

## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **WILLIAM ALVEY C. E. PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Sleaford, Lincolnshire

LEA area: Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 120670

Headteacher: Mr P R Jackson

Reporting inspector: Ms B Pollard  
1838

Dates of inspection: 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> December 2002

Inspection number: 252414

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Foundation/CE Combined
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed

School address:	Eastgate Sleaford
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Postcode:	NG34 7EA
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Telephone number:	01529 302772
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Fax number:	01529 414865
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
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Name of chair of governors:	Mr Kevin Walker
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Date of previous inspection:	June 1998
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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1838	Ms B. Pollard	Registered inspector	None	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. What should the school do to improve further?
9306	Mrs B. Moore	Lay inspector	None	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
11122	Mr D. Collard	Team inspector	Information and communication technology; Science; Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
5531	Mrs Janet Croft	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages; Music; Foundation Stage	How well are pupils taught?
19916	Mrs D. Kerr	Team inspector	Mathematics; Physical education; Religious education.	None
20417	Mrs M. Owen	Team inspector	Art and design; English; English as an additional language.	How well is the school led and managed?
30033	Mr M. Wright	Team inspector	Design and technology; Geography; History; Equal opportunities.	None

The inspection contractor was:

Lincolnshire Education Associates

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

William Alvey is a large Church of England primary school serving the market town of Sleaford. There are 613 children on roll whose ages range from four to eleven years. At the time of the inspection the school was in the middle of a reorganisation from a seven to eleven junior to a primary school. There were no Year 2 children and five classes in each of Years 5 and 6. The changeover resulted in a large staff turnover with 14 teachers leaving and 17 being appointed. Children transfer at age eleven to a boys' or girls' grammar school, or a comprehensive, according to their results in an eleven plus examination. There is a unit for children with special educational needs which serves a wider area than the school's catchment but at the time of the inspection this was supporting only children on the school's roll. There are 122 children (20 per cent) on the school's register of special educational needs which is close to the national average; 6 have statements. There are very few children with ethnic minority backgrounds (2 per cent) and only three children with English as an additional language – none of them needing specialist teaching as they are bi-lingual. There are 59 children entitled to free school meals (ten per cent), which is below the national average. Assessments show that when children enter the reception classes although there are some high attaining children the ability, overall, is a little below average. The school is currently involved in initiatives on healthy eating, it is aiming for an award for its art and hopes to gain Investors in People status soon. A notable feature of the curriculum is the teaching of French which is part of the normal timetable.

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

This is a very good school with some features that are excellent. Its particular strengths lie in the quality of leadership and management and the consistent quality of good teaching that occurs in all year groups. By the time they leave the school, Year 6 children are likely to reach standards above the national average in English, mathematics and science. Standards are also good in other subjects and the Foundation Stage. The significant changes that are taking place in the transition from a junior to primary school are being managed very successfully thanks to a carefully orchestrated and efficiently organised management structure. The school usually meets, or exceeds, the challenging targets it sets itself and it provides good value for money.

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

- Standards in English mathematics and science are good. They are also good in all other National Curriculum subjects and religious education. In art, music and French they are very good. Children in the Foundation Stage do better than expected in four out of the six areas of learning.
- The school is very effectively managed with excellent leadership provided by the headteacher, deputy and senior management team. There is a clear sense of direction.
- Teaching is a strength of the school and contributes to the good progress made by children.
- The high quality curriculum is enriched by a wide range of worthwhile educational activities many of which take place outside the normal class timetables.
- Children's personal development is excellent. It is underpinned by the very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development that helps children to become well behaved, independent and confident learners who are sensitive to the needs of others and show respect for beliefs and cultures different from their own.

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

- There are no major issues that the school is not already addressing through its school improvement plan. As part of this, the school needs to give top priority to the successful integration of the Foundation Stage and the introduction of the full range of infant classes by closely monitoring quality, continuity and progression in these areas, particularly in mathematics, so that the school's high standards will be maintained.

