

INSPECTION REPORT

**GRAPPENHALL HEYS COMMUNITY PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Grappenhall Heys, Warrington

LEA area: Warrington

Unique reference number: 132768

Headteacher: Mrs Davina Woods

Reporting inspector: Margot D'Arcy
23158

Dates of inspection: 2nd – 5th December 2002

Inspection number: 248993

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

© Crown copyright 2003

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Stansfield Drive Grappenhall Heys Warrington
Postcode:	WA4 3EA
Telephone number:	(01925) 212540
Fax number:	(01925) 212542
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Sue Quin-Boaler
Date of previous inspection:	No previous inspection

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23158	Margot D'Arcy	Registered inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Music Educational inclusion	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve?
13762	Norman Shelley	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school cares for pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23276	Margaret Mann	Team inspector	English The Foundation Stage Religious education	How good are the curricular and other experiences offered to pupils?
11528	Mike Wainwright	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography History Physical education Special educational needs	

The inspection contractor was:

PPI Group
7 Hill Street
Bristol
BS1 5RW

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4 - 7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	8 - 9
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	9 - 10
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	10 - 12
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	12 - 13
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	13
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	14 - 15
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	15
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	16 - 20
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	21 - 33

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a new school, which has been open for just over a year. It serves the new and developing community of Grappenhall Heys, near Warrington, which, overall, is both socially and economically advantaged. The school's pupils have been drawn from a number of schools in the locality and nationally. At the time of the inspection, there were 149 pupils, which is fewer than in most primary schools. However, the number is growing rapidly, as has been the case throughout the year, resulting in the school having a very high rate of joining mobility¹. In many year groups, for example, as many as a third of the pupils have only been at the school for a term. At the time of the inspection, there were 59 children in the Foundation Stage²; 29 children were attending the Nursery on a part-time basis and there were 30 full-time Reception children. There is one class of mixed Year 5 and 6 pupils; other pupils are taught in single year-group classes. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below the national average, as is the proportion with learning difficulties. The range of pupils' special needs include general learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural and speech and communication difficulties. No pupil has a statement of special need. All pupils speak English as their first language. Attainment on entry to the Reception class is mostly well above that which is expected for children's age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school. All pupils are learning well and are making very good progress, both academically and personally. Standards are high and are continuing to rise. Very good teaching and excellent learning experiences, together with exceptionally effective leadership and management, are continuously promoting this new school's growth. The school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is driving forward improvement at a very good rate.
- High standards are achieved in almost all subjects, including English, mathematics and science.
- Throughout the school, teaching and learning are very good.
- Excellent learning experiences promote all pupils' academic and personal development extremely well.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy school, behave very well and forge very good relationships.
- This is a very caring school where pupils are valued as individuals.
- The school works hard at and is very successful in, keeping parents informed and encouraging them to be as involved as possible in their children's learning.

This is a very successful school with many strengths and no significant weaknesses. In the context of its many strengths, some minor points for improvement have been suggested and will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since this is the school's first inspection, judgements about improvement are not made.

¹ The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school, other than at the normal times of admission and transfer.

² Nursery and Reception children.

STANDARDS

No table of 11-year-olds' results is included because only four pupils took the tests in 2002. The National Curriculum tests and assessments taken by pupils in Years 2 and 6 in 2002 were the school's first set of results. Although the number of pupils in both year groups was small, thereby making comparisons of pupils' performance with national data unreliable, the results achieved were high. Year 6 pupils' results in English, mathematics and science were in the top five per cent in relation to schools both nationally and in a similar context³. Year 2 pupils achieved results in reading and writing that were also in the top five per cent nationally and in mathematics and science their results were well above average. As this is a new school, there is no data to indicate trends in performance over time, but inspection evidence confirms these high standards.

Across the curriculum, standards are at least above expectations in all subjects except geography, where they are in line with what is expected. As in other subjects, pupils, particularly older pupils, have entered the school with varying prior learning experiences. In geography, however, there are some gaps in their knowledge and skills, which the school is addressing; the very good progress pupils are making in lessons is raising standards in this subject. Standards are also rising in many other subjects due to the excellent learning experiences that are provided and high-quality teaching. Strengths are evident in all subjects, including literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education (RE) and there are no significant weaknesses.

Children in the Foundation Stage make very good progress. By the end of the Reception Year most will achieve the Early Learning Goals expected for their age and many will exceed these.

The school makes very good use of the information it gains from assessing pupils to set challenging but realistic targets for them to achieve in the national tests.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils enjoy school, are keen to learn and willing to participate fully in lessons. They present their work neatly.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. This makes a strong contribution to pupils' learning. The school is a calm and orderly place and pupils have very good levels of self-discipline.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are keen to accept responsibility and mix easily with each other and adults. They show a mature awareness of the needs and views of others.
Attendance	Very good. Pupils are punctual and their attendance is much better than the national average.

³ Based on the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is one of the school's strengths. As such, pupils' needs are very well met. Throughout the school, the teaching of English and mathematics is very good. Pupils have many opportunities to explain and discuss their work, which promotes their speaking skills very well. Similarly, skills in literacy and numeracy are very well taught in lessons and effectively promoted in other subjects. Teaching is good and better in all year groups and for all subjects, including ICT, the skills of which are also promoted very well across the curriculum.

Key strengths are teachers' very good subject knowledge, high expectations, very good relationships with pupils and effective use of time and resources, including support staff. These staff show very good commitment and provide very good support for teaching and learning. Teachers are also very effective in providing work that matches pupils' individual needs so that those who experience difficulties are given extra help and those who learn quickly receive additional challenge. Verbally and through marking, teachers tell pupils how well they are doing and how they can improve. This, together with the individual targets, both academic and personal, that are set for pupils, gives them a good insight into their own learning. There are no significant weaknesses in teaching.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Excellent. Whilst maintaining an appropriate emphasis on the basics, pupils receive high-quality learning experiences in a broad range of subjects. Investigation underpins many subjects, which makes learning exciting and relevant. The curriculum meets statutory requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Staff are committed, caring and professional in their approach towards supporting pupils' learning. The school is particularly effective in ensuring that pupils are fully included in all that is on offer. This aspect is led and managed very well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good. Pupils develop into well-rounded individuals who appreciate the beauty in the world around them, know the difference between right and wrong interact well with each other and adults and value and respect people's differences.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. This is a caring school where pupils are well looked after. There are very effective systems to check on and promote pupils' academic and personal progress.

An excellent range of extra-curricular activities is provided for pupils of all ages. These are well attended and staff are to be commended for their commitment to this provision. The school acknowledges that it has not yet reached the point of identifying specific provision for pupils who are particularly gifted or talented. This has been identified as a priority, however and research is currently underway to support future provision. The school enjoys a very good partnership with pupils' parents and carers and works hard to ensure that they are informed about and included in their children's education.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent leadership by the headteacher is the foundation upon which all other strengths are built. The assistant headteachers play a central role in successfully managing different aspects of the school's work. Subject and other co-ordinators are committed to raising standards and improving provision.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors are a committed and effective team and provide considerable support for the school. They bring expertise, experience and quality to their role of critical friend, asking the right questions at the right time. They fulfil all their legal obligations.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. This is a school with its 'finger on the pulse'. It knows its strengths and what it has to do to improve. As such, it has an excellent capacity to succeed.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. Money is used very well to improve provision in many areas. Very effective use is made of support staff. Excellent use is made of ICT to support learning, administration and to assist in setting targets to raise standards and support individual pupils' progress.

The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and resources is very good overall. The school does everything possible to ensure it gets the best value from the spending and other decisions it makes.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and behave well. • The teaching is good and their children make good progress. • The school keeps them well informed and involves them in their children's education. • The headteacher and staff are approachable. The range of activities that are provided outside of lessons. • The way the school is led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing significant.

Inspectors agree with all of parents' positive views. They are right to have such confidence in the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children come to school with a very good range of social experiences and general knowledge. They communicate well and have very good speaking and listening skills; their basic understanding of mathematics is also very good. In the Nursery and Reception classes, all children achieve well and the high standards that they have on entry are maintained. By the end of the Reception Year, most will achieve the Early Learning Goals expected for their age in all six areas of learning and many will be working competently within the National Curriculum.
2. The National Curriculum tests and assessments taken by pupils in Years 2 and 6 in 2002 were the school's first set of results. The number of pupils in both year groups was small, particularly in Year 6 where only four pupils took the tests. Consequently, comparisons of the school's performance with national and similar schools are unreliable. Nevertheless, pupils achieved high results. In Year 2, reading and writing results were in the top five per cent nationally and in mathematics and science they were well above average. These high standards were also replicated in relation to similar schools. Year 6 pupils' results in English, mathematics and science were also very high, being in the top five per cent nationally in all three subjects in relation to all schools and those in a similar context. As this is a new school, there is no data to indicate trends in performance over time, but inspection evidence confirms these high standards. By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards in all aspects of English, mathematics and science are well above average.
3. While it is not possible to make any judgements about pupils' achievement over time, it is clear that their current learning and that which has occurred during the last year has been very good. Pupils in all year groups are making progress in lessons that is almost always good and frequently very good. This is having a very positive impact on standards. By the ends of Years 2 and 6, standards are above average and rising, in art and design, design and technology, history, ICT and music; in PE and RE, they are well above average. As a result of very good support, pupils with learning difficulties often achieve standards that are in line with what is expected for their age in most subjects, including literacy and numeracy.
4. As this is a new school, drawing its pupils from a range of other schools, both locally and nationally, there are obvious differences in standards in various year groups. While most children's standards on entry to the Foundation Stage are high, this has not always been replicated in other year groups, although in most subjects standards are at least above average. There have been obvious challenges for the school in planning a curriculum that builds on the diverse range of learning experiences pupils have had. The older the pupils, the more acute the differences often are. In geography, for example, pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills vary significantly. This diversity accounts for geography standards only being average overall despite learning in lessons being very good.
5. The school makes very good use of the information it gains from national and other tests and assessments to set challenging targets for pupils to achieve in the national tests.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6. Pupils have excellent attitudes to school. They are extremely enthusiastic and say that they very much enjoy their lessons and other activities. Pupils participate fully in all the activities that are arranged for them. They are conscientious, take pride in their work and want to do well. They are proud of their school and describe it as a happy place where everyone gets on well. Children in the Reception class have all settled well to school life. They contribute confidently in lessons and are already developing very good standards of behaviour.

