

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **PUSS BANK SCHOOL**

Macclesfield

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 132807

Headteacher: Carl Hutchings

Reporting inspector: Steve Bywater  
18463

Dates of inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> March 2003

Inspection number: 249009

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school: Infant and junior school

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Barracks Lane  
Buxton Road  
Macclesfield

Postcode: SK10 1QJ

Telephone number: 01625 424062

Fax number: 01625 502026

Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Councillor L Roberts

Date of previous inspection: No previous inspection

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Steve Bywater 18463	Registered inspector	Music Physical education English as an additional language Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How to improve further?
Colin Herbert 09652	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with its parents? How high are standards? (attitudes and behaviour)
Philip Martin 23262	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology	How well is the school led and managed?
Doreen Cliff 22955	Team inspector	English Design and technology	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
Lynn Marshall 31068	Team inspector	Mathematics Art	
Jo Mitchell 27477	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Religious education	
Christine Richardson 22058	Team inspector	Other features of the school Special educational needs History Geography	
Mark Madeley 22657	Team inspector		

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Puss Bank is a larger than average primary school situated close to the centre of Macclesfield. It developed when an infant and junior school on the same site amalgamated and reopened in 2001. There are 453 pupils (235 boys and 218 girls) on roll aged between 3 and 11 years but numbers are falling. Seventy-eight of these children attend part-time in the nursery. The school is unusual because it also includes a number of attached units. It has 72 places for pupils with special educational needs, three 12-place classes for children with moderate learning difficulties and a 24-place infant assessment unit. There are a further 12 places in the East Cheshire Autistic Unit. Many of these children are transported to and from school. Attainment on entry to the main school is best described as average but includes a full range from well below to well above average. The majority of pupils live in a catchment area with a wide socio-economic mix. Some families live in large detached houses; others did live in council flats that have been demolished and are currently being rebuilt. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals (14 per cent) is broadly in line with the national average. There are around 12 pupils from ethnic minority groups but only a very small number of these speak English as an additional language and are at an early stage of English acquisition. At the time of the inspection, there were 92 pupils on the main school's list of pupils with special educational needs. Seventy-seven pupils have statements of special educational need; this is very high when compared with most schools. Due to the nature of the units, there is a wide range of needs including learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural needs and sensory needs.

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

This is an effective school. Children make good progress as a result of good teaching. By the age of 11, pupils achieve standards that compare at least satisfactorily with schools having similar numbers of free school meals if those who are in the units are not included in national figures. The children are happy at Puss Bank, relationships throughout the school are good and most pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Their behaviour is good. The leadership and management of the school are good and the headteacher and governors ensure that there is clear educational direction. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Teaching is good and pupils make good progress overall.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social development and cultural development is good.
- Pupils have a good attitude to learning, relationships within school are good and pupils behave well.
- The quality of care is very good.
- The provision for special educational needs is good throughout the main school and the units.
- The headteacher is a strong leader and, with the support of staff, governors, parents and pupils, he has created a determined ethos of raising standards.

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

- Standards in information and communication technology need to be raised in the junior classes.
- In some classes, planning does not meet pupils' precise needs.
- Some subject co-ordinators need to further develop their roles.
- The nursery and reception teachers need to work more closely together.
- Communication between home and school is satisfactory but needs to be more user-friendly.

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

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

This is the first inspection for the amalgamated primary school.

## STANDARDS

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

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

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

In the 2002 national tests for 11-year-olds, pupils' performance in English was below the national average and the average for schools with similar numbers on free school meals. In mathematics standards were average and in science they were above average (with an impressive proportion of pupils achieving a higher level) when compared with all schools and in comparison with similar schools. **However, this is not the full story because these scores include the large numbers of pupils who have statements and are educated in the assessment classes. Had these pupils been excluded from results, the school would have been at least above average in terms of national and similar schools.** Inspection evidence indicates that when pupils join the nursery their attainment is broadly average. Children make especially good progress in the nursery and reception classes and, by the start of Year 1, the majority of children have attained the early learning goals in all areas of learning; a few achieve beyond this. Due to the large proportion of pupils with special educational needs, attainment overall is below national expectations in English, mathematics and science by the age of 7 but in line with national expectations if the pupils in the units are removed. At the age of 11, standards in English, mathematics and science are in line with national expectations. Pupils make good progress in the infants and satisfactory progress in the juniors. By the ages of 7 and 11, standards are above national expectations in art and design. Standards are in line with national expectations throughout the school in design and technology, geography, history and physical education. In religious education, pupils achieve the levels determined by the locally agreed guidelines. Standards in music are good by the age of 7 as a direct result of the very high quality teaching by the music specialist teacher. Standards are average in the juniors. In information and communication technology, standards are in line with national expectations by the age of 7, but below expectations by the age of 11 years. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	These are good. Pupils are keen to learn and concentrate hard. They listen carefully to teachers and other adults.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	This is good. Pupils are sensible in lessons and behave responsibly. They are polite and courteous to each other, adults and visitors.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are good. Personal development is good but there are few opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.
Attendance	Satisfactory and in line with the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching of children in the nursery and reception classes is good. In the nursery classes, teachers assess how well children cope with their tasks and plan challenging and interesting activities. However, in the reception class, pupils often have to sit for significant periods for more formal literacy and numeracy lessons. This limits their independent learning. It is particularly good in the special educational needs department where the teachers' knowledge of their children is a very positive feature. Throughout the school, teachers have very good relationships with pupils and most manage them well. There are a few occasions when the expectations of pupils' behaviour and work are too low and firmer control is necessary. Throughout the school, teachers work well together and prepare an interesting environment with a wide range of resources and make good use of educational visits and visitors. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is good. Teachers ensure that pupils know what they are expected to learn in the lessons. As a result, pupils are clearly focused and concentrate well. Class teachers and support staff are aware of pupils' individual education plans and targets for improvement, and use them well to plan work. This is especially important and seen to very good effect where pupils with special educational needs receive tightly targeted support and make good progress.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. In the nursery classes the well-planned curriculum covers the early learning goals. The reception classes are sometimes too formal. The school provides a broad range of work for infant and junior pupils. There are a number of exciting visits to places of interest and good extra-curricular provision to extend the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good in the main school and in the special educational needs units. Individual education programmes are detailed and updated regularly. There is good input from support assistants.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Teachers explain tasks carefully and ensure pupils understand what it is they have to do. The school makes good use of support staff to provide additional help for those pupils who need it.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for moral and social development is good and has a positive impact on pupils' relationships, behaviour and attitudes to learning. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to work and play together. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development are also good. Teachers provide opportunities to learn about different cultures and customs.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school cares deeply for the wellbeing of all pupils. Assessment procedures are satisfactory overall and effective analysis of assessments is used accurately to prepare targets for the school and for individuals.

In some classes, planning does not always match pupils' precise needs. The school knows pupils well and ensures that pupils are fully included in all activities. Parents have mixed views about the school, although they are satisfactory overall. Whilst most feel very positively about the school, a number of parents are concerned, with some justification, over communication. The Friends of Puss Bank provides much welcomed and effective support. However, parents' contribution to the school is limited in the junior classes and does little to support pupils' learning either at school or at home.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher is a very good leader who has a clear picture of what the school does well and where it needs to develop. He delegates wisely. The senior management team is effective. The work of co-ordinators varies between satisfactory and good.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. They are well informed and recognise the strengths of the school well. Governors are very supportive and take an active role in school development planning.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Monitoring and evaluation of performance is good. There is frequent checking of the progress towards meeting targets in the school development plan and observations of teaching. The school responds immediately and efficiently in dealing with all issues raised.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school's spending reflects the priorities and these are well supported by careful financial planning. The school makes good use of resources and support staff make a substantial contribution to pupils' learning.

The school has a satisfactory level of staffing. The accommodation is good and is used efficiently. Resources are good.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• The school enables their children to make good progress.</li> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> <li>• Their children behave well at school.</li> <li>• Staff have high expectations for their children.</li> <li>• The provision for their children's personal development is good.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homework provision.</li> <li>• The school informing parents of pupils' progress.</li> <li>• The school working more closely with parents.</li> <li>• The school's leadership and management.</li> </ul>

One hundred and seventy-one questionnaires were returned (38 per cent of those sent out) and 24 parents attended the pre-inspection meeting. A large majority of parents have a positive view of the school, but a significant number express some concerns. The team agrees with the positive points made by parents. The team also feels that communication between school and parents is sometimes not as clear as it should be and this leads to misunderstandings between the school and parents. However, the team feels leadership and management are strong and effective. Inspectors judge the information about children's progress and homework is satisfactory.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Standards overall in English, mathematics and science are below average at the age of 7 and in line with those expected at the age of 11 if the large proportion of pupils with special educational needs are included. There are 22 per cent of pupils with special educational needs in Year 2 and 14 per cent in Year 6. If the attainment of those pupils is not included standards are in line with national expectations at both 7 and 11 years. Pupils make satisfactory progress in both the infant and junior classes in English and mathematics and good progress in science. Higher attaining pupils could make better progress if work was more regularly and consistently matched to their needs. Pupils of all ability levels, including those with special educational needs, make similar progress to their classmates. Pupils in the special educational needs units make good and sometimes very good progress (please refer to the detail later in the relevant section on pages 24-26). Those pupils who come from backgrounds in which English is not the mother tongue make good progress. This is a newly amalgamated school so it is not possible to make comparisons with standards now with those noted at the time of the previous inspection
2. Strengths in standards achieved:
  - standards achieved in the national tests for 11-year-olds were above the national average and the average of similar schools in science, including the pupils with special educational needs;
  - if pupils with special educational needs are removed from calculations, standards achieved by 11-year-olds would also have been above average in mathematics;
  - children make good progress overall, especially in the nursery classes and classes in the units for pupils with special educational needs;
  - attainment in art and design, reading and handwriting.
3. Areas for development are:
  - to improve standards in information and communication technology in the junior classes;
  - to provide more challenge for higher attainers in a number of subjects;
  - to make better use of the library to develop pupils' information finding skills;
  - to develop problem solving skills in mathematics further.
4. Children join the main school with average attainment overall. There is the full range of attainment from well above to well below expectations for their age. The arrangements for children in the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> of their education are good and children make good progress overall because of good quality teaching and learning. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of activities along with visits and visitors and, consequently, children make good progress. Children are excited by their work and have positive attitudes and good relationships with adults and each other. If children maintain their current good rate of learning, most should enter Year 1 at nationally expected levels.
5. In the 2002 national tests for 7-year-olds, pupils' results were well below the average of all schools nationally and schools with similar numbers of free school meals in reading, and very low (lowest 5 per cent of schools) in writing and mathematics. Teacher assessments in science indicated that standards were well below average overall. However, these

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

figures include the very large proportion of pupils with special educational needs. A closer inspection of this evidence shows that standards would have been about the same as other schools nationally had these pupils been removed from calculations. Boys nationally do not perform as well as girls at this age and national evidence shows that as many as 90 per cent of pupils with special needs are boys. This is the case at Puss Bank. There is no evidence of trends in improvement because this is a new school.