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

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

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection in 1998 when it was still a junior school. All subjects now have clearly defined steps in the schemes of work to ensure that children develop skills, knowledge

and understanding in a cumulative way as they move from year to year. The progress made by children is carefully monitored through individual lessons, units of work and regular assessments and targets are set for improvement. The procedures for collecting, analysing and acting on the information obtained by assessing what children can, or cannot do, are very good. The school has a wealth of data to help it decide where support is needed for the slower learners and where extension is needed to the work of faster learners. The governing body is now fully involved as a partner in the management of the school. Governors understand their roles and responsibilities, they share the vision for the school's improvement and they are knowledgeable about its strengths and weaknesses. Another significant improvement, which helps the school to be more effective, is the self-evaluation that the school carries out to improve its practices. Teachers are encouraged to evaluate their classroom methods and undertake training to enhance their skills. The leadership and management structure has been streamlined to cope with the large number of staff and everyone concerned is clear about their responsibilities and where to seek help and advice. Parents feel that the school is more open and the dialogue between school and home is good as they receive better information. Relationships with parents have improved significantly. Standards in design and technology and physical education have improved. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is now very good overall.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	C	B	C	C
mathematics	C	B	D	E
science	B	A	D	D

**Key**

well above average      A

above average          B

average                    C

below average          D

well below average      E

Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress during their year in reception as, generally, they reach standards that exceed those typical for the age-group in four out of the six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage curriculum. They do especially well in their personal, social and emotional development, in communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. More demands could be made of the higher attainers in mathematics. As there is no Year 2 in school yet a judgement on standards in the infants cannot be made. Findings from the inspection show that progress continues to be good in Year 1. Results in national tests were disappointing in Year 6 in 2002 as they were worse than the previous year, particularly in mathematics and science. This was because there were more children than usual on the school's register of special educational needs (17 per cent) and of these, many were girls which is not typical. The school also performed less well in mathematics and science when compared with similar schools which is based on the entitlement to free meals. Evidence from this inspection shows that the current Year 6 are on course to reach standards that are above average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science because more of them are working at the higher levels of the National Curriculum.

Standards in the other National Curriculum subjects of geography, history, information and communication technology, design and technology and physical education are also good by the end of Year 6. In art and music, standards are very good. In religious education, children reach standards that exceed the requirements in the locally agreed syllabus. Standards are very good in conversational French. Generally, progress is good throughout the school for all children whether they are faster learners or have special educational needs. This is because of the variety of tasks designed to meet the needs of a range of abilities, the effective use made of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills in other subjects and the very good support provided for those who need it.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Children's attitudes to work are very positive and are a strength of the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good. Children can be trusted to behave even when not under the direct supervision of staff. They are polite and courteous.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is excellent. There is a well focussed programme for personal, social and health education that is reflected in the excellent relationships.
Attendance	Attendance is very good as it is well above the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Year 1	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Very good

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

There were no lessons where teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall. Teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of the age-group. They plan, organise and manage the curriculum, children and resources very effectively. In Year 1, teaching is good overall. There are particular strengths in the way teachers make lessons practical and relevant so that children maintain interest and enthusiasm. In the junior classes, teaching is very good overall. Teaching in Year 6 made the most significant contribution to these figures as this is the only year group in school where the very good and excellent teaching outweighed the good or satisfactory. Almost one out of every five lessons was excellent. Given that this is one of the largest year groups in school, the impact of teaching has a very positive effect on the standards reached by children. Teachers have high expectations and they make greater demands on the faster learners who are given extensions to the main activities while supporting the slower learners with additional help and resources. The pace of lessons is brisk and the timed tasks ensure children work hard and fast.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is very good. It is well balanced, broad, relevant and rich. The range out-of-class activities is excellent.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for children with special educational needs is very good as there is a lot of expertise in the school and they make good progress because of high quality support.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are no children requiring additional help with English as those for whom it is an additional language speak it fluently.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for children's personal development is very good as there are many valuable opportunities for them to explore values and beliefs, to learn right from wrong and to exercise responsibility within school and in the community. Provision for spiritual and moral development is excellent.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for child protection and ensuring the welfare of children are very good and a strength of the school. The monitoring of children's performance is very good and very effective use is made of the information collected to set targets for improvement.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher, deputy and senior management team provide excellent leadership as they guide the school towards its clearly defined goals for improvement. They are supported by a knowledgeable, confident staff team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	There is a very good, active governing body that understands its roles and responsibilities and shares the vision for school improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has well-established procedures for assessing its performance and it sets demanding targets for improvement in the quality of teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	The school has very good resources which enrich the quality of lessons. Grants are used for their intended purposes and the impact on standards is monitored closely. The school understands the principles of best value and applies them to its decision-making.

The transition from a junior to a primary school is being managed very well indeed. There will be a new challenge next year as Year 2 children are introduced and priority needs to be given to establishing a cohesive foundation for learning in the infant classes that will help to maintain the good standards.