7. Overall, behaviour is very good and in some lessons it is exemplary. In the very few instances where behaviour was inappropriate this was mainly because pupils were fairly new to the school and had not adjusted to the school's high expectations. Several parents confirm that their children's behaviour, confidence and attitudes to learning have improved significantly since transferring to the school. Outside of lessons, behaviour is almost always very good. Pupils are polite and courteous and their conduct is considerate and orderly. Incidents of anti-social behaviour are very rare and no pupil has been excluded. The behaviour and attitude to work and school of pupils with learning difficulties are equally as good as those of other pupils.
8. Pupils get on very well with each other and the adults who work at the school. In lessons, they often support each other and are suitably competitive in appropriate circumstances. They listen and watch with interest the contributions of their classmates and show respect for opinions different to their own. In an art and design lesson, pupils tied the aprons of their friends without being asked and in an ICT lesson they settled to their computers in pairs without any quibble about who should go first in logging on.
9. Pupils develop very well personally and show good awareness of the effects of their actions on others. They are developing a very good understanding of social and moral values and enjoy discussing issues and voicing their views in a range of lessons. In personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons they discuss issues that affect their own lives and those of others, often reflecting maturely on important and emotional matters. Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities and carry these out reliably. For example, they delight in helping out in the Reception area and with some administration tasks at lunchtime. They rightly regard their role as playground buddies as most important and carry this out diligently. In lessons many show initiative and work well independently. Pupils' contribution to raising funds for charities heightens their awareness of those less fortunate than themselves. Personal development is particularly enhanced through pupils' involvement in assessing their own learning and negotiating targets for improvement, both personal and academic. The residential visit for pupils in Years 5 and 6 makes a valuable contribution to their personal development, supporting character and team-building skills. Another good example was when Year 4 pupils had to apply in writing to a local newspaper for jobs such as editor, sub-editor, photographer and journalist on the school's newspaper.
10. Attendance is very good, being well above the national average for primary schools. Pupils arrive in good time for the start of school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

11. The overall quality of teaching is very good. All teaching is at least satisfactory; 93 per cent is good or better, with 54 per cent being very good and four per cent excellent. This high standard of teaching is seen in all areas of the school and across the whole curriculum.
12. Nursery and Reception children are taught very well and consequently make very good progress. All staff work as a mutually supportive team and have a very good understanding of the way in which young children learn. A wide range of relevant and practical activities is planned to meet all children's needs and capture their interest. The wide variety of activities, including play, is thoughtfully organised to promote simultaneous learning across a range of areas. There is a very good balance between child-chosen activities and those led by teaching staff. Staff intervene effectively and continuously to encourage key skills of speaking, listening and personal and social development. Basic skills of literacy and numeracy are also constantly promoted throughout the day. The high quality of teaching provides children with a very good start to their education.
13. In Years 1 to 6, teachers' subject knowledge is very good. This is clearly seen in the quality of their planning and in their explanations, demonstrations and questioning. Teachers' use of day-to-day assessment is especially good and is seen in the success they achieve in matching work to pupils' individual needs. Given the constant influx of new pupils with varying prior learning experiences, knowledge, skills and understanding, this is a particularly noteworthy

accomplishment. Similarly, the relevant links that teachers make between subjects make pupils' learning more meaningful. Literacy and numeracy skills are promoted well in specific lessons and the potential of other subjects to promote these key skills is constantly exploited. Similarly, speaking and listening skills are promoted very well across the curriculum. For example, in RE, pupils use a range of research skills, books, computers, artefacts and role-play to further their knowledge of Islam. They discuss their findings and feelings articulately with their classmates and write individual reports about what they have found out. Teachers recognise the importance of ICT as a tool to support learning across the curriculum. Consequently, they take every opportunity to develop pupils' skills both in specific ICT lessons in the suite and also in class lessons where computers and other ICT equipment are frequently and purposefully used.

14. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and set them challenging work. They use a range of methods, such as direct teaching to the class, demonstrations, group work and role-play very effectively to support learning. Central to many effective lessons is the element of investigation that teachers weave into their lessons. This really captures pupils' interest and sustains their concentration; ultimately it makes learning more meaningful because pupils are involved in discovering things for themselves in a way that is structured to support them in achieving success. Lessons are taught at a brisk pace, which, again, maintains pupils' interest and allows them to accomplish much in the time allocated. Teachers promote subject-specific vocabulary very well. For example, in a Year 4 English lesson, pupils were learning and required to use specific terms to discuss the production of their newspaper. This included, the *'Mast Head'*; *'Headline'*; *'By-line'*; and *'Cross Head'*.
15. Very good support is provided for pupils with learning difficulties. Lessons are planned very well with work suitable for all. Teachers and other adults ensure that pupils are fully involved in tasks so that they achieve very well in lessons. They are praised for their success and are given opportunities to show their achievements to their classmates. Teachers make very good use of resources, including support staff, to support learning. These individuals make a valuable contribution, as do the many volunteers who offer their help and expertise.
16. Throughout the school, very good relationships between teachers and pupils are evident. Teachers clearly like pupils and treat them fairly; a good rapport was seen in all classes. This pays off in terms of the high standards noted in pupils' attitudes and behaviour and the confidence that they show in explaining their work or asking questions. Marking and teachers' verbal feedback to pupils about their work are very good. Both show that teachers know pupils well and the right balance is struck between celebrating and encouraging pupils' efforts and giving them achievable targets and developmental points to help them improve. This, together with the individual targets set for pupils, gives them a very good insight into their learning. Similarly, the way teachers share with pupils the objectives of lessons and involve them in reviewing their progress at the end engages them very much in the learning process. Homework is used well to support and extend the work done in class. Tasks are interesting and challenging, often requiring pupils to undertake individual research or projects, which they say they really enjoy.

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

17. The quality and range of learning opportunities for all pupils are excellent. The rich curriculum provides pupils with a very broad and relevant education and includes all subjects of the National Curriculum plus RE. The school meets statutory requirements with suitable provision for sex education and making pupils aware of the dangers of drugs. Very good provision is made for pupils' personal, social and health education, with weekly lessons in all classes. There are many opportunities for pupils to stop and reflect on their feelings and to discuss moral and social issues.
18. The school has worked very hard in planning a curriculum that takes good account of the variety of experiences many pupils have had in the wide range of schools they attended previously.

Across the curriculum, a high profile is given to encouraging the skills of investigation. This results in pupils acquiring a deeper understanding of knowledge and facts and promotes thinking skills very well. There has been very good implementation of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy and the promotion of these key skills is planned for across the whole curriculum. A very interesting and stimulating range of experiences is also provided in ICT. These are carefully planned to promote the effective development of knowledge and skills in this subject within the context of learning in others. Of particular note are the very good links that are made between subjects, which enhance pupils' understanding and help them to see the relevance of what they are learning.

19. Children in the Foundation Stage receive a very good and purposeful curriculum. It is planned meticulously and takes full account of the national guidance for this age group. The lessons and activities provided are stimulating, practical and suitable for their age and stage of development. A particularly effective feature is the 'outdoor classroom', which gives excellent opportunities for the children to extend skills in all of the six areas of learning within a different environment.
20. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties is very good. They receive the same curriculum as all other pupils and are fully involved in all activities, having the same opportunities to participate in lessons and extra-curricular activities and being valued highly. These pupils have good individual education plans (IEP's) that contain clear targets that are achievable in the short term so that they experience success as well as challenge. The school has begun to identify 'gifted and talented' pupils, but it is not yet sufficiently clear about the exact classification (gifted or talented) that each pupil comes into. Consequently, although higher attaining pupils are given challenging work, no individual work programmes have been produced for these two specific groups so that their unique needs are met. However, this is an aspect that the school is currently developing as a priority. A very positive feature of the school is the way in which all pupils are fully included and valued in all aspects of school life. Overall, they have equal opportunities to achieve success in all areas of the curriculum.
21. The school is fully committed to extending the range of learning experiences available, both during and outside of the school day, to promote pupils' all-round development. An excellent range of extra-curricular activities is offered for all children from Nursery onwards, with pupils having numerous opportunities to join in music, drama, sports, craft and language activities. Attendance by pupils is very high and the commitment of staff and volunteer helpers to run these activities is commendable. The activities make a very valuable contribution to pupils' learning in a range of subjects and support their personal development very well.
22. The wide range of visitors and visits out of school complement pupils' learning and raise their awareness of the environment and the community. For example, a residential visit to an outdoor centre offers a different dimension in which pupils are encouraged to be independent and experience living, for a short time, independently of their parents. The school has very effective links with the community. Teachers from the high school visit to teach aspects of art, dance and drama. A local commercial firm sponsors the school's football activities and organises a summer school, whilst a rugby league club gives training and support to the rugby players. The link established with the building firm working in close proximity to the school has enriched pupils' learning experiences in subjects such as science and geography. Similarly, the link set up with a local newspaper had provided pupils with some first-rate learning experiences of the world of work as well as supporting learning in literacy.
23. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good, with that for social development, in particular, being excellent. A high profile is given to all of these elements, which are promoted continually.
24. Assemblies, acts of collective worship and lessons in RE are well planned and make a very positive contribution to pupils' spiritual development. The themes are carefully chosen and explored so that they have real meaning. For example, the festivals of Hanukkah, Eid, Diwali and Christmas are seen as special occasions in the school year and provide very good opportunities for pupils to appreciate the depth of feeling and belief of people of different faiths. In one