6. In the 2002 national tests for 11-year-olds, pupils' results were above the national average and the average for schools with similar numbers entitled to free school meals in science, average in mathematics and below average in English. However, as in the national tests for 7-year-olds, these figures include a large proportion of pupils from the special educational needs units. If these pupils are excluded from the calculations, standards would have been well above average in science, above average in mathematics and about average in English. The school analyses its results very carefully and also sets very demanding targets for pupils. Pupils make satisfactory progress in the junior classes. There is no evidence of trends in improvement or attainment of different groups of pupils because this is a new school.
7. Standards in English are similar to those expected nationally by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 if pupils from the special educational needs units are excepted. Speaking and listening skills are typical of those expected nationally. The majority of pupils listen and make appropriate responses to questions and others' ideas and opinions. Many pupils enjoy contributing to lessons, but there are some who are more reticent and answer questions quite briefly. In those lessons where teachers actively encourage the participation of these pupils they become more confident speakers. Reading standards are good across the school and pupils make good progress. However, an area of weakness is the underdeveloped use of the library to develop library and research skills. Pupils develop their writing skills as they progress through the school and a majority achieve satisfactory standards. However, at the age of 7 there are fewer pupils achieving within the higher levels than expected nationally. By the age of 11, some pupils are less secure using the skills of writing for other purposes because there are limited opportunities to write in a variety of styles in other subjects. Handwriting is generally good and pupils have pride in the presentation and accuracy of their writing.
8. As with English, standards in mathematics are similar to those expected nationally by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 if pupils from the special educational needs units are excepted. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school. Pupils of all ability levels, including those with special educational needs, make progress at the same rate. By the end of Year 2, pupils have secure mental arithmetic skills and satisfactory skills in number. In shape, space and measures pupils sort both two and three-dimensional shapes according to their properties and measure carefully using non-standard and standard measures. By the end of Year 6, pupils are very proficient in arithmetical calculations. They work quickly and accurately both mentally and in written form. They have a good recall of number facts and manipulate number competently. For example, their work quickly and accurately involves negative numbers, area, mean, median, mode and range. Importantly, teachers ensure that pupils have a good grounding in basic mathematical skills.
9. Standards in science by the ages of 7 and 11 are similar to those expected nationally if the large proportion of pupils from the special educational needs units are not included. Pupils of all ability levels, including those with special educational needs in mainstream classes, make similar progress to their classmates. There are fewer higher attaining pupils this year when compared to last year; so not as many are expected to reach higher levels. Sometimes pupils are not drawing enough ideas from higher levels and this reduces their deeper understanding of science. Pupils develop their investigative skills well and are also

developing a good understanding of scientific enquiry. However, in some lessons their questioning skills could be better.

10. By the ages of 7 and 11, standards are above national expectations in art and design. Standards are in line with national expectations throughout the school in design and technology, geography, history and physical education. In religious education, pupils achieve the levels determined by the locally agreed guidelines. Standards in music are good by the age of 7 as a direct result of the very high quality teaching by the music specialist teacher. Standards are average in the juniors. In information and communication technology, standards are in line with national expectations by the age of 7, but below expectations by the age of 11 because pupils do not make sufficient use of computers to apply their skills.
11. Pupils in the mainstream classes who have special educational needs make good progress towards the targets on their individual education plans, and in the development of self-esteem and confidence. This is because of the suitability of their targets and the thoughtful teaching they receive. The school makes good use of assessment information to identify pupils' needs at an early stage in their learning and for target setting on individual education plans. The special educational needs units are dealt with separately in this report.

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

12. Pupils have positive attitudes to school and to their learning and they are well behaved in and around school. The relationships between pupils and each other and between pupils and adults are also good. There are often occasions when attitudes and behaviour are very good and this was particularly noticed in the infant classes where a higher proportion of lessons were graded good or very good for this aspect. A high proportion of those parents who responded to the questionnaire or who attended the meeting also had positive views on the behaviour of their children.
13. Strengths in this area include:
  - pupils are enthusiastic about school, they enjoy participating in lessons and their behaviour in lessons is good overall;
  - no oppressive behaviour, bullying, sexism and racism were observed during the inspection.
  - pupils get on well with each other and with adults in the school.
14. Areas for improvement are:
  - to provide a more consistent approach to behaviour management in the junior classes to improve the behaviour of a small number of pupils; and
  - to continue to work to reduce the rates of unauthorised absence.
15. In the nursery and reception classes, children arrive happily and readily participate in the activities. They quickly learn the routines of the class and develop in confidence. They demonstrate growing levels of independence. They are enthusiastic learners.
16. Throughout the school, from the moment that they arrive in the morning pupils are enthusiastic about their activities in school. In the playground or on coming into school pupils of all ages are happy to talk to visitors and have a smile on their faces. This enthusiasm extends into the classroom. For example, in a Years 3/4 history lesson pupils were excited and very interested in the archaeological dig that they were completing in the sand container. There were expressions of 'wow' as they uncovered artefacts with their brushes. Additionally, in an assembly, pupils were very interested to hear about the story of the Frog and the Toad.

17. Pupils with special educational needs have developed very good work habits. They settle down to work quickly, concentrate well and work sensibly on their own and in collaboration with others. In almost every lesson observed, pupils concentrated very well and were determined to do their best.
18. The pupils' behaviour is good overall and sometimes very good. This is because they have been involved in drawing up their own rules and expectations of behaviour. Overall, the attitudes and behaviour in classes throughout the school were good or better in 78 per cent of lessons. However, the attitudes and behaviour of pupils in the infants was consistently better than the juniors and were good or better in 93 per cent of lessons whereas the percentage was 65 per cent good or better in the juniors. Very occasionally a small number of junior pupils display inappropriate behaviour. Standards of behaviour in the playground, in the dining hall at lunchtime or in assembly are also good overall and frequently very good. Pupils were polite and well mannered towards visitors as they moved around school or when they had dinner with them in the hall. For example, on a table with Years 3/4 pupils a visitor was asked if he was enjoying his dinner. These aspects of school life are closely linked into the good provision of both moral and social development provided by the school. There was no indication of any racist behaviour whatsoever during the inspection. There have been no exclusions.
19. Relationships between all members of the school community are good and often very good. These are encouraged and promoted by the many opportunities for pupils to work in pairs and groups. Most pupils have a very good understanding of right and wrong and always show respect towards each other and all members of the school community. For example, in a Years 3/4 personal, social and health education lesson on 'the benefits of keeping fit', where a visitor was talking to all three classes, pupils listened carefully to the questions and answers. Throughout school, teachers value the contributions of their pupils and this has a very positive impact on their personal development by raising self-esteem and confidence to speak in front of others. There was no evidence of graffiti or vandalism in or around school and pupils take very good care of the accommodation. The high quality of these relationships has a very positive impact on pupils' learning, as they are all included in all school activities.
20. The opportunities for pupils to take responsibility in school are satisfactory. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility for setting up and working the overhead projector prior to assembly. It was noticed how carefully they check that the picture is focused correctly. Other pupils help to hand out resources for use in class, such as white boards, and take the registers to the school office. Additionally, pupils in three year groups are given the opportunity to enjoy a residential visit. Pupils are also aware of the needs of those less fortunate than themselves. They make generous donations each year to a variety of local charities and sing carols at Christmas in a local residential home for senior citizens. These opportunities have a satisfactory impact on the personal development of pupils.
21. The attendance of pupils in the mainstream school is satisfactory and in line with the national average. The rate of unauthorised absence is slightly above the national average due to a small number of parents who fail to respond to requests by the school to explain the absence. Punctuality to school is good.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

22. The overall quality of teaching is good and as a consequence the quality of learning is also good. Teaching is also consistently good in the nursery and reception classes. Teaching in the infants is judged as good and teaching in the juniors is satisfactory overall, although there are many examples of good teaching and occasionally very good teaching.
23. Strengths in teaching and learning are:
- teachers teach the basic skills of literacy and numeracy well;
  - teachers make good use of resources and staff to support pupils' learning in several subjects;
  - teachers generally manage pupils well;
  - teachers skilfully link subjects together;
  - pupils with special educational needs are taught well because of the use of very good individual education plans and work set at the correct level.
24. Areas for development are:
- to ensure that work for different abilities is more carefully matched to meet their needs;
  - placing more emphasis on marking with clear explanations of how pupils' work could be improved.
25. Sixty-seven per cent of all lessons seen were good or better with 21 per cent of lessons being very good. One lesson was outstanding. Teaching was consistently very good in the nursery and this has a significant impact on the learning and progress of children in the nursery class.
26. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall, but often very good in the nursery class. The difference is due to teaching in the reception classes, which is too formal and often requires children to sit for a long time. As a result of this, children have too few opportunities to be in control of their own learning. In both nursery and reception classes, teachers work in very effective partnerships with support staff, who are very well prepared for their lessons. Classrooms are well organised with stimulating resources and displays. Staff have very good relationships with the children and manage them well. They make timely interventions to speak with children and work hard to create and hold children's interest. They use a range of stimulating resources, which appeal to and enthuse children. The provision for the development of children's language and literacy skills, particularly their speaking and listening, is good. Teachers are skilled in their questioning of children to take their learning forward and provide good opportunities for children to develop their use of language in role-play.
27. The teaching of English and mathematics is never less than satisfactory and sometimes good or better. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and they carefully plan their lessons so that there is consistency and continuity across year groups. In the best lessons, teachers successfully share with pupils what they want them to learn and check their understanding at the end of the lesson. In mathematics, pupils are asked to explain clearly the strategies they are using to answer questions. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils in some classes to use their mathematical understanding through problem solving work. In other lessons, teachers plan learning objectives clearly but do not always share them clearly with pupils. Some pupils are, therefore, not sure what they should have learned by the end of the lesson. In most lessons, teachers use a good range of resources and strategies to make lessons interesting; though computers are not used enough. There is usually a good balance between teacher-led activities and pupils' work. Pupils enjoy these lessons. Occasionally, the class teaching sessions are too long and pupils find it difficult to sustain concentration and many become passive. Weaknesses in these and other lessons include work being

given which is not always appropriately matched to the ability of each child or group. There is also a lack of challenge for more able and gifted and talented pupils.

28. In many lessons, especially in some art and design, music and physical education lessons in the infants, teachers effectively demonstrate skills, organisation is good and pupils are given time to experiment with their own ideas. After practising their ideas and techniques pupils are given opportunities to discuss what worked well and why and to consider ways to improve. Teachers vary their teaching methods well to stimulate pupils.
29. Teachers generally manage behaviour well, which ensures that pupils behave sensibly and concentrate on their work. They use praise well to ensure that pupils are aware that their good behaviour has been recognised and this helps to raise pupils' self-esteem. In a small number of classes, small groups (mainly boys) do not always behave well. This disrupts others' learning when the teacher needs to intervene to control their behaviour.
30. The quality of marking varies across the school. Only a few teachers write with clear guidance on how pupils might improve their work, whilst others often restrict themselves to congratulatory ticks or comments.
31. Teachers plan carefully for pupils with special educational needs. Targets in individual education plans are clear and achievable and are taken into account in the planning of all lessons. This ensures that tasks are matched well to pupils' abilities and usually have some level of challenge. Some pupils have support on an individual basis as well as receiving additional care and attention in small groups or whilst working with the rest of the class.

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

32. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided by the school are good. The breadth and balance of the curriculum, overall, is satisfactory. The school has identified this as an area for further development by the planning of closer curriculum links between subjects.
33. Strengths:
  - the quality and range of learning opportunities;
  - provision for the large proportion of pupils with special educational needs;
  - the range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school;
  - the interesting range of visits and visitors;
  - the part that the school plays in the life of the town.
34. Areas for development:
  - plan for the learning needs of higher attaining pupils across the curriculum;
  - improve further planned links between subjects;
  - use the schemes of work for the foundation subjects and religious education to plan more effectively for progress in the acquisition of skills within them.
35. As a whole, the curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 meets legal requirements, and the Foundation Stage curriculum is in line with government guidance for children of this age. The school fully covers the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and parents are informed of their right to withdraw their children from religious education. Overall, the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The overall provision for personal development and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also good.