## 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>• The school has high expectations.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> <li>• Children make good progress.</li> <li>• Children like school</li> <li>• The school is approachable.</li> <li>• Children are helped to become mature and responsible</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• The school is led and managed well</li> <li>• There is a good range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were no statistically significant issues raised by parents.</li> </ul>

Inspectors endorse the findings of the parental survey and the opinions expressed at the meeting for parents held before the inspection. The school enjoys very good relations with most parents. They have very positive views about the quality of education at the school and provide valuable support for their children's learning.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Apart from a dip in results in National Curriculum tests in 2002, standards at age eleven are above average in English, mathematics and science. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection and in the foundation subjects of art, and music they have improved. Standards in French are very good.
2. The school has only recently begun to admit children from the age of four and assessments, undertaken soon after they begin the reception year, show that although there are some above average ability children, this year, half of them are below what is expected for the age- group. They make good progress as, by the end of their first year, they exceed the national goals for the age-group in the areas of learning known as personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. They reach standards typical for the age group in mathematics and physical education. The higher attaining children should be given more demanding tasks in mathematics. Nearly all children begin the early levels of the National Curriculum by the end of the reception year.
3. As there are no Year 2 children in school yet, a judgement on standards at age seven cannot be made. There is evidence from this inspection that children in Year 1, generally, continue to make good progress in most subjects. There is a weakness in mathematics in Year 1 where, occasionally, work is not always matched appropriately to the abilities of children and this results in some high attaining children being given work that is too easy and others given work that is too hard.
4. The school's results in 2002 in the national tests in English, mathematics and science, for children aged eleven were disappointing as they were not as good as previous years. In English, the school reached the national average when compared with other schools and when compared with similar schools (based on the entitlement to free school meals) it was also average. In science, results were below the national average and below average for similar schools. In mathematics, results were below the national average and well below the average for similar schools. This was because there were more children on the school's register of special educational needs (in Year 6 there were 17 per cent) and there were more girls with learning difficulties than usual which meant girls performed less well than boys in mathematics and science. Trends over time show that the school is improving its results in line with the national average. The findings from this inspection show that standards are again above average in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science and the school is likely to reach, and even exceed, the appropriate targets it has set itself for 2003. In the national tests it expects 77 per cent of Year 6 to reach levels 4 or 5 in English and 80 per cent to reach levels 4 or 5 in mathematics.
5. The school has various strategies to improve standards. One of the most successful is the way children in Years 3 to 6 are divided into ability groups daily for literacy and numeracy lessons. They are split between classes and further split into ability groups within these sets. This means that the high attainers can be given more challenging tasks while the slower learners can be supported in smaller groups and take the work at a less demanding pace so that they have plenty of opportunities to consolidate their learning. The school is also focussing closely on the quality of teaching and learning in classes to raise standards.

6. Standards in the other National Curriculum subjects of geography, history, information and communication technology, design and technology and physical education are also good by the end of Year 6. In art, music and conversational French, standards are very good and in religious education, standards are very good when compared with expectations outlined in the locally agreed syllabus. This means that by the time they leave, children in this school are achieving above, or well above, what is typical in most other schools.
7. Children make very effective use of their literacy, numeracy and information technology skills in other subjects. They are encouraged to carry out investigations independently, explain their findings through the use of computers and to solve problems in a variety of ways. The good standards in literacy and numeracy contribute to the equally good standards in subjects such as geography, history and religious education as children engage in debates and discussions, seek information from a variety of sources and present their findings in attractive booklets using graphs and diagrams where appropriate.
8. Children make good progress from year to year because of the quality of teaching and the careful attention paid to assessing what they can already do and what they need to do next. The school has very effective systems for monitoring the rate of progress that children make and these alert teachers quickly to any problems children may experience. All children are included in all activities through support for the lower attainers and extension work for the higher attainers. When some children are withdrawn for individual coaching, care is taken to ensure they do not miss out on class work. There are no significant differences in standards or progress achieved by children of different gender or ethnic backgrounds.
9. Children with special educational needs make good progress in relation to the individual targets set for them. Children with literacy or numeracy problems are identified at an early stage and very suitable programmes of support are then put in place. Children identified with behavioural difficulties are also given a wide range of support that helps them integrate better with their class and make good progress in their learning. Tracking of progress shows that while children make good progress, it is not always possible to catch up on expected levels of attainment for their age. As numbers with special educational needs fluctuate each year, this can adversely affect the overall percentages in the Year 6 National Curriculum tests as was the case in 2002.