assembly, pupils watched silently and in awe as each Hanukkah candle was lit. They showed equal delight in a celebration assembly as they watched their friends receive awards for a range of achievements. Planned moments of reflection enable pupils to ponder the issues explored in assemblies or lessons and to think how these impinge on their own lives. Very good opportunities are provided in lessons for pupils to experience and appreciate the beauty of the world around them, the way artists, musicians and key historical figures have inspired others and the speed and complexity of information technology. For instance, in one ICT lesson, there was a sharp intake of breath as pupils watched the desktop of the electronic demonstration screen completely rearranged in response to pressing the return key. Similarly, in a science lesson in which Year 3 pupils visited a building site, they watched in amazement as a mechanical digger dug a deep hole. The display of paintings, plants, carefully arranged flowers, music and the positive commitment to creating an aesthetically pleasing learning environment add greatly to provision in this aspect.

25. The very good role models provided by all adults in the school make a strong contribution to pupils' moral development. School and classroom rules are agreed with pupils so that they understand the reasons for them. These foster moral values such as honesty, tolerance, fairness and respect. A strong sense of belonging and commitment to the school and community is encouraged and achieved. The difference between right and wrong and of how every individual's behaviour has an impact on others is taught from Nursery onwards. Good manners are expected and evident as pupils open doors for each other and wait politely for their turn in discussions or in the lunch queue.
26. The school places a high priority on promoting pupils' social development. In lessons, teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to work in groups and pairs. Skilful questioning by teachers, together with their very good knowledge of pupils and relationships with them, helps pupils to develop confidence and self-esteem. From the earliest stages children's contributions to school, within and outside lessons, are valued, as are their contributions to the community. Pupils actively support many charities, entertain in the community and share their talents in concerts and dramatic productions. Their involvement in sporting, musical and dramatic activities, both in school and in the wider community, promotes good teamwork and collaborative skills. Pupils' views on school life are sought, thus giving them very worthwhile opportunities to develop citizenship skills. One pupil serves on the health and safety committee and the formulation of a pupil council is planned for the near future. The residential visit for pupils in Years 5 and 6 provides excellent opportunities for social interaction and developing skills of independence. The excellent range of extra-curricular activities also makes a valuable contribution.
27. The school makes positive efforts to ensure that all of its provision reflects the multicultural nature of society. In art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and RE pupils learn about how people live in other parts of the world, their customs, history, ways of worship and artistic and creative traditions. Staff and pupils are encouraged to talk about their specific beliefs and customs. During the inspection a visitor explained and involved pupils in the prayers and rituals said and undertaken by Muslims at the end of Ramadan and talked of how he had coped with the rules of fasting during this period. The good range of books and resources within the school reflect cultural diversity well and thereby enhance pupils' understanding. Visits to places of educational interest such as museums, theatres and places of worship allow pupils to celebrate their own and others' cultural heritage.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

28. The arrangements for pupils' care and welfare and for monitoring and supporting their personal development are very good.
29. Appropriate child-protection procedures are in place and are understood by all staff. Health and safety procedures are well managed, with adequate first-aid cover and a specific medical room for treatment. The school is aware of pupils' medication needs and provides assistance where appropriate. Effective use is made of specialist education and health agencies where necessary to support pupils with learning difficulties.

30. Attendance is very closely monitored and reasons for absence are always obtained at the earliest opportunity. Behaviour is also monitored and promoted very well. In addition to effective teaching, pupils' own attitudes towards learning and their parents' expectations contribute much to the very good standards that pervade the school. There is consistency in the way that teachers manage the few incidents of unacceptable behaviour that occur. The school involves pupils in compiling rules for conduct and applies a system of recognition and reward that effectively motivates the pupils. The school has high expectations that pupils will behave well and do their best in every way and it celebrates fully with them. The very good relationships and the very effective teaching and guidance about moral and social values virtually eliminate oppressive behaviour.
31. The school has excellent procedures to monitor pupils' academic performance and personal development. Despite the high proportion of pupils joining the school, teachers and the headteacher know each individual very well. The quality of relationships that all adults foster with pupils underpins the secure and purposeful environment that is conducive to learning and in which pupils feel happy, secure, valued and supported. Teachers complete a weekly report about each pupil, identifying academic and personal successes and shortcomings, strengths and difficulties. These reports are reviewed by the headteacher so that successes can be celebrated and helpful strategies applied to support pupils. In addition, regular opportunities for pupils to review their academic and personal progress with their teachers help them develop the ability to evaluate their own progress and consider how they might improve.
32. The school has established a thorough cycle of testing and assessing pupils, which ensures that they have a clear view of how each pupil is attaining and progressing. There are regular tests of English and mathematics and suitable measures to assess all other subjects. In science and history, for example, pupils' understanding of their learning is checked at the end of each topic. The information obtained, particularly about English and mathematics, is used very well to set targets and ensure that work is matched to pupils' needs. The results of tests are recorded and the progress of each pupil is tracked so that measures may be taken to address any weaknesses; for example, by placing pupils in additional booster groups for a short time. There are good procedures to identify early those pupils with more-specific learning difficulties and, in response, an IEP is produced that contains clear, achievable targets against which pupils are regularly assessed.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

33. Parents have a high regard for the school and express great confidence in it. The partnership between school and parents is very good.
34. Parents are right to be extremely pleased with the quality of education and care that the school provides. Some describe it as excellent and say that they are amazed at the high standards that have been achieved in such a short time. All parents say that they are pleased that they have transferred their children to this school and particularly mention how well staff received them on their initial visit. They are delighted by the way in which the school has welcomed, involved and consulted them. At the meeting with inspectors before the inspection a minority of parents raised concerns about homework, feeling that the school set too much for younger pupils and did not allow sufficient time for it to be completed. However, this view was not borne out by the results of a survey of parents and carers, where 90 per cent said that they were happy with homework. Inspection evidence shows that the school's policy on homework corresponds with national guidance. Clear guidelines about completion are also included in the policy and show flexibility in this aspect. Inspectors judged the quality of homework to be good.
35. Parents are kept very well informed about their children's progress and the life and work of the school. Annual reports on pupils' progress provide very good information about what pupils know, understand and can do. The improvement targets that have been negotiated with pupils are shared with parents at consultation evenings, with parental attendance at these being high. The school keeps parents informed about their children's good behaviour and commendable efforts through good day-to-day communication and more formally through the awarding of certificates

and sending parents postcards. Weekly newsletters are informative, as are notice boards. The school has consulted parents in order to seek their views and gauge their satisfaction and the response has been very positive.

36. The school has an extensive programme for involving parents. Many regularly help in school and with after-school clubs. A good number of parents share their occupational expertise and experiences with the pupils; for instance, by supporting work in ICT and art and design. The school successfully engages the co-operation of parents in helping their children with work at home and providing reasons for absence. Parents of pupils with learning difficulties are kept well informed and are appropriately involved in the review process. There has been very good attendance by parents at the curricular workshops that the school has provided and also at assemblies and school productions. A 'friends' association is very active, organising social and fund-raising events to support the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

37. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and management. Since her appointment she has worked relentlessly and with clear vision to develop this new school. The headteacher's approach to management is underpinned by a deep-rooted conviction that all members of staff play an essential role. All feel valued and are consequently willing to work hard. This, together with the dedication and commitment of governors, has been central in helping the school to develop so rapidly and continues to support it in going from strength to strength. The priorities that have been identified for the school's future development are the right ones at this time and reflect the headteacher's and senior management team's very effective evaluation of the school's work. As well as the response to national initiatives, the views of all stakeholders, including governors, parents and pupils, have been sought to guide planning for improvement. Everyone is clear about the purpose of the school's work. The headteacher has a very high profile in the school and 'leads from the front'. She knows all pupils individually and has been very successful in gaining the respect of staff, governors and parents and is clearly and deservedly, very popular with the children.
38. Supporting all of this is the excellent ethos of the school. A visitor to Grappenhall Heys is immediately struck by the friendly, caring and industrious atmosphere, which is also fused with the excitement of interesting and enticing experiences to come. The clear philosophy that children come first is evident everywhere and it is very apparent that every individual is valued. This human dimension to management puts great value on the all-round development of the pupils and inspection evidence shows that it pays off, with many strengths noted in the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
39. Providing additional strength for the management structure are two very competent assistant headteachers who support the headteacher very well. These individuals carry out the duties and responsibilities delegated to them effectively and play a central role in managing different aspects of the school's work. For most of this school's 'life' the co-ordination of all ten subjects as well as key aspects, such as that for provision of special educational needs, assessment and the Foundation Stage, has been conducted by the headteacher and a minimal number of staff. At the time of the inspection a significant number of teaching staff were new and had only recently taken on subject co-ordination responsibilities. Consequently, whilst many co-ordinators have very good subject knowledge and are enthusiastic and clear about how they will develop their roles, they have not yet had time to influence, significantly, standards and provision in their subjects. However, the development of the role of co-ordinators is one of the school's priorities.
40. Governors bring expertise, experience and quality to their role of critical friends, asking the right questions at the right time. They are a committed and effective team and provide considerable support for the school. Many are regular visitors, helping in class and involving themselves extensively in the school's work. Governors understand their roles and responsibilities, attend regular training and fulfil all their legal obligations. They are well informed, clearly articulating the school's strengths and demonstrating an informed insight about where provision could be improved. Governors are effectively involved in shaping the school's direction and receive

comprehensive and accurate information from the headteacher and co-ordinators to support them in this. They constantly question and challenge the school's management to ensure that all pupils receive the best possible opportunities.