36. In nursery and reception classes, the curriculum provides experiences for the children that are based firmly in the nationally identified goals for learning. Although these classes share some of the same formats for planning, the reception classes' organisation is more closely linked to the main school rather than the nursery. The introduction in reception of the full literacy hour and mathematics lessons is too formal. It results in the children sometimes sitting for too long periods. There is insufficient liaison with the nursery, which would enable common practice to be established through this early stage of learning.
37. All subjects have long-term plans that take into account the organisation of the vertically grouped classes. These plans give a clear overview of the topics to be covered by each year group each term. There are good arrangements for planning to ensure that pupils in each year group have similar opportunities for learning. Appropriate schemes of work are in place, based upon national guidelines to support the planned topics. However, the acquisition of skills to be learnt is not always monitored in order to inform planning to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. The allocation of time for each subject is clear and takes into account the importance of the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills with a generous amount of time given to them. Overall, the curriculum is relevant to the circumstances of the school and the pupils and provides interest and stimulation for them. Effective use is made of resources to support the curriculum.
38. The school is implementing the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies effectively. It carefully monitors their impact upon pupils' attainment and uses the information to identify areas for development. However, the needs of higher attaining pupils are not consistently planned for across the school. There are some opportunities for pupils to use literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects such as science, history and geography. These are not always recognised and developed in a way that will reinforce the use and understanding of them. In addition, computers are not used sufficiently to support learning across the whole range of subjects. The school has identified these as areas for development.
39. Pupils make numerous visits to places of interest such as the Heritage Museum in the town, Bramhall Tudor day, and the World War 2 shelters in Stockport. Pupils also explore the town where they carry out surveys of the local shops or traffic movement. Effective community support is provided by local businesses and organisations such as the Macclesfield Leisure Centre who provided a speaker to talk to all pupils in Years 3/4 on the importance of taking exercise. The school links all these activities clearly into the curriculum and they have a positive impact on pupils' learning and development.
40. Overall, the school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities and after-school clubs are an integral part of school life. The school also offers pupils a range of sporting activities outside formal lessons as well as music, drama, art and library. The school takes part in a local music festival and pupils in Years 2, 4 and 6 go away for residential visits. These are planned to support the curriculum and pupils' social development appropriately. Parents overall are pleased with the range of activities provided outside the school day. Pupils are also enthusiastic about the range of activities available and are eager to join in.
41. The school is effective in ensuring that its curriculum is socially inclusive. It values all pupils and is committed to providing them with access to a wide-ranging, well-balanced curriculum. The school is particularly proud of its good provision for the pupils with special educational needs. Teachers prepare and review individual education plans regularly and parents and pupils are involved in discussions of the targets wherever possible.
42. Pupils' ages are considered in curriculum planning, whereas planning to take account of the learning needs of higher attaining pupils is not consistently addressed.
43. Overall, arrangements for pupils' personal, social and health education are good. A long-term plan for providing personal, social and health education has recently been introduced.



This also includes elements of citizenship and guidance in this area is satisfactory. The governors fulfil their statutory obligation with regards to the curriculum, including sex education and drug education. These aspects of the curriculum are taught with the involvement of parents and the school complies with requirements to inform parents of their right to withdraw their children from sex education lessons.

44. The school has developed a satisfactory link with the local secondary school and this allows a smooth and effective transition into Year 7.
45. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Many of the lessons in religious education give pupils time to reflect and consider feelings and beliefs that are important to the people that follow them. For example, in Years 5 and 6 pupils responded to an account of the Easter Story by associating shapes and colours that came into their minds as they listened, many with eyes closed. Assemblies start with music and time is given to prayers and quiet reflection. Value is given to art work through the high quality of display, so that human effort is appreciated and recognised. The school is successful in creating an ethos where everyone is valued and cared for.
46. The provision for moral development is good. An effective behaviour policy promotes good behaviour and an effective reward system encourages good behaviour. Each class negotiates its own set of rules so pupils develop self-discipline. Staff provide good role models and have high expectations of good behaviour in lessons.
47. The provision for social development is good. Younger pupils have the opportunity to take responsibility within the classroom. Older pupils take on responsibilities for organising the music and overhead projector for assemblies. Many lessons provide scope for pupils to work in pairs or groups and this promotes the good relationships and attitudes to learning. All pupils have the opportunity for outside visits and visitors to school contribute to pupils' social development. Pupils in Years 2, 4, and 6 are given the opportunity to go on a residential visit. The youngest children go for one night while the older ones stay away for two nights and this is good preparation for the week-long residential visit they go on as soon as they start secondary school.
48. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. The contribution from the art curriculum is good with examples of western and non-western artists studied, as well as the high standards that pupils achieve themselves. Visits from theatre groups and musicians combine with the entering of music festivals to promote pupils' cultural development. Through religious education lessons pupils learn about other faiths and customs associated with those faiths. Through stories such as *Handa's Surprise* pupils learn a little about the culture and way of life in other countries. This is an area, however, where there is room for further development.

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

49. The school takes very good care of the emotional and physical needs of its pupils. There are also satisfactory procedures in place for the promotion and monitoring of attendance and good procedures to promote and monitor behaviour. At their meeting all parents expressed the view that their children were well cared for by the school.
50. Strengths in this aspect are:
- Puss Bank is a caring school with good and effective procedures for child protection and all the aspects of health and safety;
  - good procedures are in place to promote good behaviour and to ensure the absence of oppressive behaviour, sexism or racism in school.
51. The school maintains appropriate records for first aid, fire drills, accident recording and the emergency contact of family and friends in case of an emergency. The procedures for child protection are effective and the designated teacher ensures that all members of staff have an appropriate understanding of it. The school looks after pupils well at dinnertime and in the playground and the midday supervisors are an effective and important part of the school family. Additionally, the office staff provide appropriate levels of tender loving care to pupils who are feeling unwell or waiting for parents to collect them from school.
52. The governing body takes its responsibility for health and safety seriously. It ensures that risk assessments are carried out for visits and is currently completing an action plan following a comprehensive inspection of the premises by the local education authority.
53. The school promotes and monitors attendance satisfactorily. The impact of this is that the school has worked hard with its parents since the amalgamation to attain levels that are in line with the national average. Additionally, the school promotes and monitors behaviour well through the good provision of moral development and the way that it is implemented. The procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are also good.
54. Assessments of pupils with special educational needs are carried out thoughtfully and staff are aware of pupils' targets, programmes or additional medical needs. A few pupils have well-structured behaviour management programmes that are reviewed frequently. Relationships between staff and pupils are good so learning takes place in a purposeful, inclusive atmosphere. The school complies effectively with the new Code of Practice and liaises well with outside agencies.
55. The strengths in assessment, and educational and personal guidance are:
- assessment procedures in place in all areas;
  - procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good;
  - the monitoring, support and guidance given to pupils with special educational needs and those in the nursery are good.
56. The weaknesses in assessment, educational and personal guidance are:
- targets are not set for all pupils in mathematics or science;
  - inconsistencies in the use of the assessment procedures;
  - gifted and talented pupils are not identified.
57. The senior management team, in conjunction with all teachers, has worked very hard over the last year to introduce assessment procedures into the school. Most procedures are fully in place. The school now needs to monitor them carefully to ensure it uses them consistently and effectively to track pupils' progress.
58. In English and mathematics, tracking records are kept of pupils' attainment using the statutory and optional national tests for all year groups from Year 2 to 6. In science,

teachers use the national tests in Years 2 and 6 and teacher assessment in the other year groups to record attainment. The senior management team analyses the results of these tests and uses this information to record how many pupils will meet, exceed or not meet the expected government targets in English and mathematics. Pupils whose progress needs to be monitored to encourage improvement are identified. However, gifted and talented pupils are not identified, consequently opportunities to extend and challenge their learning are lost.

59. Targets are set and shared with all pupils for reading and writing. They are clearly displayed in each classroom and some are pasted into the back of workbooks. As a result pupils are clear about what they have to do to improve. There are no targets set with pupils for mathematics and science. Therefore, a whole-school approach to the explicit setting and sharing of targets with individual pupils and their parents/carers is now needed to raise standards further.
60. Procedures are in place to record pupils' academic progress in all other subjects including religious education. In these subjects, standards and progress are recorded as pupils complete a unit of work. However, there is confusion as to how the records should be completed. In addition, comments added are not always relevant to the particular subject. For example 'shows understanding' and 'needs to develop understanding' could refer to any subject. Therefore, in order for these records to be used to give teachers information about how pupils are doing and what they need to do next, the senior management team should ensure they are filled in correctly.
61. Teacher evaluations of pupils' learning could be used more effectively on a daily basis to inform written planning. Teachers regularly praise and encourage good social and learning behaviour and set up class rewards. Some classes collect 'cubes in a jar' whilst others collect points or squares. The rewards are negotiated between the class and the teacher and may be extra playtime or watching a favourite video. In addition, pupils are awarded stamps for good work. When pupils collect 10 stamps they receive a certificate from the class teacher. Once a week, in assembly, two pupils from each class are rewarded with certificates for specific good behaviour or work. Pupils' personal, social and emotional behaviour is satisfactorily monitored and developed informally through the good relationships most teachers have with their pupils. Very good procedures are established in the nursery for the continual assessment of children's progress. Adults keep detailed notes through close observation and these are used both to set targets for individual children and record their progress. This system is not continued through into reception at the present time, although the school has plans that a recently developed assessment record will carry through the whole of the Foundation Stage.

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

62. The school promotes itself satisfactorily to its parents. Almost everyone who responded to the questionnaire or who attended the meeting had positive views about many aspects of school life. The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory, but this was one area where many parents felt that there could be an improvement.
63. Parents particularly like:
  - that their children like school;
  - the high expectations that the school has of their children;
  - the good quality of the teaching; and
  - the progress that their children make in school.
64. An area for development is:

- that the school should review its communication and consultation strategy to ensure that all parents are satisfied with the quality and quantity of the information that they receive.
65. The contribution of parents to school life is satisfactory overall. Although some parents help out regularly in the infants, only a small number do so in the juniors. However, they do provide effective support for visits and also generously give their time to transport their children to sporting events. The school values this help.
  66. The school successfully builds up positive relationships with parents in the nursery classes. An effective induction policy, with meetings and visits for parents and children, ensures a smooth transition from home to school. Parents are welcomed into school to help and are very well supported. The transition from nursery into reception is smooth due to an effective programme of visits of the reception staff to the nursery and visits of the nursery children into the reception classes.
  67. The school benefits from a very active friends' association. Parents are very supportive of the variety of activities that are planned, ranging from a ball at a local hotel to discos for their children. The association has generously donated money to the school for additional resources, in particular an attractive landscaped area by the main entrance.
  68. The information provided by the school is satisfactory overall, but some parents consider that there is room for improvement in the communication and consultation process between them and the school. The inspectors agree with these parents. The school has undergone major changes since the amalgamation but it has not always carried all the parents with it. There is now a need for a reassessment of communication and consultation with parents across the whole school to bring about an improvement.
  69. Parents of pupils with special educational needs have regular opportunities to discuss targets and reviews with the school. They, and their child, contribute to the discussion about the progress they have made and what they need to do to improve further. This is valued.
  70. The school values all the support given by its parents and it has a satisfactory impact on pupils' learning.