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

10. Since the last inspection report children's attitudes and enthusiasm for their school have improved and they are now very good. Children are keen to participate in a wide range of activities and in the day-to-day life of the school; their involvement is a strength of the school. Children behave very well in and around school. They are courteous and polite and very welcoming to visitors. They form excellent relationships with one another and with adults and this also is a strength of the school.
11. Staff, led by the headteacher, set an excellent example in their relationships with one another and with the children. They are very good role models and this is reflected in the way children relate to one another, without any apparent aggression. Although children change classrooms at the start of some lessons this is achieved with the minimum of fuss and with consideration for others. In personal, social and health education lessons, children respond very well to classmates; they listen to one another's ideas, and co-operate well, often working in pairs. Through the support the school gives to a Romanian charity, children develop an excellent

understanding of the impact of their actions on the lives of others. This was given particular impact in an assembly when children watched a video showing gypsy children in Romania who had benefited from gifts sent by the children.

12. The personal development of children is excellent. Older ones take on a good range of responsibilities. Through the very well conducted work of the school council, children have opportunity to discuss and promote suggestions and ideas, and to report back to their classes. They also enjoy their involvement in the 'Buddy' scheme where junior children each support an infant pupil. Children are able to give articulate descriptions of their life in the school; they talk about their favourite lessons and they have a clear understanding of what is expected of them in the day-to-day life of the school.
13. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils with special educational needs is equally good. The consistent support they receive from classroom assistants ensures that there is little disruption during lessons. Most pupils with special educational needs try hard in their work. Levels of concentration are highest when they have support during lessons. A group of pupils in every class is identified as having emotional and behaviour difficulties. Teachers have a wide range of strategies that help. An example of the success of the systems is the way that a pupil, excluded from two schools, has settled into the new class well and is now learning at a much better rate.
14. Attendance levels are very good and children are happy to come to school. The school focuses well on maintaining this very good attendance level. Children arrive punctually and lessons start promptly. Through the daily life of the school, children's understanding and respect for others reflects the strong ethos of the school and its links within the community.

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

15. The last inspection (when there were only juniors in school) judged the quality of teaching to be very good. Standards have been maintained, as the quality of teaching is still very good in the junior classes, particularly in Year 6. Overall, teaching in the Foundation Stage and Year 1 is good. Very good teaching was seen in every year group and some excellent teaching was seen in the junior classes. There was no unsatisfactory teaching in any class. In eight of ten lessons seen, teaching was good or better. In half of these it was very good or excellent. The quality of teaching was highest in Year 6 where no teaching was less than good and three quarters of it was very good or excellent. The quality of teaching has a very positive impact on standards reached by children.
16. In the Foundation Stage, teachers show a very good knowledge and understanding of the needs of young children. They plan effectively and organise the accommodation, time, support staff and resources efficiently. Basic skills are taught very well. Staff successfully use a variety of appropriate teaching methods which provide children with plenty of practical, real-life experiences to make learning fun and relevant. Questions are effective at probing children's thinking and extending their ability to express themselves. Teachers assess what children know and understand and set targets for new learning as a result but the identification of high achievers is not yet as consistent as it could be between all the reception classes, especially in mathematical development.
17. In Year 1, teachers plan lessons thoroughly and resources are organised well. There are good examples of practical activities that help to motivate children and maintain their interest, for example, tasting French food, carrying out experiments to see if taste is affected by smell or

sorting Father Christmas's presents by alphabetical order. Teachers help to build children's confidence by the ways in which they praise them for their efforts and encourage them to express their views or seek help when needed. Children are often paired with a partner for their work and this allows them to test their ideas, share tasks and support one another. It develops their speaking and listening skills. Teachers use learning support assistants very well to help slower learners and enable them to be fully included in all aspects of a lesson. There were occasional instances, particularly in mathematics, where teachers' expectations were not high enough and the higher achieving children were doing the same exercise as lower achievers resulting in a lack of challenge. The timing of tasks helps children to organise their learning and maintain a good work rate.