41. Very good systems for monitoring the school's work have been implemented. The headteacher observes teaching in all classes, both formally and informally and, as part of the school's policy on monitoring teachers' performance, there are plans to include the two assistant headteachers in observing teaching. Teachers' planning is regularly checked, with all being required to provide an evaluation of each half-term's work, commenting on their success in meeting planned outcomes, pupils' attainment against the learning outcomes, identification of pupils who have shown particular ability or who have experienced difficulty and resource management issues. Pupils' work is also monitored regularly and discussions are held with them about how well they feel that they are learning. The very good systems to check on the quality of teaching and learning, together with the detailed analyses and interpretation of performance data, support the school in identifying and prioritising areas for improvement. These are clearly set out in a comprehensive improvement plan. The school's finances are very carefully monitored and controlled. There are excellent procedures for financial management. The school makes very effective use of specific grants; the use of monies from all sources is rigorously monitored.
42. There are a good number of appropriately qualified and experienced teachers and support staff. The school has very good induction procedures to support newly qualified teachers and has excellent potential to train student teachers. Administrative staff provide a warm and welcoming first contact for parents and visitors. Day-to-day administration and financial control are efficient and assist in the smooth running of the school. Excellent use is made of ICT to provide accurate information; for example, about finance, assessment and attendance. The site maintenance officer is an invaluable resource, providing support for staff in many ways and maintaining the accommodation to a high order. The school's good quality resources are used very well and support teaching and learning in all subjects, areas of learning and pupils with learning difficulties. The school is very effective in ensuring that it gets the best value from spending and all other decisions made to improve standards and provision.
43. The accommodation is very good. The school is new, modern and bright and greatly enhanced by displays that celebrate pupils' work and stimulate their interest. There are more than enough rooms of adequate size in which to teach the curriculum, with every pair of classrooms sharing an additional, large, adjacent working area. The large hall is used well for lessons in PE, music, assemblies and as a dining area. The facilities also include a good-sized library and computer suite. The Nursery has a very good secure outside play area that is partially covered to maximise usage during all weathers. The playground and grassed areas provide good external recreation and sporting facilities. There is no special community room, however, through which the school can fulfil the original intention of providing facilities for local residents and parents. The school is in excellent condition and is very well maintained. The high standard of the accommodation contributes much to the quality of learning and pupils' enjoyment of school.
44. In this school there is a shared vision and a collective determination to go for all-out excellence. The high quality of leadership and management has ensured that there are effective strategies and systems to support this. As such, the school has excellent potential to succeed.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

45. There are no key issues for the school to address. However, in the context of its many strengths, the following minor point for improvement has been made and will form the basis of the governors' action plan:
 - define the school's classification of gifted and/or talented pupils and make specific provision to address these pupils' individual and unique learning needs.

(Paragraph 20)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	46
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	2	23	18	3	0	0	0
Percentage	4	50	39	7	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than 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)	15	134
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR - Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	12

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	60
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.6
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	6	6	12

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

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total			
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (N/A)	100 (N/A)	83 (N/A)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Where the number of boys or girls in the year group is ten or fewer the individual results are not reported.

The table showing attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6) in the 2002 tests is not included because there were less than ten pupils in the year group.

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	108	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	3	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19
Average class size	22

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	52.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: Nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	7.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	9

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002 ⁴
----------------	------------------------

	£
Total income	189,763
Total expenditure	189,428
Expenditure per pupil	2,786
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	334

⁴ The financial information in the table represents seven months; from September 2001 to March 2002

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate: 76%

Number of questionnaires sent out	164
Number of questionnaires returned	124

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	81	19	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	71	28	0	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	77	22	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	63	27	5	3	1
The teaching is good.	82	17	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	73	25	2	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	85	15	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	93	6	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	82	17	1	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	94	6	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	84	15	0	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	83	15	1	0	2

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

46. Children enter the Nursery in the term after they reach their third birthday and transfer to the Reception class in the September after their fourth birthday.
47. The educational provision for children in the Nursery and Reception classes is very good. Although standards on entry to the Reception class are well above what is expected for children's age, the quality of teaching and learning in all six areas is very good and high standards are maintained. By the end of the Reception Year, most children will attain all of the expected Early Learning Goals and the majority will exceed them and be working confidently and competently within the National Curriculum.
48. All staff work co-operatively and have a very good understanding of the needs of the age group. The co-ordinators are knowledgeable and dedicated to ensuring that all children's needs are met. A good level of additional adult support is available in most lessons and this enhances learning. Children with learning difficulties are quickly identified and given suitable help. Staff are also beginning to identify potentially gifted and talented children in order to address their specific needs.
49. There is an excellent induction process that helps children settle into school quickly. Information for parents is also very good and parents are welcomed and fully involved in their children's learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

50. Children enjoy school and are developing independence and confidence. This reflects the very good teaching and high expectations of staff. Adults provide good role models and treat each other and the children with courtesy and respect. Nursery and Reception children show an understanding for and empathy with others that are particularly mature for their age. This is especially evident in play and group activities, where they work together well and show delight in each other's achievements. For example, they share the dressing-up clothes in pretend-play and make remarks such as *"You'd look nice in this one"*. They also show great delight when their friends receive certificates in assemblies. Staff make every effort to make lessons challenging and exciting, which results in children having very positive attitudes to learning. Children are very well behaved and have developed a clear sense of right and wrong. There is a good balance between teacher and child-chosen activities, which foster children's independent learning skills. For instance, Reception children show independence in using the established 'Golden Key' system to access the outside classroom, understanding that they have to check how many keys are in use before they go outdoors. Outdoor activities are effectively organised to enable the children to mix socially, develop initiative and think for themselves. This was demonstrated well when children created dens, discussing and making choices about the materials they would use and posing questions, such as, *"Will that join to it?"* The only element in which children's standards are not particularly well developed are the skills of dressing and undressing, with many children still requiring quite a lot of adult assistance in this task. Assessment of children's progress is very good. Each child has an individual target book, which includes personal targets such as *'I can zip my own coat before I go outside'*.

Communication, language and literacy

51. Children have very good communication skills. They listen well to teachers' questions and to each other. They are learning to take turns and participate well in stories and rhymes. Children talk clearly. Most speak in complete and sometimes complex, sentences, showing much confidence and using a very good range of vocabulary. For example, in a lesson focusing on the letter 'f', one nursery child volunteers *"That footprint has number five on it!"* whilst another

suggests “A *female turkey*”. Teachers consistently encourage speaking and listening skills in all areas of the curriculum.

52. In both the Nursery and Reception class the teaching of letter sounds is very good. Lessons have a clear focus and are taught at a good pace with a range of interesting activities to keep children interested. Nursery children recognise a good many letter sounds and identify rhymes and the correct sound that starts a word. Writing is taught alongside reading, with children having many interesting opportunities to learn to form letters correctly; for example, in the air, the sawdust tray, sand, paint and eventually books. There are many opportunities for children to experiment with writing in play situations such as the outdoor market stall, library and various pretend-play areas. Nursery children are making very good progress in learning to write their names.
53. Reception children’s reading skills are developing very well. They enjoy books and listening to stories. Many recognise common words and make good attempts at reading. The good range of books in classrooms and a weekly library time promote children’s enjoyment of books, which they love to share with their parents. Writing skills are also well developed. Most children hold pencils correctly and form letters well. Displays are particularly effective in supporting the development of literacy skills, encouraging children to discover, experience and use words.
54. In both classes, children, including those with learning difficulties, receive very good teaching as a class group, individually and in groups. Assessment is very good and supports teachers in matching work accurately to the children’s needs. For example, three pieces of writing are assessed during the year, resulting in a record of children’s achievements, such as ‘*I can write some letter shapes, especially those from my name*’ and targets for which to aim.