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

71. Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and very clear direction for the school. He is supported well by the senior management team and the governing body fulfils its responsibilities well.
72. Strengths in leadership and management are:
  - the very good leadership of the headteacher;
  - the delegation to staff with management responsibilities is good;
  - procedures for monitoring and evaluating teaching are good;
  - the school's development plan is a useful tool for further improvement;
  - there is a good level of shared commitment to improvement and capacity to succeed;
  - the induction of newly appointed staff is good;
  - educational priorities are supported well through financial planning;
  - the school uses new technology well and the school office is very well organised;
  - specific grants received by the school are used effectively; and
  - the school provides good value for money.
73. Areas for development include:

- improving the effectiveness of the subject and aspect co-ordinators in raising standards;
  - improving communication with parents.
74. The headteacher has been successful in creating one school with a common sense of purpose following the amalgamation of an infant and a junior school in 2001. Since his arrival, the headteacher has demonstrated very good leadership and established a good senior management team that is playing an increasingly important part in leadership and management. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school's development, particularly in raising standards. With the senior management team, he has identified those areas for improvement and devised a plan for bringing this about. Subject co-ordinators have also contributed useful ideas to this plan. However, this way of working is new to some co-ordinators and their plans sometimes lack detail of how their plans are intended to raise standards. In some cases, the co-ordinators have not included enough detail about how much carrying out these plans will cost, or how much time will be needed. This reduces the plan's usefulness for planning development and judging its effectiveness. The plan itself covers next year's development in detail, but only a very brief longer view than this.
75. As part of the development of the leadership and management of the school, the headteacher has established an effective senior management team. Those members of the team who are responsible for leading smaller teams of teachers from the different departments are important in helping to make sure that the school meets its aims. As part of their role, they are involved well in reviewing and evaluating teachers' performance, including teaching, and analysing what needs to be done to improve this further. The procedures for this evaluation and monitoring are good, and the school's intention to develop teachers' skills in this area is an important part of its plans for improvement.
76. There is a special educational needs governor who is involved well in the work and life of the school. The co-ordinator is new to the school this year, but has a good understanding of the needs of pupils and areas for further development within the mainstream provision.
77. The governing body is well informed and has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development of the school. Governors share the headteacher's vision for improvement and are fully involved in reviewing and refining the school's plan for future action. They play a sound part in deciding the direction of the school. The headteacher and governors have needed to take some important decisions, in particular the establishment of mixed-age classes. The school notified parents of this decision in advance, and although a meeting to discuss this was held, some parents had reservations. As a result, some parents do not feel fully confident that the school is well led or managed. These views are not supported by findings of the inspection. Taking into account the effectiveness of the education provided, Puss Bank School provides good value for money.
78. The school uses its specific grants well. For example, the monies received through initiatives such as the National Grid for Learning and Capital fund have both been used appropriately. The school makes good use of new technology in the office, which is very well organised. The office staff make a very valuable contribution to the day-to-day life of the school.
79. Good procedures exist to match the allocation of finance to various planned projects. However, the school has faced a number of difficulties with regard to its funding since amalgamation. There has been no previous budget on which to base or estimate income or expenditure. A number of agencies, including the local education authority, local council and other service organisations appear to be unaware of many of the complexities of amalgamation. For example, some databases have not been changed and the large

campus has not been surveyed or re-rated. Additionally, there have been complications with the funding of the units. All these uncertainties have resulted in a very high carry forward figure, which is well above Audit Commission recommendations. However, this sum is earmarked to maintain current staffing levels, which are judged as satisfactory. Until a more settled financial situation is achieved and a realistic budget has been embedded down, the application of the principles of best value can only be judged as satisfactory.

80. There is a sufficient number of qualified teaching and support staff overall. The provision and match of staff are particularly good for the teaching of music. Arrangements for the induction of new staff are good. Teachers who are at an early stage of their career at the moment consider that they have been well supported through mentoring and lesson observation by their colleagues in both infants and juniors.
81. The adequacy of accommodation is good overall, particularly when consideration is given to all the outside areas where stimulating play areas have been developed. The maintenance officer and his staff are effective members of the school community and they ensure that the school is well looked after. Learning resources are also good overall. For example, in the libraries for both infants and juniors there is an adequate range of both fiction and non-fiction books and the school's library service is well used by the junior classes to supplement reading and the rest of the curriculum.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

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

- improve the standards in information and communication technology by:
  - ensuring that teachers allocate sufficient time to information and communication technology;
  - providing sufficient equipment to demonstrate and teach the ICT skills;
  - ensuring that a programme of work in each subject gives enough emphasis to ICT;
- ensure that planning is improved by:
  - making sure that the planning format pays more regard to assessment in meeting the different needs of pupils in each infant and junior class and pupils of different abilities, including those with special educational needs and higher attainers; (paragraphs 3, 9, 27, 34, 38, 56, 116, 121, 124, 128, 132, 140, 142, 168, 192, 201)
- providing co-ordinators with guidance, time, resources and opportunity to develop their subject by:
  - i) monitoring teaching and learning in their subjects in order to find what is working well and what is not;
  - ii) reporting back to senior management and governors and taking the necessary action to raise standards and quality; (paragraphs 73, 74, 85, 98, 125, 168, 178, 201)
- improving the communication between school and home, particularly making the letters more user-friendly. (paragraphs 62, 64, 68, 77)

### Minor issues

- improve the quality of marking so that pupils can see clearly what they have done well and what they need to do to improve their work; (paragraphs 30, 116, 123, 176)
- develop further the link between nursery and reception planning so that the children in the reception class can learn more independently. (paragraphs 26, 36, 101, 102, 105)

## OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

### SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS UNITS

83. The provision for children and pupils with special educational needs in the three units is good. Suitable levels of attainment are achieved.
84. Strengths:
- teaching and use of specialist resources and programmes;
  - good levels of inclusion within the school;
  - planning of lessons to match closely the areas of learning in the Foundation Stage and the National Curriculum;
  - good use of assessment, which is clearly used to amend the curriculum and programmes indicated on individual education plans.
85. Area for development:
- increased non-contact time for the assistant headteacher to carry out her role as manager of the provision, including liaising with parents and external agencies.
86. There have been several changes of staff in the unit, which has expanded since amalgamation. Some staff have yet to complete aspects of their training. However, many of the current staff have considerable experience and expertise in special educational needs and they share their skills and knowledge effectively. Speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and physiotherapists give teachers invaluable support and advice. Parents are included well at reviews and welcome opportunities to discuss pupils' targets. Home-school diaries provide a good dialogue between school and parents for the younger children and pupils. The provision complies well with the new Code of Practice.

### Infant Assessment Unit

(23 children in three classes of children from Nursery to Year 2)

87. The majority of children and pupils enter the Infant Assessment Unit after a period of assessment at the Child Development Centre. Most have complex learning difficulties and an increasing number have speech and communication difficulties. All have a statement of special educational need and require a period of further assessment. A few pupils transfer to their local infant school after a period of well-planned and structured integration. Parents are involved fully in discussions about the integration. The majority of pupils transfer to the Year 1 class for pupils with moderate learning difficulties when they leave the oldest group in the assessment unit.
88. Pupils make good, and in some cases very good, progress towards their targets because teaching is consistently good. Pupils achieve well because of the sensitive, challenging teaching and the clear, manageable targets on individual education plans. Teachers and teaching assistants work enthusiastically together and provide a wide range of interesting learning activities for children to explore and take part in with other children. These include swimming at the hydrotherapy pool at a local special school and horse riding for the disabled.
89. The very good procedures for assessment help teachers build up a clear profile of children's progress. Daily assessments of targets in all classes are carried out in a warm supportive atmosphere and shared by all who work with the children. All tasks and games in the activity area provide opportunities for staff to talk with children and develop their listening and speaking skills. Years 1 and 2 pupils listen carefully in literacy and numeracy sessions. Through a series of interesting practical activities they consolidate their skills in counting and number recognition to 20. In literacy they retell *Three Little Pigs* with relish,



delighting in the rhythm of the rhymes. Their writing improves and many write sentences with support.

90. Routines are well established and children respond well to them. When children hear the bleeper, they know the activity is finished and move their symbol on the chart. They anticipate the greeting and weather songs. Such routines give structure to the day and provide a secure atmosphere for learning. Picture timetables, which sequence the activities, add very effectively to the structure. Very good use of questions and answers help pupils extend their understanding and thinking skills.
91. Pupils are involved in music lessons and assemblies with the infants. They show their work proudly in sharing assemblies and play happily on the apparatus or in the playground with others. The school promotes inclusion for the Infant Assessment Unit well.

### **Unit for children and pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD)**

(12 primary aged children organised into two classes)

92. Pupils in the ASD provision come from other schools, the Child Development Centre or transfer from the Infant Assessment Unit. They have a wide range of difficulties and all have a statement of special educational need. A few pupils in the junior class transfer to their local primary school after a period of structured integration, which is agreed by parents and carefully checked by the educational psychologist. There is a specific aim of including pupils in as many lessons as possible with either the classes for pupils with moderate learning difficulties or mainstream classes. Some pupils go regularly for music and physical education lessons with pupils in the mainstream classes. Most pupils have some level of integration included on their individual education plan, but a few pupils need more time to be ready to integrate beneficially. In some cases pupils are included initially for playtimes and assemblies only. The school uses a 'buddy system' well to ensure social integration is successful. Pupils eat with others in the dining room. They go for a variety of lessons with support and junior pupils integrate well when they go swimming with mainstream classes.
93. Pupils make good progress in their social development and towards the academic targets on their individual education plans because of the skilled use of programmes specifically recommended for use with pupils on the autistic spectrum. Staff make very good use of picture timetables to provide a structure to the day and direct pupils to activities as independently as possible. They teach pupils to use symbols to build up requests for food and toys and give constant reinforcement by the award of tokens when pupils succeed in an activity. The systematic and purposeful use of these programmes enables pupils to achieve well. For example, pupils make choices of foods to eat at snack times by presenting symbols to the teacher. Younger pupils present the picture, older pupils have to add a second symbol and a verbal request to the teacher to ask politely for what they want. They show good understanding of the system and learn to choose an activity, such as time in the well-resourced light room or working on the computer, as a reward.
94. Staff make good use of assessment information for target setting on individual education plans and for preparing pupils to work with other classes in the school. Targets on individual education plans are achievable and are reviewed regularly and effectively. Teaching and learning are good, and frequently very good, because of the meticulous adaptation of the National Curriculum and use of good quality resources. Teachers from mainstream and other unit classes plan activities and lessons together so that there is a very good match between activities in the ASD class and the class with which pupils are integrated. Pupils in the ASD also go to horse riding for the disabled sessions.

### **Moderate learning difficulties unit (MLD)**

(39 pupils in three classes, Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4, Years 5 and 6)

95. The school has a commitment to inclusion and the MLD classes were moved into the same buildings as infant and junior mainstream classes in September 2002. This increases the opportunities for integration and inclusion in activities in the school successfully.
96. Pupils in the MLD units come from the assessment unit and other primary schools in the local education authority. Pupils have a wide range of learning difficulties and all have a statement of special educational needs. A few pupils transfer to their local school after a period of phased integration agreed with parents. Pupils from mainstream and other unit classes integrate into MLD classes for some lessons each week. For example, pupils from the older ASD unit join the Years 3 and 4 MLD class for music, physical education and some literacy lessons each week. Pupils from Years 1 and 2 MLD group go into literacy, numeracy, music and assemblies with infant mainstream classes. In a sharing assembly they celebrate their good work in literacy with the rest of the infants and show them that they are studying the same books and doing similar work. Boys and girls from Years 5 and 6 mainstream classes read with pupils from the Years 5 and 6 MLD class or listen to them read each week. They show them how to tackle new words and encourage them to read more widely.
97. Pupils make good progress towards their targets because teaching is consistently good. Pupils achieve well because of the carefully planned, interesting lessons and the correct level of challenge in the targets in individual education plans. Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together to enable pupils to build systematically on their learning. Assessment of pupils' progress is carried out very effectively and lessons are amended daily to ensure that pupils reinforce their learning and improve their skills. The skilful use of questions enables staff to develop pupils' understanding and language. In a geography lesson in Years 3 and 4, the teacher's thoughtful interventions kept pupils focused on their task and helped them to draw purposeful maps of Llandudno, which they discussed with the class later.
98. Routines are well established in all three classes and staff make good use of picture timetables and symbols for activities. This provides good continuity for pupils who still require additional support to become involved in their tasks. The assistant headteacher, who works in the MLD department, has only one afternoon each week for administrative and supervisory tasks. The school is aware that this is insufficient time for the management of a large department of three discrete units.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	95
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	40

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	1	19	44	29	2	0	0
Percentage	1	20	46	31	2	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching.

