs of others and is a contributing factor aimed at helping pupils to have a more tolerant and respectful attitude towards one another. Pupils visit local churches and the synagogue in order to understand the differences between places of worship and the significant features of such buildings.
140. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Lessons are enhanced by the effective use of good quality resources. Teachers work hard to base learning on previous work, using well-framed questions in order to enable pupils to recall key names. Pupils recognise the Bible and know that it contains stories of Jesus. They have a good recall of the names of the key people in stories about Jesus. Seven year-old pupils know the story of the Good Samaritan but fail to grasp the main point of the story. Higher achieving pupils show an understanding of the need for forgiveness and recall the story of the Prodigal Son, but not in any clear detail. Pupils have a scant knowledge and understanding of stories from the Christian religion and have covered limited work on symbols and events in religions. Whilst they do listen to other people's points of view they are not yet at the stage where they respond confidently with their individual ideas and opinions. Teachers work hard to encourage such skills but a significant number of pupils struggle to do so confidently.
141. In a good lesson in Year 5, pupils were given the opportunity to use and reinforce facts, apply vocabulary learned in a previous lesson and to give their views as to whether or not Jesus should have been found guilty. The very strong reinforcement of previous learning and good direct teaching enabled pupils in a lesson in Year 6 class to recall facts and to draw comparisons between different faiths in order to understand the key beliefs of the Sikh religion. In the one unsatisfactory lesson observed, in Year 3, lack of pace meant that the lesson lost direction and hence failed to engage pupils' interest. In this lesson, the teacher's expectations of all pupils were not high enough. Pupils' work in books shows a scant coverage of the curriculum. Throughout the school, written work is not carefully matched to pupils' prior achievement and there is not always satisfactory challenge for higher attaining pupils or adequate support for the lower attainers. In many instances recorded work is the same for ability groups, and in some classes the over use of worksheets limits pupils' thinking skills and their ability to express their ideas and views successfully. There are no assessment procedures and so teachers have very little accurate knowledge of the pupils' progress or the levels at which they are performing.
142. In the temporary absence of the co-ordinator, the head teacher is managing the subject satisfactorily. Under her guidance a new scheme of work has given teachers greater confidence to deliver the subject more effectively. This, together with her monitoring of teaching and learning is beginning to impact positively on the standards that pupils achieve.