Mathematical development

55. A wide range of games, activities and imaginative teaching methods support children’s mathematical development. Nursery children count accurately to 20 and most correctly recognise those numerals. They know the order of numbers to ten and show good understanding of the quantity represented by a numeral. Children enjoy feeding the ‘Biscuit Monster’ the exact number of biscuits that match the number thrown on a dice. Number skills and mathematical vocabulary were further extended in this activity when the teacher challenged children to ‘add on’ the number of biscuits and find the total’ at the end. One group comfortably managed to add on to 19, showing very good understanding. Reception children’s counting skills are very good. Most count forwards and backwards in ones to 20 and are gaining good skills in counting in twos from zero to 20 and forwards and backwards in tens to and from 100. The use of novel devices, such as hand puppets that make ‘deliberate mistakes’, captures children’s interest and maintains their concentration.
56. In both the Nursery and Reception, work in other areas of learning is exploited well to promote mathematical development. For instance, activities in sand and water and cooking, reinforce children’s understanding of measures and their efforts to produce symmetrical structures using construction toys help them gain knowledge of pattern and shape. Puzzles, bingo and dice games and the way teachers capitalise upon the many incidental happenings throughout the day, such as deducing the number of children absent during registration, constantly reinforce learning. Mathematical vocabulary is also promoted very well through teachers’ effective use of questioning, such as “*How many altogether?*” “*How many more/less?*” and “*Which is bigger/smaller?*” Both classes are well organised so that children can take advantage of the outdoor classroom. The market stall, for example, is very well stocked and provides children with shopping experiences in which they learn to recognise coins, add amounts and give change.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

57. The children play imaginatively with construction toys, build houses and dens and create imaginary situations for play in them. ICT skills are very advanced. Children switch on the monitor and use the mouse confidently and with good control. Nursery children choose different

colours to make recognisable pictures. Many Reception children work independently and some save and print their work with support. They watch attentively as the teacher gives instructions and demonstrates using the large electronic screen; they are fascinated when she uses her finger to complete the picture of a face. Children are quite competent in operating the audio machines in class listening corners.

58. Children are taught to care for their environment and delight in planting winter pansies in the outside garden, then recording what they did. Their understanding of how they grow and develop over time is enhanced as they watch a visiting mother bathing her baby. Similarly, a visiting anaesthetist supported children's early scientific learning by showing them x-ray plates and checking their heartbeats. Early geography and history skills develop well as children explore the school and locality, noting the building site and how the area is changing. Through stories, role-play and religious education lessons, children learn about different cultures. For instance, they know that Diwali is a special festival for Hindu people.

Physical development

59. Very good teaching of specific PE lessons and daily access to a wide range of mobile toys and climbing, jumping and balancing apparatus in a large, secure, area ensure that children acquire very good physical skills. In outdoor play, Nursery children manoeuvre wheeled toys along a designated pathway showing good control and co-ordination and an awareness of direction and use of space. PE lessons are well planned with effective warm-up activities and suitable cooling-down exercises. In a very good PE lesson, Reception children were able to use both their hands and feet to control very well the movement of different-sized balls. The lesson was taught briskly, but with good time allowed for children to practise skills. They also had very good opportunity to evaluate their work, saying whether control was easier with hands or feet or when using a large or small ball. When these skills were used in a game, the children were also able to say how they could make the game harder, suggesting reducing the size of the ball and using a goalkeeper.
60. In both classes, children learn to handle and use small equipment and tools correctly showing rapidly developing dexterity. Staff challenge children to be adventurous, but provide very good support to help them gain confidence. In outdoor play, staff interact with the children very well, purposefully intervening in their games and playing with them to promote physical skills.

Creative development

61. In both Nursery and Reception, a wide range of activities provide children with excellent opportunities to develop creativity. Children enjoy a rich curriculum, having countless opportunities to explore, use their imagination and express and respond to the very good programme created for them. Teaching and learning are very good. Pretend-play in a variety of forms is ongoing, sparking children's imagination as they improvise different scenarios, which also promote skills in other areas, such as speaking, where many children articulate what they are doing very well. For example, one child answers the telephone in the home corner and calls, *"Come quickly. Your mother's ill"*. The children's very good concentration allows them to sustain purposeful role-playing activities for long periods.
62. Although no specific music lessons were seen, children clearly enjoyed singing songs, rhymes and hymns in assemblies and incidentally as part of daily activities. They sing enthusiastically, joining in with the actions and achieving reasonably accurate pitch. They experiment with the sounds made by different instruments and show good understanding of the difference between loud and soft sounds. The musical structure in the outdoor classroom was an especially popular activity and gave children very good experience of exploring the sounds that can be made using everyday objects such as pans, keys and sticks.
63. Children's artwork is of a particularly good standard. They produce interesting collages that show choice in the way they have selected and placed materials. Their paintings and observational drawings show good use of the paper space and the development of the artistic element of form, with human images including quite a lot of detail. Children explore pattern and different textures of paint and methods of application; for instance, through using sponges and other tools and

painting colourful pictures of fruits and vegetables using watercolours. Using poster paint, they are taught how to create an artist's palette and learn how to mix paint. Children also learn about famous artists. For instance, they have tried to paint in the style of Picasso and have worked with a visiting artist who helped them to make a creditable watercolour in the style of Monet. Three-dimensional work has included activities with clay and other modelling material, making sock puppets and masks.

ENGLISH

64. By the ends of Years 2 and 6, standards are well above average. Pupils of all ages have very good listening and speaking skills. They listen to each other readily, sharing ideas and thinking through their responses. For example, in a Year 1 lesson where pupils were discussing and making judgements about friends, one pupil suggests, *"I think that's why you've chosen that particular book!"* Year 2 pupils listen silently to discover which sounds they can hear around them and then imagine the sounds they might hear in different places, such as on a beach. They sustain concentration and articulate their thoughts clearly, using a good range of vocabulary. Pupils describe waves *crashing*, seagulls *crying* and little children *paddling in the waves*. Speaking and listening skills are also well promoted through role-play and drama activities. For example, Year 3 pupils present play scripts, learning to adhere to the stage directions and following the script so that they are prepared for when their character speaks. By Year 6, most speak confidently and clearly within a range of contexts, modifying their speech according to the situation. For instance, in an RE lesson, pupils take the 'hot seat', answering questions posed by their friends with poise and aplomb and making effective use of vocabulary. One pupil in the 'hot seat' replies, *"I feel annoyed, yet confused. I've had one definite belief and now I have another!"* Pupils are learning to evaluate their own and others' ideas and to give helpful and constructive ideas for improvement.
65. All pupils show a real enthusiasm for books. Year 2 pupils express clear preferences for authors and various types of stories. Higher and middle attainers read challenging texts well. They alter their voices to suit the text and show good understanding. Higher attainers deduce the meanings of difficult words and make reference to the story when explaining their likes and dislikes. The few lower attainers read with remarkably good expression, showing great enjoyment and good skills in blending letters to read words they do not immediately recognise. Pupils show skill and understanding in using the library and know how contents and index pages are used to locate information. By Year 6, higher and middle attainers are fluent and expressive readers. In lessons there is no shortage of volunteers to read aloud! Pupils show excellent insight into the characters and plots of stories and have an equal interest in prose and poetry. They talk about a wide range of authors and their styles, even comparing the styles of two poems by R L Stevenson, explaining that one is 'relaxed and calm', while the other is 'fast and frantic'. Pupils have well-developed library and information-retrieval skills, making effective use of books and ICT-based sources.
66. By Year 2, pupils write enthusiastically, paying good attention to accurate punctuation and presentation. They make effective use of vocabulary to add interest to their writing, including using connecting words to link ideas in sentences. They reflect well on their own and others' writing, evaluating it and thinking about how it could be improved. For example, when listening to each other's work at the end of a lesson, pupils volunteer, *"I liked her saying 'beautiful birds'. It's got alliteration"* and, *"It describes them in my head"*. Writing shows maturity and clear thinking skills; for instance, when writing instructions about making a costume, a pupil writes, *'Finally, try your costume on'*. Handwriting is legible, usually well formed and often joined.
67. By Year 6, pupils write fluently and at length. They have very good knowledge of how to alter their style of writing according to the purpose. For example, they write formal and informal letters and, after analysing Dickens' story *A Christmas Carol*, they change an excerpt into a play script. Within many subjects, pupils write notes, reports and accounts. They plan their writing and have gained a range of effective strategies to help them start stories in ways that capture a reader's interest by setting the scene and developing the characters. Pupils are competent at spelling, having a good knowledge of spelling rules. Grammar is usually correct and language is used

creatively; for example, *'Dark waters are tossed like a ship on a stormy sea, charging like troops starting to flee'*. Punctuation is good, with pupils using speech marks, commas and exclamation and question marks automatically and in the right places.

68. Teaching is very good. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and have high expectations. They share the aims of the lesson with pupils so that they know exactly what they are going to learn. This also helps pupils, as well as teachers, to assess progress during the evaluation sessions that occur at the end of lessons. Teachers give clear instructions so that pupils feel secure and able to tackle tasks confidently. Questions are probing to make pupils think. When discussing metaphors in a poem, for example, a pupil explains that, *"There is no right answer because everyone has a different image in their head"*. Lessons are taught at a brisk pace, with questions and work being well matched to pupils' needs so that all are challenged.
69. Literacy skills are promoted very well across the whole curriculum. Particularly good use is made of ICT to support research skills and those of drafting and editing writing. The school's use of a 'class pet' award also makes a valuable contribution to pupils' literacy skills as well as their personal development. On receiving this weekly award, pupils contribute to the accompanying diary that charts the 'pets' experiences with each child. Speaking and listening skills are promoted well across the curriculum. In all subjects, teachers ensure that the correct use of subject-specific vocabulary is given a high profile. Pupils are expected to use the correct terms and add detail when answering questions or explaining and evaluating their own or others' work. Teachers make very effective use of support staff, who make a valuable contribution to teaching and learning. Marking is of a high standard and homework is used well to support learning.
70. The subject is led and managed very well by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator. Very good assessment procedures ensure that pupils are tested regularly and the information is analysed and used well to set individual and school targets and to match work to pupils' needs. Resources, including the library, are very good and of high quality. Careful thought is given to the use of visits and visitors to enhance pupils' learning experiences. For example, a trip to a local newspaper office and visits from the editor have enhanced Year 4 pupils' skills of report writing and helped them to see the relevance of writing within the world of work.