### 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)	39	375
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	52

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4	73
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4	92

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	26
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	33

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.5
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	37	24	61

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	25	22	21
	Girls	18	19	20
	Total	43	41	41
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	70 (79)	67 (86)	67 (79)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	23	19	21
	Girls	19	20	19
	Total	42	39	40
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	69 (77)	64 (79)	66 (82)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	20	32	52

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	12	13	15
	Girls	27	27	30
	Total	39	40	45
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	75 (58)	77 (42)	87 (72)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	12	13	15
	Girls	27	27	30
	Total	39	40	45
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	75 (63)	77 (57)	87 (67)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	363	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	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	2	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)	20.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18
Average class size	20

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

Total number of education support staff	19
Total aggregate hours worked per week	486

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	39
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65
Number of pupils per FTE adult	10

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	15
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	13
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	1,122,320
Total expenditure	1,123,183
Expenditure per pupil	2,496
Balance brought forward from previous year	86,158
Balance carried forward to next year	85,925

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 37.7%

Number of questionnaires sent out	453
Number of questionnaires returned	171

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	36	4	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	49	43	5	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	35	49	8	4	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	36	18	4	6
The teaching is good.	54	40	4	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	36	16	2	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	35	6	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	51	44	2	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	40	37	14	6	3
The school is well led and managed.	33	37	13	10	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	43	8	2	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	37	11	2	15

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**

99. The provision made for children in the Foundation Stage is good both in the nursery and the reception class. The school operates an admissions policy for children to start in the nursery the term after their third birthday. Some children will, therefore, have a year in the nursery while others have longer as they transfer into the reception class in September of the year in which they are five. Attainment on entry to the mainstream nursery is broadly average.
100. Strengths in the Foundation Stage include:
- effective teaching, through both the nursery and reception classes, which leads to good learning;
  - very effective teamwork and planning in the nursery that addresses all areas of learning;
  - very good relationships between adults and children, and between children themselves.
101. Area for further development:
- a closer working relationship between the nursery and reception classes to form a Foundation Unit with a united approach to all areas of learning.
102. Children receive a positive start and make good progress through both the nursery and reception classes, continually building on what they have learnt. They achieve well because the teaching across all areas of learning is consistently good, and sometimes very good. The two teachers and the nursery nurses work very closely together as a team to ensure continuous progress through the nursery. The balance between activities led by adults and those which children choose themselves is good in the nursery, and this ensures that the needs of all children, including those with special educational needs are met. This progress continues through the reception classes, although children have too few opportunities to be in control of their own learning. At the end of the reception year most children are on course to attain the early learning goals in all areas of learning.

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

103. The quality of teaching, learning and progress made by the children is good. Children settle quickly into the nursery enjoying the interesting activities that are provided for them. Children develop an enthusiasm to learn. They are becoming independent and after a relatively short time in the nursery they choose activities. Independence grows through the nursery, where children manage their own coats, into reception where children change for physical education, even folding their own clothes after they have changed. Routines are quickly established and children know the number of children allowed to play in particular areas, such as construction or role-play. They willingly help to tidy away in the nursery and by the time they are in reception efficiently put things away by themselves. From learning to take turns from an early age, older children work collaboratively together constructing a beach in the wet sand or playing a rhyming matching game. The inspector watching them was immediately asked and indeed expected to join in. Rules were clearly explained and suspected cheating quickly noticed! Adults provide good role models in their caring relationships with children and with each other. They make good use of praise to encourage children to try hard, to raise their self-esteem and promote their confidence in learning. Children's personal and social development takes place in a calm, ordered atmosphere of mutual respect. Children develop positive attitudes and good working routines from the time they start nursery.

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

104. The quality of teaching in this area of the curriculum is good. As a result, the children learn well and they make good progress. Throughout the nursery and reception classes children are introduced to the joy of stories. Staff take every opportunity to engage



children in conversation giving them time, encouragement and support to express their knowledge and thoughts. This means that they learn a great deal about language and literacy and have good opportunities to extend their vocabulary and develop speaking and listening skills. Children practise and further develop these skills well in role-play areas. In the nursery, children playing in the baby clinic area organised their own resources, one child putting up the high chair and putting their 'baby' into it, saying 'I am going to feed my baby'. Meanwhile another child purposefully picked up another baby saying 'I am going to the pub!'

105. The introduction of the literacy session in the reception classes is effective in developing children's literacy skills. Children are actively involved in whole-class and group sessions, but children are sometimes required to sit for too long. This occurs when the whole literacy hour uses the format that is intended for older pupils. It is more appropriate for the elements to be woven through the day rather than concentrated in a formal session. Stories are used effectively in the reception class to develop children's writing skills. During a shared writing session children contributed ideas to put on 'Wanted Poster for Jack' from the beanstalk story. Children quickly identified things that Jack had stolen and contributed phrases 'Jack has stolen the giant's money'. Short handwriting sessions in groups emphasise correct sitting position, pencil grip and lay foundations for the good presentation of work seen through the rest of the school.
106. Most children know the sounds of single letters and a number of consonant blends while higher attaining pupils also know vowel blends and use this knowledge to help them read and spell new words. Higher attaining pupils are confident young readers while lower attaining pupils use pictures and require more support to predict unknown words. Writing materials are readily available in the nursery and reception. For example, there are note pads by the side of telephones, appointment forms in the baby clinic and paper in the office.

### **Mathematical development**

107. The quality of teaching, attainment and learning in this area is good. Children achieve well through the nursery and reception classes through a wide range of well planned activities and the quality of the interaction between children and adults. In the nursery children are introduced to counting and numbers through a range of well chosen informal activities and this is continued into the reception class together with planned numeracy sessions. Good teaching stimulates children's interest and this results in good achievement through the Foundation Stage so that children reach the expected levels of attainment by the time they enter Year 1.
108. As with the literacy hour, when this is delivered formally, children can remain sitting and inactive for too long. The more able children in the reception classes count accurately to 20 and back, and work with written numbers to 20. As a class they count to 50 and beyond. A group of higher ability children confidently organised their own game of bingo with one child acting as caller. All children compare and order lengths of ribbon and most apply the correct language of longest and shortest. Although they made towers of unifix cubes to match lengths, few could predict that more cubes would be needed to match the longer piece of ribbon. When playing in the giant's castle everything is on a large scale with a line of washing that includes a large man's pair of jeans and a tee shirt while the sand contains a range of flowerpots of different sizes for different sized sand castles.
109. The use of praise and encouragement and effective use of questioning are significant factors in the development of the children's mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding.

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

- 110 The quality of teaching, learning and progress is good. Throughout children's time in the nursery and reception classes they have range of experiences that help them to learn about the world and they achieve well. A visit from a mother who brought her baby to the nursery for a bath gave the children first hand experience as they helped to wash the baby with a sponge. Having taken great care with the real baby they continued to practise this skill in the water tray. This time, however, most 'babies' were held upside down by the foot as they were soaped all over! Plastic dinosaurs in the sand, together with green fern-like plants created a landscape where children learnt basic facts about what dinosaurs ate. Very good intervention and questioning by the teacher supported the children to use the chart and books near the sand tray to identify the animals. In the nursery children learn to click on the mouse to control programs. In reception they learn new skills in the computer suite through appropriate direct teaching, enabling them to draw plants, 'flipping' leaves and rotating petals to create flowers.

### **Physical development**

111. The quality of teaching, learning and children's progress is good. Most children are on track to achieve the early learning goals in this aspect. Staff successfully teach the skills to help children gain safe control of finer movements, such as using glue spatulas, paintbrushes and cutting with scissors. In the nursery children confidently use hammers to knock nails into wood and then successfully wind wool to create patterns. The partly covered outdoor area is used effectively in all weathers so that children learn to use space well, keeping on the 'train track' and obeying the guard as the whistle is blown. At the time of the inspection the reception children did not have access to an outdoor play area but good use is made of the hall for physical development lessons. They know they need to warm-up their bodies and follow the teacher's instructions well. Children showed good balance and body control as they learnt a new combination of movements to play hopscotch

### **Creative development**

112. In this area of learning, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are provided with good opportunities to develop creatively throughout both the nursery and reception classes. By the end of reception the attainment of most children is in line with the expectations of the early learning goals. Children are well supported in these activities from the time they first start in the nursery when they experiment with applying paint to paper through to the reception class where they design their own shield and then transfer and enlarge their design on to larger paper. Leaves, feathers, moss and cones collected on a walk are turned into attractive collages while papers of different textures in winter colours of white, blue and silver create 'winter pictures'.
113. Teaching in group music sessions in the nursery is very good. Children know the names of a wide range of percussion instruments, which they play loud or quiet, fast or slow in response to a familiar song. Concentration is very good and they listen carefully to one another. Instruments are returned to their marked places on the display table so they are readily available to the children at any time. Children enjoy singing and songs are used effectively at different times of the day either as a whole class in reception or in smaller groups in the nursery. The children particularly enjoy role-play. They use props and other resources with good imaginative skills.

## ENGLISH

114. Standards overall in English, including the large proportion of pupils with special educational needs, are below average at the age of 7 and in line with those expected at the age of 11 years. If the attainment of those pupils is not included, standards are in line with national expectations at both 7 and 11 years.
115. Strengths:
- attainment in reading and handwriting;
  - planning across year groups ensures consistent coverage of the curriculum;
  - the identification of learning objectives to improve standards.
116. Areas for development:
- use marking consistently across the school to inform pupils about their learning;
  - use assessment information to match work to the needs of the higher attaining pupils;
  - continue to extend the use of literacy skills in other subject areas and the use of extended writing for a variety of purposes;
  - develop the use of the libraries and library skills.
117. Speaking and listening skills are typical of those expected nationally. The majority of pupils listen and make appropriate responses to questions and others' ideas and opinions. Teachers extend pupils' confidence and vocabulary by the effective use of questions. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 are asked to describe tropical fruit from a shared story. The teachers have provided real examples and the pupils see, touch and feel the fruit and know that the words they are using are adjectives. By the age of 11 pupils are developing a good vocabulary range that they apply to a variety of situations, such as writing effective story openings. They also use subject specific language appropriately in discussions. However, while many pupils enjoy contributing to lessons there are some that are more reticent and answer questions quite briefly. In those lessons where teachers actively encourage the participation of these pupils they become more confident speakers.
118. Standards and the rate of progress in reading are good across the school. Displays and the organisation of resources in classrooms and libraries give reading a high profile. Pupils enjoy borrowing books from the libraries and spending time browsing. However, their use is underdeveloped. There is limited space for a whole class and this limits the opportunities to develop library skills. The school tries to minimise this by having as many books as possible in the classrooms, but library classification and retrieval skills are not well developed. The school has identified this as an area for improvement. The majority of pupils enjoy reading, and talk about books and favourite authors with enthusiasm. They discuss texts and can use information from them to answer questions and draw conclusions about characters and events. The pupils read with confidence and fluency, often using expression to convey meaning. They often self-correct errors using a variety of word-building or contextual clues. Pupils at the age of 7 understand the use of an index and have secure dictionary and alphabetical skills. They begin to use books to find information about rain forests in the infant classes. This skill is well developed by the time the pupils are 11 and they use it to research waterfalls from books and the Internet. Guided and group reading sessions have a clear focus and are used successfully.
119. As pupils progress through the school they are developing their writing skills and a majority achieve satisfactory standards. However, at the age of 7 there are fewer pupils achieving within the higher levels than expected nationally. The school has appropriately identified this as a continuing area of development. Pupils are confident storywriters and understand the need for a structure to develop the story line. They are less secure using the skills of writing for other purposes. Although the pupils write letters following visits, and those in Years 5 and 6 make arguments for healthy eating, there are limited

opportunities to write in a variety of styles or for different purposes in other subjects. Where curriculum links are effectively planned pupils see a purpose for their writing and are enthusiastic about it. For example, pupils planning a tourist brochure during a geography lesson in Years 5 and 6 confidently discuss layout and style in order to make an area attractive to visitors.