18. In the junior classes, lessons are very well prepared and the identification of what children are expected to learn is clear and focussed. Expectations are high for all groups of children and those who are capable are encouraged to pursue work to the higher levels of the National Curriculum, for example, high achievers in Year 6 were taught an algebraic formula to explain the results of a problem-solving exercise. Teachers are very knowledgeable about the subjects they teach and are therefore very confident. The match of what children already know and understand to the challenges of new learning is very good as new skills are added successfully to existing ones. This ensures that good progress is made and learning is secure so that children can apply it in a variety of situations, as seen in a lesson in Year 6 where children were using computers to produce a pamphlet on a sea life centre in connection with work in literacy. In Years 3 to 6, teachers enjoy very good relationships with children and they provide very clear explanations of what children are required to do as they share the aims of a lesson at the beginning and review what has been accomplished at the end. Teachers are very good at asking questions that help them to check children's understanding and help them to organise their thoughts and ideas. Children are expected to work hard and fast and keep to the time limits set by teachers. Support staff are used very effectively and make a significant contribution to the progress made by those children who require more guidance.
19. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Well-constructed individual education plans clearly set out small, achievable steps for each child. These are reviewed at least once a term and more often should circumstances change. Due reference to the previous plan is discussed first with the classteacher and assessed for its effectiveness and success. Children are involved in this process so that they know what they are trying to learn. The special needs co-ordinator is supported well by another teacher and this allows small group work on a regular basis. The withdrawal of pupils from lessons is monitored carefully, so they do not miss out on classwork, and this addresses an issue from the last inspection. Teachers are consulted about children causing concern and their progress is also monitored. Innovative systems are used to address particular needs. One of these is a 'Munch-Bunch Club' at lunchtimes. Those who find it difficult to socialise in the playground are able to have their lunch with adults and to build up their own self-esteem.
20. The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies as shown by the good standards reached by children in Year 6. The school has introduced setting for these subjects in the junior classes where children are grouped by ability across a year group and then targeted within their set according to their capabilities. Special educational needs teachers are an important factor in these arrangements as they target the lower ability set which is smaller in numbers than other sets. Work is planned carefully, in great detail, to help children reach their potential. The very good assessment procedures are a strength and assist teachers in their efforts to match work to ability. Another factor in the success of literacy and numeracy

is the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and its impact on learning carried out by the senior management team through classroom observations.

21. Teachers ensure that all children have access to all aspects of school life by planning and providing work that, generally, matches their capabilities and needs. This applies to higher achievers as well as lower achievers. There are no significant differences in learning between girls and boys or ethnic minorities.

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

### **The curriculum**

22. The learning opportunities that are offered by the school both in lessons and in other activities are very good. There are some particular strengths including the provision for extra-curricular activities, the provision for children with special educational needs and for personal, social and health education. This enables children to make good progress in their learning and to build upon the skills of knowledge and understanding. There has been a well-founded, steady and consistent improvement since the last inspection.
23. In the Foundation Stage children are provided with a broad range of stimulating and worthwhile learning activities based on the six areas of learning in the recommended curriculum for the age group. Starting points are mainly practical and engage children's interest so that they are keen to learn. Different work is, generally, set for children with different abilities, including those with special educational needs. However, there are occasions when the work set for the higher attaining children is not sufficiently demanding, particularly in mathematics. There are effective strategies for teaching basic literacy and numeracy skills. These are better for the area of learning known as communication, language and literacy than mathematics, which, in some classes, is too infrequently included in the daily programme. The curriculum is enriched with visits to places of interest and visitors to the classrooms.
24. In the rest of the school, the statutory requirements for all subjects are met and the school carefully follows the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Additionally, French is offered to all pupils through conversational discussion using a recognised scheme. Personal development is fostered through regularly timetabled lessons. These include 'circle time' which provides children with the opportunity to talk about their feelings toward one another and to raise any concerns. The National Literacy Strategy has been incorporated well within English lessons and is having an impact in the learning of spoken and written language. Equally, the National Numeracy Strategy is having a positive impact on the mathematical skills of children. Both are regularly monitored and evaluated and the results of national and internal tests reviewed to establish where improvements could be made. These are then incorporated within the school improvement plan for the following year. A strength within both these initiatives is the way that lessons in other subjects are used to reinforce the skills learnt in English and mathematics.
25. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Children with any specific problems are identified at an early stage, sometimes within a few weeks of entering the school. Individual education plans are drawn up in conjunction with the teacher and special needs co-ordinator. These contain small, short-term targets that can be easily measured for success and a number of longer-term goals that children can work towards. All parties, including the children and parents, are fully involved at all stages. Support is divided between classroom

lessons and by withdrawal to a specialist area. The use of teachers and learning support assistants ensures that the systems work well. A criticism in the last report was the number of times that these children were withdrawn from lessons and thus missed some creative subjects such as art or physical education. This has been addressed through careful checks on the timetable. Children with emotional and behavioural difficulties are given extra help, and the innovative use of additional help during lunch hours as well as before and after school. They are supported through any crisis because the teachers know their needs well.