MATHEMATICS

71. Standards at the ends of Years 2 and 6 are well above average. Teachers plan and provide interesting and challenging lessons, which results in a high level of application from pupils and also promotes very good thinking skills.
72. Most pupils in Year 2 count accurately and confidently to beyond 100. Higher attainers accurately and confidently order numbers to 1000. They show good understanding of measure when they work out the difference between the length of an elastic band when stretched and unstretched. Pupils apply their good understanding of number to shopping problems; for instance, by giving change from different amounts to at least 20p. They correctly record amounts of money in pence and then add the decimal point to convert this to pounds and pence. Higher attainers recognise multiples of five and ten and approach problems sensibly. For example, when adding three numbers they choose carefully the order in which they add them, showing good understanding of number patterns and strategies for effective addition.
73. Year 6 pupils are very competent in using large numbers, which allows them to tackle complex problems using the required skills in basic computation. When investigating they use different strategies and order their work systematically. Pupils present their findings in appropriate ways, solving problems by showing and interpreting data in tables, graphs and charts. They use their understanding of negative numbers and co-ordinates to draw line graphs and use a formula to find the circumference of a circle.
74. Teaching and learning are very good. All teachers are well versed in the teaching of mathematics and the National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented very well. Teachers' expectations are very high. They plan and prepare lessons thoroughly with a clear view of what they want

pupils to learn. Lessons are enjoyable because all pupils are fully involved in oral work; group and individual tasks are interesting, challenging and well matched to pupils' needs. Marking of work is very good. Not only are pupils praised and encouraged, they are also prompted to think further about their work. For example, when a Year 5 pupil successfully converts fractions to decimals the teacher writes *'Excellent. What percentage are they equal to?'* Sometimes, when a pupil is having difficulty, the teacher will suggest substituting a similar but easier problem that involves the same basic method as a model. Pupils are very aware of their own learning. Before attempting a problem they write down what they are trying to achieve and evaluate their success at the end. After working on the translation of shapes, one Year 5 pupil writes, *'I got a bit confused'*. However, after further guidance and practise the pupil writes, *'I am now happy with it'*. Occasionally, pupils write a rule that they have deduced from solving a problem.

75. In response to the regular intake of new pupils, many teachers are regularly involved in assessing pupils' standards in order to match work to their needs. For example, when Year 2 pupils were learning how numbers, including odd numbers, can be halved, the teacher was quick to spot that three pupils were very confident and so set them a harder task. As a result they were soon mentally dividing numbers such as 541 by two. Some excellent teaching provided constant challenge for Year 5 and 6 pupils. In this lesson, all, including those with learning difficulties, were expected to contribute orally, explaining their reasoning in suggesting ways to extend number patterns. The work developed very well so that pupils began to suggest algebraic rules for patterns. The brisk pace of learning continued during the group work session, with pupils concentrating extremely well and being keen to progress to a new task as each one was completed. Teachers constantly promote numeracy skills within other subjects. For instance, pupils count the days from advent to Christmas, time themselves performing specific tasks and weigh and measure in science and design and technology. ICT is frequently used to support learning in mathematics; for example, by using spreadsheets and producing and interpreting graphs in data-handling work. Homework is set regularly and makes a good contribution to learning.
76. There is effective subject leadership and a very good curriculum that has investigation and the use and application of mathematics at its heart. There are particularly effective assessment procedures and the information gained is used very well to support learning and to plan action to improve standards. Good resources are used purposefully in lessons and other adults, including volunteers, provide strong support for teachers. Parents are well informed about the teaching of the subject, with the provision of an information pack and a very successful mathematics information evening. Effective links with the other schools have resulted in some higher attaining Year 6 pupils participating in a workshop with pupils from six partner schools.

SCIENCE

77. By the ends of Years 2 and 6, standards are well above average. The strong emphasis the school gives to developing pupils' experimental and investigative skills is particularly effective in supporting their learning and results in high standards.
78. Year 2 pupils have gained good knowledge of a range of scientific ideas; for instance, of materials, forces and life processes. They are aware, for example, of the basic growth changes that occur in animals and humans and of the different needs of babies and toddlers. In learning about food for healthy growth, pupils have gained a good range of vocabulary to describe various food groups, such as carbohydrates and proteins. They talk knowledgeably about how different foods affect the growth of bones and of how vitamins in fruit and vegetables protect humans from illnesses, such as colds. Much of the work pupils complete is practical and through this they have gained a very good understanding of the principles of scientific investigation. For instance, during the inspection, pupils used toy cars and ramps to investigate forces. They tested their predictions about how to make the cars travel faster and further and showed good awareness of how to make their tests fair. By the end of the lesson the good time allowed for practical experimentation had allowed the pupils to gain much more knowledge than they had at the start. For instance, they explained how they had discovered that the type of ramp surface and its height, as well as the size of the car and its starting point on the ramp, were significant factors in

how far the car travelled. During and after practical work, pupils are successfully taught to record their findings in tables and labelled diagrams and by writing about whether what they discovered was what they expected.

79. By Year 6, pupils have secure knowledge of all areas of science and well-developed skills. Their use of scientific vocabulary when explaining their work is very good. For example, when discussing the process of plant reproduction, pupils use words such *pollination*, *fertilization* and *stigma* and correctly identify the different parts and functions of a flower, such as the *sepal*, *stamen* and *carpel*. Similarly, in their work on physical processes, pupils explain that the earth *orbits* the sun and rotates on its own axis. Pupils' very good scientific skills were evident in a design and technology lesson where they investigated the strength of different structures and the suitability of various materials for designing and making kites. Their well-developed knowledge of forces was also evident as they considered factors such as gravity, up-thrust and air-resistance when suggesting ideas for testing. Pupils record their work scientifically and in a range of ways. In addition to written accounts, pupils use graphs, tables and detailed labelled diagrams to communicate what they did and found out and make good use of ICT, both in communicating findings and researching information. Pupils enjoy practical work and apply themselves very well, working effectively in groups.
80. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and high expectations of what pupils can achieve. This comes through clearly in their explanations and the questions they ask pupils, which continually reinforce correct use of vocabulary. In all lessons, investigations play a central role, which is why pupils' knowledge is so secure and their investigative skills are so well developed. Lessons are organised and resourced down to the last detail, so learning progresses smoothly and teachers are able to spend productive time working with pupils during practical tasks. Here they assess pupils through observation and by asking probing questions, supporting and challenging them as required. The pace of lessons is brisk, with teachers and pupils accomplishing much in the time allocated. Teachers mark pupils' work constructively, providing praise and pointers for improvement. Homework is used well to support and extend the work done in class.
81. The subject is led and managed very well. A very good curriculum builds on what pupils already know, develops their scientific skills very well and makes a significant contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Together with good assessment procedures and resources, these factors provide very effective support for teaching and learning and result in pupils achieving high standards.

ART AND DESIGN

82. Pupils experience a wide range of art and design activities, which results in very good learning. By the ends of Years 2 and 6, standards are above average.
83. Through work based on the artistic elements of scale, proportion, line and colour, Year 2 pupils have developed particularly good observational and creative skills. For instance, after choosing part of a magazine picture and sticking it to paper, pupils used their imaginations to draw what they thought might be around the picture, ensuring that the size and proportion were in keeping with the original picture. To produce the background, they successfully matched the colours to those in the picture. Pupils' creativity is also very evident in their current work on pattern and shape, where they are developing good skills in drawing, freehand, overlapping shapes, which they later 'fill' in a variety of ways; for example, with wavy lines, different small shapes and dots. Each pupil's work is individual, with all showing very good effort, pride and enjoyment. Pupils learn to evaluate their work critically and think how they might improve it.
84. Some particularly good clay work was seen in Year 1 where pupils learned to mould the material to produce individual head shapes. They gained skills in using tools to mark the clay; for example, to depict expression and to fix features such as hair, noses and ears. Pupils learn much about the work of different artists, craftspeople and designers. For instance, in Year 1, pupils have used charcoal to draw self-portraits in the style of Picasso. The work of surrealist

artist Magritte has also been used as a stimulus, resulting in pupils making use of photography to combine facial features on a landscape background.