120. Handwriting is good. The pupils learn the correct formation of letters from an early age and regular handwriting lessons help them develop a fluent style. The majority of pupils use joined writing from early in the junior classes when they also begin to use ink pens. By Year 6 many of them have developed neat individual styles. The pupils have pride in the presentation and accuracy of their writing.
121. The positive relationships between adults and pupils encourage them to work hard and show enthusiasm for the subject. The style of teaching adopted in the school results in an emphasis upon success and understanding. Teachers value pupils' answers and ideas and so pupils become more confident answering questions and sharing their ideas. The majority concentrate well on their work and during teaching and discussion times make useful contributions to lessons. When teachers make high expectations clear for independent or group work the pupils focus well and make progress. However, in some classes small groups of pupils disrupt learning when they are not sufficiently challenged or as effectively managed.
122. The teaching of English is never less than satisfactory and sometimes good or better. The teachers have a secure knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy that is used to plan lessons. Regular planning by year group ensures consistency and continuity across year groups. A long-term plan is in place to recognise the needs of the vertically grouped classes over a two-year period.
123. Where teaching is good there is a balance between teacher-led activities and pupils' work. When the class teaching sessions are longer the pupils find it difficult to sustain concentration and many become passive. As a result learning is less effective and pupils' independent working time becomes shortened. Inadequate time is often given for the final plenary session. It is often rushed and its usefulness for pupils and teachers to evaluate learning is diminished. The quality of marking varies across the school. Where it is good it identifies achievements and learning objectives to help individual pupils understand what they need to do to make progress.
124. The school carefully collects performance data and charts the levels at which pupils are working from year to year. Teachers use these assessments to identify different ability groups and set targets. However, the learning needs of the more able pupils are not clearly identified and work does not often provide sufficient challenge for them. As a result they do not always make appropriate progress.
125. Under good leadership, standards in English have improved since the amalgamation. Co-ordinators from the infants and the juniors have worked closely together to identify areas for development and appropriate action has been taken to monitor teaching and learning. However, the long-term absence of one of the co-ordinators means that this has not developed as far as planned. The other member of staff with this subject responsibility has had limited time to oversee the whole school. There is a clear sense of educational direction in the subject and teachers use classroom resources well.

## MATHEMATICS

126. Pupils' standards in mathematics, including the large proportion of pupils with special educational needs, are below average at the end of Year 2 and average at the end of Year 6. There are 22 per cent of pupils with special educational needs in Year 2 and 14 per cent in Year 6. If these pupils are not included, then standards are similar to national averages at the ages of 7 and 11 years. Pupils make satisfactory progress in both the infant and junior classes. Higher attaining pupils could make better progress if work was regularly and consistently matched to their needs.
127. Strengths in mathematics are:
- the good quality teaching;
  - the good range of resources and strategies used to teach mathematics;
  - planning linked to teachers' knowledge of the three-part numeracy lesson;
  - pupils' good behaviour and attitudes.
128. Areas for development are:
- target setting for all pupils;
  - provision of challenge for able and gifted and talented pupils;
  - further development of problem solving skills;
  - developing the use of computers to enhance learning in mathematics.
129. By the end of Year 2, pupils work out simple calculations mentally, know the value of coins, construct simple block graphs and explain results and read and write whole numbers up to 100. They know the value of digits in a number. For example, in the number 56, they know that the 5 represents five tens and the 6, six units. More able pupils understand that in 256, the 2 represents two hundreds. Some pupils understand that addition sums can be turned into subtraction sums and vice versa. In shape, space and measures pupils sort both two- and three- dimensional shapes according to their properties, read o'clock and half past accurately and measure carefully using non-standard and standard measures of metres and centimetres.
130. By the end of Year 6 most pupils understand the relationships between addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. They identify and draw co-ordinates in four quadrants, successfully work out the mean, median and mode of a set of data and turn remainders into fractions and decimals. They also add and subtract to two decimal places and find perimeters of simple shapes. Pupils have a good knowledge of the properties of shapes and symmetry.
131. The teaching of mathematics is good overall. The quality of teaching varies throughout the year groups, ranging from satisfactory to very good for junior pupils and from satisfactory to good for infant pupils. In the best lessons, teachers successfully share with pupils what they want them to learn and check their understanding at the end of the lesson. For example, in one Years 5/6 lesson the teacher shared with the pupils the learning objective of solving problems using decimals. At the end of the lesson he reinforced the learning that had taken place and asked pupils if they could think of situations in 'real life' when they might need to use decimals. At least 60 per cent of pupils identified that they needed decimal knowledge when shopping. The teacher then used this understanding to arouse interest and expectation by explaining that the next lesson would be about problem solving involving money. In good lessons, pupils are asked to explain clearly the strategies they are using to answer questions. In a Years 1 and 2 lesson focusing on adding one- and two-digit numbers together, pupils clearly and carefully explained about rounding up or down, adding tens or units together, doubling or near doubling. A further feature of good teaching is the constant reinforcement of appropriate mathematical language and encouragement of pupils to follow the example.

In the juniors the mathematical words 'inverse, array and column (decimals)' were much emphasised. The standard and quality of pupils' recorded mathematics work are good.

132. However, there are some shortcomings in teaching. Work is not always appropriately matched to the ability of each child or group and there is a lack of challenge for more able and gifted and talented pupils. The school has yet to identify pupils in all year groups who are working well above the expected level for their age group. In addition, there are limited opportunities for pupils in Years 1, 2, 5 and 6 to develop and use their mathematical understanding through problem solving work.
133. Pupils with special educational needs are integrated well into mathematics lessons. This is achieved by targeting specific questions to pupils according to their ability and by providing work that is appropriate to their needs. In addition, teachers often provide extra resources, such as number squares, lines and pre-printed cards with mathematical symbols, to help them complete their work. Most make good progress.
134. Teachers use a good range of mathematical resources, such as number sticks, number lines, number fans, counters and cubes, to support learning of addition, subtraction and multiplication facts. Decapus, an octopus with 10 legs, is used to aid the learning of multiplication and division facts. Teachers also use a variety of strategies to make lessons interesting and to aid learning. Whiteboards are used by pupils, in pairs and individually, to record answers instantly. These are not only an effective method of instantly assessing pupil's knowledge but are really enjoyed by pupils. An incorrect number line and sum involving the subtraction of decimals allowed pupils to explain in mathematical language the mistakes made and also to use their knowledge of numbers to identify errors. Ninety per cent of pupils were successful in this activity. However, the use of computers in mathematics is limited.
135. Teachers plan work well, based on the National Numeracy Strategy. They have a good understanding of the three-part lesson, which involves a mental warm-up, a main activity and a plenary. Although learning objectives are clearly planned, they are not always clearly shared with pupils, therefore some pupils are not sure what they should have learned by the end of the lesson.
136. Pupils generally enjoy mathematics lessons. There is a positive atmosphere in most lessons and they show their enjoyment. They think 'mathematics is fun, it gets your brain going and class teachers make lessons interesting'. Pupils generally settle down to independent work quickly and quietly and work conscientiously until tasks are complete.
137. As yet, the school has not set curricular targets for mathematics with all pupils. In order to improve standards and for pupils to make better progress, individual mathematics targets should be set with each pupil and made available to them to refer to when working. In addition, the regular sharing of targets with parents and carers will provide additional support for pupils.

## **SCIENCE**

138. Standards in science, including the large proportion of pupils with special educational needs, are below those expected from pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6. However, standards for pupils in the mainstream classes are similar to those expected. The pupils make good progress as they go through the school. Pupils of all ability levels, including those with special educational needs, make similar progress to their classmates. Those pupils who come from backgrounds in which English is not the mother tongue also make good progress. This is a newly amalgamated school so it is not possible to make valid comparisons with standards now with those noted by a previous inspection.

139. Strengths in the subject are:
- pupils' good attitudes and behaviour in science lessons;
  - the importance that teachers give to teaching scientific enquiry skills.
140. Areas for development include:
- assessment procedures are not used effectively in planning work and setting targets for pupils' attainment;
  - encouraging older pupils to ask their own questions and find ways of answering them;
  - ensuring that all pupils are consistently given challenging work.
141. Last year, teachers judged that pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 was very low in comparison to the national average. This reflects the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. However, the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels was about the same as that in all schools nationally. In the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2002, pupils' performance was above the national average and the average for similar schools. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level was well above the national average, but the proportion reaching the expected level was below. This reflects the high percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs in Year 6 who tended to achieve below average results. There are fewer higher attaining pupils this year; so not as many are expected to reach higher levels. An examination of pupils' work shows that they are covering the required curriculum but sometimes are not drawing enough ideas from higher levels. This reduces some pupils' chances of developing a deeper understanding of science. This is the main reason why there are fewer higher attainers this year than last and why the judgement about attainment is below expectations.
142. The quality of teaching is sound with some good features. This helps to ensure that the pupils' quality of learning is also sound. Teachers plan together so that pupils of the same age in different classes have similar opportunities to learn. Generally, teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and how it can be taught effectively. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 develop pupils' investigative skills well. In lessons concerned with forces and considering how far toy cars go, teachers helped pupils to devise questions they could try to answer. As a result, pupils made good progress and came up with some questions they could try to answer; for example, 'Will the plastic car go further than the metal car?' The teacher developed the lesson well and, through effective questioning, led the pupils to consider how fair their tests were. As a result of these activities, pupils are developing a good understanding of scientific enquiry. However, although older pupils are encouraged to learn through practical work, they do not always have the same opportunities to ask their own questions and think of ways of finding the answers. When looking at different kinds of change, teachers in Years 5 and 6 gave the children detailed instructions of what to do with vinegar, lemon juice, baking soda and washing soda. As a result, pupils developed their powers of observation and description, but not skills in questioning or experimental design.
143. Pupils behave well in lessons and co-operate when carrying out tasks. The way that teachers organise science lessons means that pupils' social skills are developed well. Pupils share ideas and discuss their findings. This is a notable feature in Years 3 to 6, when pupils describe what they noticed when watching reversible changes such as melting, or the chemical changes noted when vinegar and baking soda were mixed.
144. The subject is soundly led and managed by two subject co-ordinators, one for the infant classes and one for the juniors. Pupils have sound opportunities to use their literacy skills in recording their investigations and in writing about what they know. Teachers give pupils some opportunities to use their numeracy skills but there is no consistent development. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 measure the distance their cars roll. Younger pupils compare distances using non-standard units of measurements such as straws, whilst the older ones use metres and centimetres. Older pupils have created graphs

when, for example, investigating links between age and the length of forearms. There are good links with design and technology in Years 3 and 4 when pupils use a secure knowledge of electrical circuits when devising an alarm for the teacher's lunch box. In some cases, information and communication technology has been used to create these graphs. However, this technology is underused in teaching and learning science, for example, in simulating investigations or researching and recording work. There are sound procedures for finding out what pupils have learned. However, these procedures are still underused in planning and setting targets for pupils' attainment.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

145. Standards of work seen during the inspection for pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6 are above average. These standards are achieved because of the enthusiasm and skill of the co-ordinator, the use of a good scheme of work, some good teaching and the availability of very good resources. In addition, pupils' attitudes are good and contribute to the good quality of their learning in art. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress as they move through the school. Pupils in the special educational needs classes follow the same curriculum and planning as those pupils in the mainstream school. Teachers adapt the lessons well so that special educational needs pupils are able to complete all the tasks to a good standard.
146. Only three lessons for junior pupils were observed as the infant pupils were following a design and technology programme. Judgements are largely based on a scrutiny of pupil's work, the work on display throughout the school, the range of resources and conversations with both the co-ordinator and pupils.
147. Strengths in the subject include:
- the quality of work on display throughout the school, which ranges from good to very good;
  - the enthusiasm and skill of the co-ordinator;
  - good links made with other subjects in the curriculum.
148. Area for improvement:
- greater use of sketchbooks in the junior classes to develop further the variety and scope of pupils' work.
149. Art is given a high profile in the school and the displays of artwork in all areas are of high quality. Displays not only celebrate the pupils' achievements, but also illustrate the range of experiences provided for pupils. There are sketches, paintings, collages, sculptures of paper and clay, sewn puppets and weaving, printing with natural and man-made objects and photographs. Pupils are also given the opportunity to study the work of major artists from a variety of cultures. Landscape collages are inspired by the work of Klimt. Hundertwasser's work is used to encourage pupils to experiment with shape, pattern and colour resulting in pictures in black, red and white. A particular strength of the artwork is the use of a 'mixed media' technique in which pupils complete a piece of work using a range of materials. For example 'Puss Bank 3000', a huge piece of work, started as an ink outline, was filled in with paper and fabric, then colour-washed and finally re-inked. Such experiences encourage the development of the pupils' creative and imaginative senses and, therefore, make a particularly good contribution to their spiritual development and understanding of how people work together.
150. Additionally, throughout the school there is evidence of good art links with other subjects. For example, art is linked to geography through work on the rainforest, crayon pictures are translated into computer pictures and history and art are linked through using clay to design pots and 'finds' from the Anglo Saxon period.