26. The curriculum is planned very well. A long-term plan covering the work of each year has been analysed to ensure that all units within the National Curriculum are covered in a sequence of themes and topics. Each year group then decides how these will be planned over each half term. Individual teachers plan their own way of delivering these units each week and this keeps the curriculum fresh and alive. The senior management team and subject co-ordinators know how their own expertise will be used and the person responsible in the whole management structure. This ensures that this large staff are not isolated in their own teaching and that children are able to build up their skills, knowledge and understanding year on year. A good example of how this operates is the way that a commercial scheme has been adopted in physical education to give non-specialist teachers much more confidence.
27. A high priority is given to ensuring that all children are fully included in any learning experiences. In the analysis of the school's results, the performance of boys and girls, children with learning difficulties as well as the higher attainers are all carefully scrutinised and the curriculum altered in the light of any weaknesses that are identified. An example of this is the way that ability sets have been introduced for literacy and numeracy. Work is now more closely tailored to the needs of particular groups. This equality of opportunity is extended to the very wide range of extra-curricular activities. Many are offered to the whole school community and include the provision for sport, including competitive games, music, art, information and communication technology and first aid. During the inspection a very energetic 'Stomp' club was taking place to allow boys who would not normally be interested in dance to take an active part. The curriculum is also enriched by a wide range of visits and visitors. Each year all classes are given the opportunity of trips to enhance work in subjects such as geography, history, science and environmental studies. The school is seeking to further enhance the curriculum by aiming to gain a gold award for its artwork.
28. Overall, the links with the local community make a good contribution to children's learning. The school welcomes the participation of the local church and other schools. The school is involved in music concerts and combined sports events. A group of children entertained residents with carols at a local residential home during the week of the inspection.
29. There is very good provision for personal, social and health education. The school is hoping to win recognition as a health awareness raising school. Health and safety is emphasised during science, physical education and sports lessons. Children and parents have been asked to sign an Internet safety policy. There is a programme of lessons for Sex education. Sex education and drugs misuse are also dealt with through science lessons as well as approaches to healthy eating. A lunchtime Yoga club provides further enrichment for older children as they become familiar with relaxation techniques. During assemblies self-esteem is encouraged by celebrating children's successes. Special support is given to children who have difficulties developing relationships with others, for instance during breaktimes.

### **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

30. The school has made further improvements to its provision for children's personal development since the previous inspection and this is now very good. The provision for spiritual development is excellent. It is very well planned within religious education, school assemblies and acts of worship, and within many other subjects such as art, music, dance and personal and social education. In assemblies children are encouraged to participate in times of reflection and to celebrate achievement and the success of others. (The daily acts of worship were inspected separately under a section 23 inspection.) Religious education and 'circle time' sessions (where children gather together for discussions) are used particularly well to encourage children to consider their place in the world and respond to what they learn about different values and beliefs. Very high quality displays of children's work around the school are testimony to the value placed on children's own creativity and responses to learning.
31. Provision for moral development is excellent. Teachers take many opportunities to promote children's understanding of right and wrong. Children are taught from the start that their actions have consequences. All adults use the positive behaviour management systems consistently so that children are very clear about the kind of behaviour expected and the sanctions that poor behaviour will incur. Moral issues are explored within assemblies, class lessons and personal, social and health education sessions and the school's values are constantly promoted through the ethos of respect, care and consideration that pervades the school.
32. The school's very good provision for developing children's social skills ensures they quickly learn to become useful members of society. Older children, in particular team representatives, contribute to the smooth running of the school by carrying out tasks around the school. Representatives from classes contribute to the school council that works to improve the learning environment, and children's ideas are valued. For example, children agreed that the erasers being purchased by the school were poor quality and lobbied successfully to have the suppliers changed. In lessons, teachers regularly plan paired and group activities to encourage collaboration. The 'Buddy' system ensures younger children are well supported by older pupils. A strong sense of community is promoted through children's activities locally; for example, older children visit a local old peoples' home and the Community Care Club run by children plans and organises fund raising activities for a wide range of different charities.
33. Provision for cultural development is very good. Teachers feel strongly that children's learning should be enriched through first hand experience and plan a wide variety of visits each term to local museums, buildings and heritage sites. Photographic records and planning notes record visits to places as diverse as a local restaurant, local churches, a mosque and the seaside. Artists such as dancers, musicians and writers visit to share their expertise and pupils celebrate a variety of religious festivals at school. The school has a strong link with children in Romania and the successful French programme in the school provides excellent opportunities for pupils to learn about French food, places and customs.
34. In the Foundation stage there are very good opportunities for children to develop personal, social and emotional skills. Staff promote the principles that distinguish right from wrong and children learn quickly what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. They explore the values of others and celebrate special times in their own lives. They take part in activities and acts of collective worship that help them appreciate Christian cultural traditions as well as the diversity and richness of other cultures.