85. By Year 6, pupils produce a wide range of work in two and three dimensions. Their drawings depicting movement in people show good skill development and attention to detail. The large-scale works that they have produced on the theme of 'Emotions' whilst working with a visiting artist are particularly impressive, showing very good creativity in choosing and combining various media such as oil pastels, paint, charcoal and collage materials. The very good progress in practical work is also evident in pupils' knowledge and understanding of the work of different artists and designers from different cultures.
86. The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers expect a lot from pupils and are rewarded by their enthusiasm and high-quality work. Teachers prepare thoroughly for lessons, which are well resourced and organised, with plenty of opportunity for pupils to practise skills and techniques. In all classes the process begins with pupils using their sketchbooks to experiment with techniques before embarking on an original work. Moreover, pupils are frequently encouraged to conduct research before and during their work to increase their knowledge, which ultimately improves the finished work. Teachers value all work that results from good effort and application and display it attractively in classrooms and corridors. They make effective links with other subjects, which ensure that learning is more meaningful. For example, linked to their work in music, Year 3 pupils have used papier-mâché to make masks depicting characters from Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*. Similarly, linked to their history work, Year 4 pupils have studied art from ancient Egypt and used real papyrus to make their own drawings in this style.
87. Effective curriculum planning ensures that teachers are aware of and exploit, opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; for instance, through studying the art of different times, traditions and cultures. Examples include drawings of Indian Mendi patterns and the use of coloured powders, beads and glitter to produce Rangoli patterns. After looking at the works of the artists Mondrian, Delaunay and Van Doesbury, Year 2 pupils were asked to express the feelings these evoked. Examples included, '*This reminds me of a busy street;*' '*It looks like a colourful sunset;*' '*It makes me think of a stained glass window*'. A constant reminder of the school as a social community is provided in the entrance by the impressive colourful ceramic tile mural that includes contributions from pupils in all year groups.
88. Good use is made of visits and visitors to support teaching and learning. For example, pupils have worked with visiting artists and have regular opportunities to work with a number of the school's governors who are particularly talented in this subject. Year 2 pupils are also benefiting from the input of a subject specialist teacher from a local high school who is working alongside the class as part of a ten-week project focusing on pattern and decoration. Extra-curricular clubs for both infants and juniors are well attended and make a very good contribution to pupils' learning. The recently appointed co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and is keen to develop the leadership and management role.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

89. By the ends of Years 2 and 6, standards are above average. Year 2 pupils have acquired good skills in designing, making and evaluating. In a recent topic about toys, pupils have studied mechanisms, such as those used in wind-up toys. They have learned about the function of axles and cogs and incorporated these into their own designs. These are carefully thought through, identifying materials and labelling the different parts. In making their own wind-up toys, pupils used different methods of fixing the materials, such as tying, gluing and taping. Work with textiles had included exploring the materials used to make string puppets and how they worked and were put together. Subsequently, pupils designed and made their own puppets, thinking about the appropriateness of the materials they would use in relation to who the 'consumer' would be; for example, a young child. Work on this theme has made a particularly good contribution to pupils' learning about forces and materials in science. Literacy skills and those of speaking and listening are also promoted well as pupils write instructions for making their design and discuss how they might improve the finished product.

90. By Year 6, pupils have covered a comprehensive range of work in the subject, including making very good use of ICT, for example, to design scenery for a pantomime. Current work on designing and making kites is of a high standard. Pupils have investigated different designs, identifying good and weak features such as shape and weight before beginning their own work. Their designs contain very good detail; for instance, of the different lengths of wood needed to build the frame and how these would be arranged and joined. Effective teaching helped pupils to see that the working characteristics of materials influence its application and resulted in pupils making considered choices about the fabric that they would use for their kites; for example, about its strength, flexibility and ability to withstand water and wind. Other work, such as designing and making photograph frames and making bread with an electric mixer, has involved pupils in developing skills in using tools such as glue guns, craft knives and electrical equipment alongside knowledge of how to do this safely.
91. The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers' secure subject knowledge allows them to plan interesting activities, such as the challenge given to Year 5 and 6 pupils to design a mathematics game that had to include multiplication tables, division and brackets. There are good opportunities for pupils to use a wide range of resources and teachers challenge them continuously with questions that make them think about what they will do, the materials they will use and how their work might be improved. Pupils with learning difficulties are given additional support from teachers and other adults, who help to raise their self-esteem with well-earned praise. Throughout the school, investigation is central to all work and very good links are made with subjects such as science, mathematics and ICT. These factors result in pupils having a more secure understanding of what is being taught and very good insight into their own learning. Marking is particularly good, praising pupils' efforts whilst continuing the challenge; for example, one Year 2 pupil was asked *'How are you going to turn your handle?'*
92. Pupils show real enjoyment for the subject and apply themselves very well during lessons, presenting their work neatly and co-operating maturely in group work as they share ideas. The curriculum is very good. Underpinned by the process of investigation, the three key factors of designing, making and evaluating are all addressed effectively. Pupils are assessed regularly. The new co-ordinator is enthusiastic and keen to take on the leadership and management role.

GEOGRAPHY

93. It was only possible to see one lesson. Consequently, judgements are supported by analysis of pupils' work and discussions with them. By the ends of Years 2 and 6, standards are broadly average. Whilst pupils are making good progress in lessons, many have joined the school with a wide variety of previous learning experiences and a significant proportion have gaps in their knowledge and skills. This will take time to rectify to raise standards and achieve consistency between pupils. However, the curriculum is very good, providing for a wide range of learning experiences with an emphasis on understanding through investigation and practical work.
94. Year 2 pupils have drawn maps and completed work about a Scottish island, but overall their recall of what they have learned is limited. Some describe features of the island and know that because of its size, small population and single road there are no cars. However, while one pupil defines an island as being surrounded by water, another thinks that it would be possible to travel there by train. They are aware of some of the similarities and differences between countries, such as the climate and shops.
95. The residential visit to North Wales has been particularly useful in supporting the learning of Year 5 and 6 pupils. They study maps of different scales, carry out a village study and compare their surroundings with their home area. Tasks involve surveys, in which pupils tally their findings and looking at different physical features such as a gorge and a swirl pot. Pupils' knowledge of the local area is very sparse. For example, they have little knowledge or understanding of why Warrington exists or any physical reasons for where it is sited. However, the work pupils are currently studying is promoting above average skills and understanding. For instance, a higher attaining pupil writes very good descriptions of the sections of a river, such as *'an oxbow lake is*

an old meander which has been cut off from the river'. Pupils experience and understand the purpose of fieldwork. They experiment with sieving and filtering when looking at drainage and use atlases to identify and mark wet and dry areas of the world. Pupils' work shows their developing awareness of social responsibilities as they write persuasively about how and why Oxfam helps various peoples.

96. Teaching is good. Pupils' work reflects a constructive approach to the subject in which current learning builds on pupils' immediate knowledge and skills. For instance, Years 1 and 3 study the locality, walking around the immediate area and addressing questions that lead them to think about the landscape, settlement, work and transport. Year 4 consider how people affect the environment and how it can be improved. They use interviews and questionnaires, as well as their own observations and record what they find out in tables and graphs. Pupils review their own work alongside comments from the teacher. A very good lesson resulted in pupils in Years 5 and 6 reinforcing good mapping skills by drawing and interpreting contour lines so that they were then able to site a river and a settlement in sensible locations. The teacher had prepared very well and asked pupils to use correct geographical vocabulary so that, for example, they referred to 'the south-east slopes'. Homework is used effectively to support learning in class. For example, a holiday task to research a river or canal is thoroughly assessed by the teacher, who reminds pupils of what they have learned and praises their efforts.
97. The subject co-ordinator has only held the position for a few months and has not yet had time to influence provision or standards.

HISTORY

98. By the ends of Years 2 and 6, standards are above average. Pupils in Year 2 have a good understanding of what history is all about and know some ways of how to find out about the past. For instance, they know that old buildings such as churches, bridges and some houses are of different construction to modern buildings. They know why castles were built and were protected by a moat. Based on their knowledge of Samuel Peypys' diary, pupils give a very good account of the Great Fire of London; one pupil quoted '1666' from memory.
99. Some Year 6 pupils have a rather sketchy knowledge of some of the main periods in our history due to their differing prior learning experiences. However, their general understanding of the subject is very good and their skills are being developed very effectively in lessons. Pupils have a wide knowledge of various sources of evidence and are aware that some may be unreliable. They are agreed that it is important to learn about history because of the bearing it has on life now. Those pupils who have been in the school since it opened have good recall of their study of a local family and of the history of Britain since 1940. They give good explanations of how they studied documents such as birth certificates and old photographs to find information about people who have died.
100. Teaching and learning are good. At the start of topics, teachers review with pupils what they already know and what they are going to learn so that at the end they have gained a good insight of how well they have progressed. Lessons are managed well with plenty of opportunities for pupils to investigate and participate in fruitful discussions. Teachers' questioning is very good and illustrates their secure knowledge. Timelines displayed in classrooms allow pupils to order important societies in world history and help them to develop a sense of chronology. Year 2 pupils are helped to develop skills of empathy as they study eyewitness accounts of the Fire of London and look at paintings to determine what the artist could see. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 research information about ancient Egypt and write their names in hieroglyphics on papyrus. Good use was made of resources; for example, Year 3 pupils compared information from books, a video, artefacts and a computer program when investigating the lives of Egyptian women. Every pupil, including those with learning difficulties, had an opportunity to speak briefly about his or her findings. Pupils respond very well, working hard at their tasks. In each lesson there is a busy working atmosphere.