151. Sketchbooks are a strong feature of the school and are given to all pupils as soon as they start school. They are used for a variety of purposes such as working out ideas, plans and designs and experimenting with techniques. They contain designs for masks, hats, people and puppets; experiments in colour mixing, smudging and shading and examples of techniques and effects created with pastel, wax and pencil crayon. The work contained in these books is high quality in the early years and infant classes. However, it is variable in the junior classes. Therefore, in order to match the standards set in the infant department, junior teachers need to develop the use of sketchbooks and use them as an ongoing record in which pupils develop further their ideas, skills and understanding.
152. In the three lessons observed the teaching was good, although there was one unsatisfactory lesson. Teachers effectively demonstrate skills, organisation is good and pupils are given lots of time to experiment with their own ideas. For example, in a lesson on hat making, the objective was for pupils to learn that paper could be used to represent fabric and that it could be manipulated and its texture changed; pupils were shown how to fringe, curl, plait, pleat and screw paper. All pupils practised the techniques and then used their knowledge successfully to link some of the techniques together. In the one unsatisfactory lesson, the materials chosen to complete the task were unsuitable and the pupils were not challenged to try out their own printing ideas. Therefore the pupils were not able to print from their clay tiles on to paper as the paint was thin and the paper shiny. Consequently, all pupils failed to make a print and were frustrated.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

153. The limited evidence available during the inspection suggests that standards are in line with those expected nationally at the age of 7 and 11 years. This judgement is based upon discussion with pupils, some finished work and one infant and one lower junior lesson. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they go through the school. Those pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the very effective support they receive. There was insufficient evidence available during the inspection to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching in this subject.
154. Strength:
- consistency of planning across year groups.
155. Areas for development:
- the assessment of skills learnt in order to inform planning and progression.
156. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make glove puppets. They label their puppet design diagrams and carefully translate these into their finished products. Pupils investigate fixed and moving axles and evaluate which they will use in their own designs. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 work hard to plan a lunch box alarm to keep their teacher's lunch safe from other hungry staff. They evaluate the design of a range of their own lunch boxes and select one as a basis to solve the problem. The pupils understand the way electric circuits work and plan how to use one to make the alarm. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 describe the gas mask boxes they made as part of a history topic about the Second World War as well as motor driven fairground toys. They understand the need to evaluate whether the finished product fulfils its purpose and the necessity to adapt plans during the making process to overcome difficulties.
157. The curriculum is planned using national guidelines for the teaching of design and technology. These provide guidance for teachers and a range of activities to develop pupils' skills as they move through the school. By planning in year groups the teachers ensure consistency across the classes of pupils of the same age. However, there is limited use of information and communication technology both in the design stage and in

the use of control technology. The pupils talk enthusiastically about the things they have made and obviously enjoy the subject.

158. Two teachers have shared responsibility for the subject since the beginning of the school year and as yet their monitoring and evaluation role has not been fully developed. Pupils' progress is assessed each year. However, the existing system does not yet identify the skills learnt in order to inform planning of future starting points for pupils of different abilities. There are appropriate resources for the subject and these have been organised to ensure easy access from central stores.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

159. Standards in the school, including the large proportion of pupils with special educational needs, are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils make satisfactory progress through the school.
160. Strengths:
- the varied and stimulating curriculum is enhanced by visits and visitors;
  - resources are plentiful and used well by teachers;
  - the programme of study units is well chosen and well organised.
161. Areas for development:
- teaching and learning are not monitored closely enough;
  - assessment is not in place.
162. Standards at the end of Year 2 were judged entirely on the scrutiny of pupils' work and are satisfactory. Pupils describe the school and their classroom quite accurately. Most reproduce their description on to a map of the infant department, which they have drawn themselves. Most pupils know the names and the capital cities of the countries of the United Kingdom, but lower attaining pupils find locating the cities very difficult. A good topic on 'Rainforest' has helped everyone become more familiar with hot climates. The local study on the canal has helped pupils investigate and be more aware of their local surroundings.
163. Standards at the end of Year 6 are satisfactory. Pupils understand how rivers are formed and use the technical vocabulary, like meander, quite well to describe the passage of water from the source to the river mouth. Higher and average attaining pupils name the main rivers of the world. They have completed a well-drawn map of the United Kingdom with its main rivers. Lower attaining pupils found this particularly difficult and their finished map was inaccurate. The whole year group has a sound understanding of the water cycle and pupils use words like 'evaporation' and 'precipitation' correctly.
164. All pupils make satisfactory progress through the school. They receive sound or better teaching, enjoy and learn from a good range of topics and visits and develop the map reading skills and technical vocabulary needed to be geographers.
165. No lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2 because of the way the school organises its teaching. The scrutiny of work indicated that at least sound teaching was helping pupils to develop the skills and understanding they needed. However, pupils' work is untidy at times and teachers' comments did not show how pupils might improve further.
166. Teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 are satisfactory. Teachers give clear explanations to the class and organise and use resources, like maps of the world, well. This helps pupils understand what is to be learned and also stimulates their interest. Teachers support pupils well during tasks, making themselves available for help and advice, which helps pupils remain focused and get on with their work. They could give more time to

allowing pupils to discuss in pairs or groups the things they need to consider when creating their own maps in Years 3 and 4. Marking was complete and appropriate praise given, but too few pointers on how pupils might improve further were seen. Teachers promote the use of literacy and numeracy skills in this subject. Pupils research for their brochure on 'waterfalls' in Years 5 and 6 and start to learn about the scale of maps. The Internet is used with growing confidence for research purposes.

167. Residential and day visits to places like Beeston Centre and Delamere Forest make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning of geographical skills and to their personal development.
168. A very newly appointed co-ordinator satisfactorily leads the subject. She has written a suitable action plan, which is likely to improve standards of teaching and learning. Resources, including a good range of videos, have been organised well into boxes for topics and this makes appropriate materials more easily available to teachers. The co-ordinator has not received training in her monitoring role yet and so teaching and learning have not been monitored closely enough. Assessment is currently based on a record of what topics pupils have studied rather than any checklist of skills learned.

## **HISTORY**

169. Standards in the school, including the large proportion of pupils with special educational needs, are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. All pupils make satisfactory progress through the school.
170. Strengths:
- the good range of topic units is enhanced by some good visits;
  - pupils are starting to understand what it was like to live in different times.
171. Areas for development:
- monitoring of teaching and learning;
  - assessment.
172. Standards at the end of Year 2 are satisfactory. Pupils have a growing understanding of the place of canals in British history. They understand that the people who worked on them had a hard life, particularly 'legging' through tunnels. They have used their eyes and ears well to glean information from canal tow paths and the visit of experts from the local canal society. They know that canals were used for work many years ago but today are mostly used for leisure activities.
173. Standards at the end of Year 6 are satisfactory. Pupils have a sound understanding of the Second World War from the viewpoint of an evacuee. They write interesting and sometimes emotive letters back to their parents in the city. They are developing good reasoning skills when deciding which air raid shelter they would choose to have in their garden and they are starting to understand how difficult life was for ordinary people living in a time of rationing. They benefited greatly from their trip to the Air Raid Shelter in Stockport, which was an exciting and stimulating visit.
174. All pupils make satisfactory progress through the school. They receive sound or better teaching, enjoy and learn from a good range of topics and visits and develop the enquiry skills needed to be historians.
175. Because no lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2, no overall judgement on teaching and learning is made. The scrutiny revealed that teaching is at least satisfactory and that pupils are given good opportunities to be 'time detectives' when looking at the history of

the canal. However, presentation is often untidy and marking is not helpful in giving pupils advice on how to improve their work.

176. Teaching and learning in the junior years are satisfactory. Lessons were observed in Years 3 and 4 because Years 5 and 6 do not study a history unit this term. Teachers use interesting devices to start lessons, which capture the pupils' attention, as in a Year 3 lesson when pupils quickly and with great excitement decoded a message. Resources are used well to maintain this interest and to explain key points. A particularly good example of this was the archaeological dig in the classroom involving a clear box, sand and some artefacts. The question 'Who did the objects belong to?' led to much excitement, discovery and discussion using the clues the pupils found. Insufficient use is made of classroom displays, like time lines, to help pupils understand when different events occurred. Presentation is much better in junior classes, handwriting is clearer and better formed and spelling has improved. Work is marked and appropriate praise is given but few comments indicate how a pupil might improve next time.
177. History gives pupils opportunities to use their literacy skills, particularly in extended writing, but these are few and far between in some Years 5 /6 classes where only five pieces of written work have been completed in a term. Very little use of computers was seen in the scrutiny of work or lessons other than some word processing.
178. The management by the recently appointed co-ordinator is satisfactory. The action plan shows clearly the direction the subject is heading but over-emphasises resources rather than the raising of standards of teaching and pupils' attainment. Resources are plentiful and well organised for teachers to use. A good range of visits and first hand experiences help maintain pupils' interest in the subject and also promote their personal development.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

179. Standards in information and communication technology, including the large proportion of pupils with special educational needs, are below those expected from pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6. If the attainment of pupils with statements of special educational needs is not included, pupils at the end of Year 2 reach the expected level. However, standards for pupils at the end of Year 6 are below those expected from pupils of that age. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they go through the school. Pupils of all ability levels, including those with special educational needs, make similar progress to their classmates. Those pupils who come from homes in which English is not the mother tongue also make sound progress. This is a newly amalgamated school so it is not possible to make valid comparisons with standards now with those at the time of a previous inspection.
180. Strengths in the subject are:
  - there are some good examples of information and communication technology being used to support learning in some other subjects, particularly in art in the infant department.
181. Areas for development include:
  - the use of the available software for demonstrations and lesson introductions for whole classes;
  - assessment procedures are underused in planning work and setting targets for pupils' attainment;
  - the technology is inconsistently used to support teaching and learning in other subjects.
182. The quality of teaching is sound. Teachers plan lessons with clear purposes and usually use appropriate methods to reach these objectives. Teachers' knowledge of how to use

information and communication technology to enhance teaching and learning is sound overall and, in some cases, good. Teachers have recently completed a training programme designed to help them to use the technology effectively to help learning and this has had a positive impact.