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



35. The care of the pupils is a strength of the school. Staff understand the children well, their care ensures that children feel secure. All staff know the procedures to be followed to ensure that children are well protected and the level of welfare is very good. Social inclusion is a strong feature. It is well promoted in the daily life of the school in an atmosphere where everyone is valued. Very effective procedures are in place to promote all the related matters of health, first-aid, safety and security to a very high level. Parents appreciate the way staff care for their children.
36. Procedures for the monitoring of children's academic performance and personal development are very good. Through assemblies and programmes for personal, social and health education the school has established very good personal support and guidance for children. This is developed through the teachers' very good knowledge of the children. Staff work hard to ensure that everyone in the school community is valued. There is a consistent approach throughout the school that ensures the good behaviour of pupils and the elimination of oppressive behaviour. The strong moral ethos, which is a part of the daily life of the school, ensures the good and caring behaviour, which is carefully monitored. The very effective support children receive makes a positive contribution to children's well being, and enables them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered.
37. Assessment is very good throughout the school. In subjects like religious education and physical education, assessment procedures are still being trialled, but elsewhere there are very good procedures in place. Formal and informal assessments provide useful data that is analysed by the school and is very effectively used to inform planning and establish priorities for development.
38. The local education authority works closely with the school in assisting with analysis and highlighting weak areas. An example of this was a gender imbalance in mathematics at all levels that had been detected and the school has effectively addressed the issue by including it in the school improvement plan and monitoring the results of the action taken.
39. Positive action is taken by the school in using accumulated data, for example, by producing an action plan for any child who lags by more than one National Curriculum part-level from where they are expected to be in numeracy and literacy. Very good steps are taken to establish how well children have progressed in all the subjects. Assessment takes place after each lesson and an internet scheme for individual pupil assessment has been trialled and will give National Curriculum levels for each child as well as tests that match the scheme of work.
40. The wide range of statutory and non-statutory testing as well as steadily accumulating data on each child, enables teachers, year group leaders, the deputy head and the head to identify the needs of individual children and plan effectively to help them to improve.
41. Pupils with special educational needs are carefully monitored. There are good links to any welfare issues and these are shared with the co-ordinators, classroom assistants and other teachers. The assessment of these children is strong. Evaluation of the individual education plans involves setting one or two short-term targets and three or four longer-term targets. In this way success can be measured and alterations in the provision made. The targets have a clear sharp focus and children are involved in their formulation. Younger children have assessment records based around the testing done when they enter the school. This enables teachers to pick up problems quickly and seek advice from the special needs teachers. The overall effectiveness of the procedures can be seen in the quality of behaviour in and around the school and in the good progress that these children make in their academic learning.