101. The curriculum is based on pupils investigating, which deepens their understanding and sharpens their skills. Visits to museums and places of historical interest provide good support for learning. Well-planned and attractive displays, such as the Year 1 class museum, with information desk, that displays toys from the past, stimulate pupils' interest.
102. The subject co-ordinator was only appointed in September so has not yet had sufficient time to influence provision or standards.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

103. This is a computer-literate school where the use of technology has a high profile. Standards are above average at the ends of Years 2 and 6. A very good curriculum is thoughtfully planned to make relevant links with all subjects. Full use is made of the very good resources and the computer suite is constantly occupied and used. As a result, pupils are developing very good skills well whilst applying them to meaningful activities. Samples of the work done in all years are printed and presented very attractively in books so that pupils can see their progress and take pride in it.
104. Year 2 pupils develop and use skills in communicating information very well. They confidently log on to the computers and quickly locate their work. They have good control of the mouse and know the functions of a variety of keys such as those to produce capitals and delete letters. They change fonts for effect, sometimes choosing a font to provide a visual illustration of a particular word such as 'scared'. Pupils apply their developing word processing skills when producing a book review. By Year 6, pupils compile a very good multimedia presentation about their residential visit to Lledr Hall. In this they make effective use of research, pictures, graphics, text, maps, captions and hyperlinks. They work on spreadsheets in mathematics lessons and research information on rivers and mountains in geography. Throughout the school, pupils use the digital camera to record aspects of school life. In Year 4, pupils used a digital microscope to examine snails in connection with their science work. Pupils learn about how ICT is used in the world around them.
105. Teaching and learning are very good. Lessons are meticulously planned and the learning objectives are shared with the pupils so that all know what has to be achieved. The pupils enjoy their work, share equipment very well and treat it with respect. Teachers' instructions are clear and they use the large demonstration screen very effectively to help pupils understand what to do. Teachers deal confidently with any queries or problems that arise so that no time is wasted. In this they are well supported by other adults, including volunteers and a simple but effective system for pupils to seek help. Other adults help particularly with those pupils with learning difficulties so that they are fully involved and learn very well.
106. Tasks are planned to link with learning in other subjects. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils worked on spreadsheets, changing data and using formulae. The work was varied according to pupils' different attainment, but all showed good knowledge of number when working on a task in which they had budget limits. Higher attainers were given the more challenging task of increasing the number of items purchased without increasing the weight of the rucksack to carry them beyond the limit set. In another lesson in Year 1, pupils had to think of, or choose from a screen-based word bank, suitable words to describe a photograph on their screen. This task was very effective in promoting literacy skills alongside those in ICT, which involved pupils in word-processing and making purposeful use of the mouse. Classroom computers are also used well. For example, Year 4 pupils use ICT to prepare text and graphics for inclusion in a class newspaper.
107. Leadership of the subject is very good. The co-ordinator provides a fine role model for teaching as well as strong support for colleagues. There is a system to assess pupils' skill development, which will shortly be supplemented by pupils' own assessments of their learning. A planned project for pupils to be involved in building the school's own website is to be implemented soon. Security measures for the use of the Internet are in place.

MUSIC

108. By the ends of Years 2 and 6, standards are above average. Pupils are enthusiastic about the subject. In whole-school assemblies, for example, singing is lively and tuneful, with pupils from all year groups participating well, including joining in with actions and showing clear enjoyment in performing together.
109. By Year 2, pupils have learned the names of a variety of tuned and un-tuned instruments and know how these are played. Their creative skills are developing well and they are confident in using musical instruments to create their own accompaniments to singing. For example, in a lesson where pupils' understanding of the difference between pulse and rhythm was being extended they worked very effectively in groups to produce a piece that included a song, rhythm and pulse. Pupils chose from a wide range of instruments, negotiated roles and showed a very good understanding of timing and each other as they performed whilst following their appointed 'conductor'. Each group listened respectfully to each other and showed a good degree of maturity and reflection as they evaluated their work and suggested how it could be improved. Pupils are developing a good technical vocabulary to talk about music. During Years 1 and 2 they have many opportunities to sing a wide range of songs and have learned how to perform a song in two parts. A number of pupils are confident in singing solo.
110. By Year 6, skills in performing and appraising are well developed. Pupils competently play a range of different instruments and perform confidently for others, maintaining the beat and rhythm of the music. They recognise how instruments produce different sounds and respond sensitively to accompaniment. Their understanding of key musical ideas such as pitch, dynamics, duration, tempo, texture and structure is clearly evident in their performances. In a choir practice, pupils sang in unison and with good diction, competently managing a performance of a song with more than one part and including harmony. Many pupils read standard musical notation and show good insight in evaluating their own and others' work. Pupils are very enthusiastic about music and are keen to listen and perform. They behave very well in lessons and pay careful attention to teachers. Pupils take pride in their work and try hard to improve. They handle instruments carefully and with respect. Many are keen to take advantage of the extra-curricular activities and attendance is good.
111. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and sometimes excellent. Lessons are well planned and prepared and resources are used very effectively. The co-ordinator has ensured that the curriculum, based on a commercial scheme and national guidance, gives a balanced programme of learning experiences for pupils and supports non-specialist teachers in providing lessons of a good standard. The subject is managed very well and every opportunity is taken to use local resources and arrange relevant visits and visitors to enhance learning. Pupils have opportunities to perform locally and take part in local music festivals, which develops their performance skills and self-esteem. Music lessons and activities make a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. During the inspection, for example, pupils listened to and sang along with a variety of songs and music from other countries, including calypsos, folk music and Israeli music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

112. Standards are well above average. The school places a high priority on pupils' all-round physical development and every aspect is valued. Pupils take pride in their very smart appearance in lessons and this is well matched by their attitude and behaviour. A very good curriculum is provided and generous time given to the subject. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 study the required three elements. Athletics is also studied to take advantage of a visiting specialist in this field. Junior pupils experience the full curriculum, including all of the optional elements.
113. The only lessons seen were in dance. In this, teaching overall is good and in some lessons it is very good. There is a strong emphasis on pupils thinking about the quality of their movements. They observe each other and pass comments, which not only praise and encourage but also

provide thought for improvement. Teachers manage pupils well. For example, as one half of the Year 4 class is about to observe the other half, the teacher checks that they know what a good audience should do. Teachers make good use of technology. Both audio and video stimuli are used effectively and with discrimination so that they do not dominate the lesson. For example, there was judicious use of a musical excerpt from 'Cats' to simulate pupils' thoughts about their dance.

114. Lessons are well managed from the outset so that warm-ups start with pupils spaced out and involve suitable activities, firmly controlled. An excellent opening to the Year 5 and 6 lesson began with pupils warming-up their minds in an activity that required them to concentrate hard, listen acutely and select the time to move. After this, movements were suggested and sometimes led by different pupils. These careful preparations resulted in high-quality group work, showing that pupils had listened carefully to the music and observed their partners so that they then made very realistic, cat-like, movements at the correct time. At the conclusion, pupils evaluated their work, commenting on how they felt they had improved.
115. As a result of high-quality teaching, pupils particularly enjoy dance and immerse themselves fully in lessons. They show very good control and hold balances with clear shapes. Movements are well fitted to their intentions, such as those to depict 'scampering cats'. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils express emotions of fear and happiness as they respond to music following a theme of 'Goblins and Giants'. Clear progress is seen in all lessons. Teachers' high expectations, their personal involvement and the emphasis they place on teamwork result in pupils' commendable attitudes to the subject.
116. Although lessons were not seen in other aspects of PE, brief views of sport-related extra-curricular activities showed high standards. Infant pupils showed good close control of balls when attending football club. Junior pupils practised rugby skills with good footwork and very assured ball handling that showed fluent passing and safe catching. Swimming has not yet taken place, but is planned for the spring term. An audit is being taken of pupils' current swimming competence so that provision can be made for all to swim the required distance by the end of Year 6.
117. The new subject co-ordinator is being well supported by other colleagues and is keen to be more involved. A local rugby league club and a sports goods company provide after-school rugby and football activities. This is in addition to the significant involvement of teachers and some parents in this provision. The residential visit to North Wales provides a good opportunity for pupils to develop team spirit whilst participating in challenging outdoor pursuits activities. Physical education makes a major contribution to pupils' personal development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

118. By the ends of Years 2 and 6, standards are well above what is expected in relation to the locally agreed syllabus followed by the school.
119. All pupils learn about Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism. Year 2 pupils understand that there are special events and festivals in people's lives and in different religions. They are developing a good knowledge of Bible stories and the teachings of Jesus. For example, they recount very well the events leading to Christmas and Easter. Pupils also have good knowledge of some of the stories Jesus told such as 'The Good Samaritan' and the moral within them. One pupil writes '*Jesus told this story to teach us to be kind*'. Pupils realise that, just as the Bible is the important scripture for Christians, the Torah is special to Jews and the Qu'ran to those of the Islamic faith. Good reinforcement in lessons ensures that pupils understand different ways of worship and learn to be tolerant of views, beliefs and traditions that are different to their own. For example, higher attaining pupils in Year 2 write good sentences about how Jewish people celebrate Hanukkah, whilst middle attainers sequence sentences that depict the events and other pupils make Hanukkah cards. Pupils know why the menorah is lit for eight days, readily explaining, "*Because the people thought the oil would run out in one day when they escaped from the King, but it lasted for eight days*". Pupils' knowledge and understanding at this stage are very good.

120. Year 6 pupils have a suitable knowledge of many of the major beliefs, symbols and observances of Christians, Jews, Muslims and Hindus. Their understanding of Islam was enhanced by a visiting speaker who talked to them at the beginning and end of Ramadan, helping them to understand why people fast. Pupils learn to compare the similarities and differences between various religions and understand that prayer, forgiveness and care of others permeate all. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils debate and act out how people can be converted to a different faith. Pupils experience writing prayers to God and to Allah and realise that both Jesus and Muhammad are role models for their followers. Assemblies support pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs and underpin the school's commitment to their spiritual and moral development.
121. Teaching and learning are very good. Well-planned lessons and imaginative teaching make learning meaningful and relevant to pupils' everyday lives. For example, when talking about prayer, children readily volunteer that they pray *"for people who are sad"*, *"for courage"* and *"for my mummy to get better"*. Adults and children interact well and teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations. Religious education makes a very valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
122. The new co-ordinator is keen and enthusiastic. Record sheets at the end of each unit, in addition to yearly reports, provide information about pupils' learning. Resources are good and growing as the school develops. Visits to places of worship and a range of visitors enrich pupils' understanding and raise awareness of the beliefs and needs of others.