183. There are some good features of information and communication technology in Years 1 and 2. A strength is the way in which pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn to create pictures. Teachers encourage good mouse control and careful work and the products are of high quality. Pupils have produced their own clearly recognisable 'Mr Men' pictures. Some have used painting programs to create colourful and accurate pictures of rainforest creatures. As a result of well planned and organised lessons, pupils in Years 1 and 2 know that floor devices such as 'Roamer' are simple robots and can be made to follow a sequence of instructions to move in a particular way. They look carefully at instructions and work out the path the device will take with reasonable accuracy. During these lessons, the teacher uses other adults to guide and support small groups of pupils well. Consequently, pupils in these groups work well together, discuss their ideas and take turns to carry out different tasks. As a result, they make good progress in lessons.
184. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Pupils make satisfactory progress as a result. However, Year 6 pupils have not previously learned enough about the range of skills and understanding required and their attainment is below what it should be. They understand how to enter and alter text in word processing programs and add pictures when creating war poems or continuing stories. However, they do not use such programs when creating work from the beginning to enter, revise and edit their work, so do not develop their literacy skills as well as they might. The school has a computer suite that helps teachers to teach the subject to a whole class. Some teachers, however, are not confident enough to use the teaching program that allows all pupils to see what they should be doing on their own screen. In these cases, teachers ask pupils to look at an ordinary-sized monitor whilst they demonstrate. This is unsatisfactory because many pupils, particularly those at the back of the group, cannot see what is happening and one or two boys lose interest and concentration. Pupils are not quite sure about what to do when they start their own work. This leads to some delay before they successfully manage to refine their searches for web sites with information about their geography topics. However, the teacher of a Years 3 and 4 class used the demonstration program well when teaching the class about selecting the most suitable graph when finding information.
185. Pupils have used the technology to support learning in some other subjects; for example, art in the infants and finding web sites that might be of use in researching geography topics. Others have created bar graphs of information they have collected. Years 3 and 4 have created line graphs of information collected when comparing age and the length of forearms. Pupils have created spreadsheets and used formulae, for example, when calculating the cost of party food, but this work has not been developed to look at the effect of changing prices. Discussions with Year 6 pupils and an examination of their work reveal that that they have not covered the required skills, knowledge and understanding in sufficient depth. For example, although pupils combine text and pictures in documents, they have not yet incorporated sound and animation effects into these. The scrutiny of pupils' work in different subjects across the age range shows that the technology is not yet used to support learning consistently in a wide enough range of subjects.
186. The subject is soundly led and managed. There is a timetable that will ensure that pupils now in Year 5 and in younger year groups will be taught the required skills. Teachers make regular half-termly assessments of pupils' progress, but the findings from these are not used effectively to plan work and set targets for improvement.

## **MUSIC**

187. Standards in music are above national expectations by the end of Year 2 and in line at the end of Year 6. A significant number of pupils in the juniors receive instrumental tuition. They make good progress and attain at a higher level. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress in the infants and they thoroughly enjoy their music lessons. Progress is satisfactory in junior classes.
188. Strengths in the subject include:
- teaching in the infants by the music co-ordinator is outstanding;
  - music is secure within the curriculum and all that should be taught is taught;
  - many pupils in the juniors have good opportunities to learn and play instruments and join a choir;
  - good interlinking with other subjects helps to develop pupils' joy of music and makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.
189. Areas for improvement are:
- to improve the use of information and communication technology in music;
  - to improve the provision in the junior classes.
190. Pupils in Year 2 have good skills in performing as they showed in an excellent lesson linked to their work on weather. In groups they named instruments, including a xylophone, rain stick, drums and Indian bells, and discussed how these could be played for effect. For example, by playing the drums vigorously and at speed, pupils created the sound of thunder. The delicate playing of other instruments depicted the sound of the 'whispering wind'. Pupils confidently used their voices so that all were fully included in the performance. Pupils as young as six years old accurately described the dynamics by using the correct musical vocabulary 'piano' and 'forte'. The descriptive language they chanted such as 'loud, crashing thunder' and 'drip-drop rain' helped to promote pupils' use of descriptive words and also set the mood for the music. The lesson undoubtedly supported pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Progress in the infants is good as a result of the very high quality teaching by the music co-ordinator.
191. Progress in the junior classes is not as good because teaching is not as good. However, pupils achieve satisfactorily. Pupils in Year 3 build on the prior learning by correctly naming tuned and untuned instruments. They play and listen to two or more notes and consider whether they fit together well, although pupils struggle with this. The teacher does not always use the correct musical vocabulary. For example, when two notes do not fit well the phrase 'they sound sharp' is used. This is incorrect. In Year 6, pupils also struggled to cope with rhythms and fitting phrases to them. However, some higher attainers have a good understanding of musical vocabulary, reading conventional music well. Many pupils enjoy singing in choir and in the whole-school assemblies. This supports their social development as they listen and work well together. The specialist teacher not only ensures that pupils take care with posture, breathing and diction when singing but her enthusiasm is infectious. Pupils are very keen to perform and do so with considerable panache.
192. The quality of teaching seen was very good in the infants and satisfactory in the juniors. Teachers are supported by a scheme of work that provides clear guidance, so that work becomes progressively more demanding as pupils move throughout the school. Lessons are generally well structured, but the pace of the lesson is very much linked to the confidence and security that a teacher feels about music. Teachers do not currently use information and communication technology to support their teaching but this development is being planned. Most pupils in the infants genuinely enjoy the subject, but juniors tend to be less enthusiastic in lessons and there are odd instances of silly behaviour. A positive feature of the school's music making is the provision made for junior musicians

who play recorder, violin, flute, clarinet and brass. Pupils receive good quality teaching from specialist teachers and school staff.

193. The leadership of the subject is very good overall and the co-ordinator has correctly identified the need to provide more training for junior teachers. Monitoring of planning and lessons is firmly in place and there is a good assessment procedure. Music is at the heart of the Puss Bank community and the performances of the pupils at festivals and concerts are very much acclaimed and appreciated. Resources are good and there is an especially good range of ethnic instruments.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

194. Standards in physical education are in line with national expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6, although many pupils exceed these standards. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress in the infant classes and satisfactory progress in the juniors.
195. Strengths in the subject are:
- the quality of teaching in the infants and the response of pupils, which are good;
  - that it makes a good contribution to pupils' social development;
  - that it is secure within the school's curriculum and taught regularly in each class;
  - that pupils are aware of the need for rules, health and safety guidance and the need to warm up and cool down.
196. Areas for development are:
- procedures for setting out apparatus vary within classes in the same year groups;
  - that there are no consistent approaches to assessing pupils' progress as they move through the school.
197. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 perform a sequence of simple gymnastic movements with agility and good control as they balance, twist and jump on the floor and on apparatus. They make effective use of their space by changing directions and making high and low movements. The teachers make good use of information and communication technology as they use the digital camera to record pupils' efforts. In the junior classes, pupils in Years 3 and 4 consider the types of exercise different sportsmen and women would apply to different parts of their body to improve their performance. This is linked well to their science and work in personal, social, health and citizenship education. They demonstrate how they would use shoulder exercises for tennis players and the balancing skills of skaters and skiers. All pupils in Year 5 have swimming lessons and around four-fifths of pupils, including pupils with special educational needs from the units, can swim a minimum of 25 metres by the time they leave school. In Years 5 and 6 pupils' ball skills in hockey improve as they develop their skills of dribbling and shooting accurately at speed.
198. In most classes pupils make perceptive and sensitive evaluations of their performances and those of others. For example, a pupil in an infant class suggests a classmate could improve her performance by 'balancing on tip-toes'. Pupils also spot the changes to routines that can improve performance. In a very good lesson in Years 5 and 6, pupils identified time constraints and the increase in skittles to dribble around as ways to challenge the skills of higher attaining pupils. Pupils of all ethnic groups and boys and girls perform well as partners and co-operate happily in groups when performing their country-dance work. Pupils from the units fit in seamlessly with adult support and are fully included in lessons. The quality of pupils' relationships is good. This supports their social development.
199. The quality of teaching is good in the infants and satisfactory in the juniors. The best teaching is characterised by secure subject knowledge, an emphasis on pupil

demonstrations, high expectations of pupils' behaviour and the effective use of available resources. The best lessons also have a good mixture of effective questioning as well as rigorous exercise. This leads to pupils' enthusiastic responses, good standards of concentration and positive attitudes to their work. For example, Years 5 and 6 pupils were disciplined and focused when developing their hockey skills. Teachers are well aware of the needs of all pupils and ensure that they are fully included. Talented classmates or support staff often support pupils with special educational needs, and the teacher ensures that directions are suitably clear. However, a minor weakness grows out of some staff finding it difficult to balance the time spent talking and evaluating pupils' work and providing enough vigorous exercise. This sometimes causes the pace to slow or reduces the impact of pupils' skills in identifying strengths and weaknesses in each other's performance. In a small number of classes in the juniors, the behaviour of a minority of pupils let down the class and in another, pupils did not bring their kit, which showed a disappointing attitude. Behaviour and attitudes are better in the infant classes (good) than juniors (satisfactory).

200. Overall, teachers make effective use of the accommodation, dress appropriately for the subject and are conscious of health and safety matters. Consequently, pupils show an appreciation of the importance of warming up and relaxing after exercise and set out equipment with care. However, there is inconsistency between classes in the same year group over setting out the equipment. These procedures should be unified so that pupils learn the most effective routines. After exercise pupils in Years 3 and 4 reflect and listen to music as they cool down. This supports their spiritual development.
201. The curriculum co-ordinator has only just taken over the subject. He has yet to gain a full understanding of the strengths and areas to develop of the subject, but he is committed to improving standards. The current policy statement and scheme of work ensure that teachers are aware of the skills to be taught in each term and that pupils are provided with activities in an appropriate sequence that builds upon their previous learning. Assessment procedures are at best adequate but these are not used sufficiently to plan future work. The accommodation and resources are good. Physical education makes an effective contribution to the social and health development of the pupils as well as promoting the importance of fitness. There is a suitable range of extra-curricular activities, including football, netball, aerobics and cross-country, that are taught enthusiastically with the support of a number of staff.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

202. Standards in religious education are broadly in line with the Cheshire Agreed Syllabus by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress throughout the school.
203. Strengths in the subject include:
- strong contribution to pupils' personal, social, moral and spiritual development;
  - good opportunities for pupils to reflect and respond to the subject in a variety of ways.
204. Area for improvement:
- a better match of work for pupils of mixed abilities in the same class.
205. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall but is variable and depends largely on teachers' subject knowledge and understanding of the subject. In these younger classes, pupils are introduced to the parables as 'stories Jesus told'. In the best lessons, where teaching is good, pupils learn that these are special stories that have clear messages. As stories are read or told, the teacher ensures that pupils fully understand the meaning of the story, such as 'The house built on the rock'. They know that if they put their trust in God they will feel safe and secure, thus contributing to their spiritual development.



Where lessons are not so good, stories are treated as they would be in a literacy lesson and lack the special quality that makes stories from religions unique.

206. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall but in the observed lessons teaching was good. Thought-provoking topics made a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual development. A very special atmosphere was created in a Years 3 and 4 class before the pupils were read a retrospective account of the Easter morning story. By pupils closing their eyes and possibly resting their heads on their desks the teacher sensitively took them back in time to set the scene before reading the account of the women arriving at the empty tomb. The quiet spiritual scene was maintained while pupils chose shapes that they associated with the story and then matched colours to them. As a final part of the lesson they transferred one of their chosen shapes on to a small piece of card using the Impressionist painters' technique of small dots, thus linking with previous work in art. The cards were then to be used to form a mosaic expressing the meaning of Easter. In this case the follow-up task to the lesson allowed for the difference in ages and abilities in the class and was sufficiently open ended to match the needs of all pupils. This is not always the case and much of the recorded work is similar for all pupils, with younger and lower attaining pupils completing similar written work, albeit with support for those that need it.
207. In Years 5 and 6 poems were written as pupils considered the plight of the Jews enslaved in Egypt and this led on to origins of the Passover and the Seder meal as celebrated by the Jewish people. The teacher led a supportive discussion as he introduced each ingredient giving the pupils clues as to why each element was present. Due to this good preparation, pupils working in groups re-examined the ingredients and came up with very good ideas on what each part symbolised. The teacher skilfully drew ideas together and successfully compared the symbolism here with that of the Communion in the Christian Church. Pupils enjoyed this lesson and were heard to comment 'I really enjoyed that, it was fun'.
208. The leadership of the subject is good. This is because the co-ordinator has a good understanding of the subject and has compiled a scheme of work that is supportive to the staff and develops the subject in line with the Cheshire Agreed Syllabus.