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

42. At the time of the last inspection relationships with parents was judged to be satisfactory. This has now improved and is a strength of the school. Of the returned questionnaires 97 per cent said their children made good progress in school and 98 per cent thought the school had high expectations. Overall, parents' views of the school are very positive. A very high percentage of parents also think the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. They also say that their children like school and are happy and secure.
43. The school has very good links with parents to consolidate and extend children's learning. Parents appreciate the many extra-curricular activities, which are available for their children.
44. The parents of children with special educational needs, including those with statements, are kept fully informed of developments. They are given written information and an opportunity to meet with the teachers who are caring for their children. They appreciate the quality of support that is offered. Not all parents take up the offer of face-to-face meetings so the special needs co-ordinator then ensures that they are kept up to date. All the staff involved are very aware of the anxieties of parents and work hard to try and allay fears about individual progress.
45. Parents' involvement in the life of the school is greatly valued; this involvement is increasing since the school became a primary school. The headteacher is always available to talk to parents at the start and end of the day, and parents are welcomed into school with opportunities to talk to teachers. Parents are shown courtesy by the office staff who deal carefully with any enquiries parents have. The staff led by the headteacher is always helpful and supportive, and parents feel the school is always prepared to listen to any problems they may have.
46. The quality of information for parents is excellent. Home-school agreements are in place. Children's reports are very detailed and give a clear indication of their progress. The school prospectus is clear and helpful and newsletters give parents a very clear indication of the life of the school. All the staff of the school make parents very welcome with opportunities to know about the curriculum and their child's progress, this provides parents with many opportunities to share in the life of the school.
47. In addition to the very good support parents give to their children's learning at home and at school, they support the various social and fund raising activities organised by the Friends of William Alvey School. The funds raised by this very active group enhance the life of children in the school. Through this and such events as entertaining the elderly in the town and their work for charities the school is placed firmly as an important part of the community.

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

48. The present headteacher was new to the school at the time of the last inspection when leadership and management were judged very good. There were some weaknesses in the role of the governing body that have now been addressed. This inspection also finds leadership and management, overall, to be very good. The school is clearly focussed on improvement and is working towards the Investors in People award.

49. The head teacher has consolidated his position and provides excellent leadership. He has a strong sense of purpose and vision that is shared by his efficient deputy and capable senior management team. All those with responsibilities are clear about their roles and are very competent at carrying out their duties. Although the line management is more complex in this large school than in most other primaries, everyone understands where to seek help or express concerns. The year group leaders have a key role, as the size of Years 5 and 6 alone in this school is equal to all the year groups in many smaller primaries. The management structure allows the school to function efficiently in smaller teams and prevents minor decision-making at meetings from becoming too unwieldy.
50. The governing body is very supportive of the school and fulfils its strategic management role. There has been a significant improvement in the way in which governors carry out their duties since the last inspection. They are active and well informed and view themselves as partners in the management of the school. They share the long term vision for school improvement and understand their role as a 'critical friend'. They are keen to visit school and each governor is linked to a subject so that, collectively, the governing body is knowledgeable about standards and achievements.
51. Recent complex changes in the school's age range have been carefully managed and thoughtful planning has achieved a successful transition from junior to primary school. This will still need careful management until transition is complete and staff in the Foundation Stage and infants are as secure in the school's expectations as the rest. The management of the Foundation Stage is only in its second year of operation and the leader is currently based in Year 1 where she is also co-ordinating the introduction of Key Stage 1. She has a clear vision of what is needed for high quality provision but is hampered in her ability to lead by example by her remoteness, on a day-to-day basis, from the reception classes. She has produced supportive guidance documentation and has weekly non-contact time to monitor the work of the Foundation Stage.
52. The school takes pride in its broad and balanced curriculum and the quality of education it provides is very good. It is strongly committed to improvement and whole school self-evaluation is an on-going process that is having a positive impact on standards. The school is well aware of its own strengths and weaknesses and seeks to address these through the comprehensive and useful school improvement plan that involves both staff and governors.
53. There has been a high turnover of staff, because of the change in age range, but the head teacher has been successful in attracting high quality teachers. The school provides very good support for new staff.
54. Performance management is well established at the school with the head teacher and his deputy appraising all the year group managers. They, in turn, monitor the teaching and learning of their team. All staff have objectives which support the objectives in the school improvement plan.
55. Financial planning and the strategic use of resources are excellent. The school employs a finance officer who ensures that all the accounts are in order, that the headteacher and governors are kept well informed of spending and that value for money is obtained when purchasing resources. Grants are used for their intended purposes and the concept of 'best value' is applied to decision-making. An example of this is the provision of a second computer suite to provide increased access for children and improve standards in information and communication technology.

56. The experienced special needs co-ordinator has amassed a wealth of information and expertise to enable this group of pupils to progress well. Procedures have been stated clearly and shared with all staff. In this way there is an understanding about how best to provide a high level of support. Another teacher, a number of special needs assistants and a governor ably support the co-ordinator. The policy has been revised in light of the recently amended national Code of Practice and classteachers have been kept up to date with its implications. Training has been undertaken to ensure that individual education plans are incorporated into daily lesson planning.
57. Throughout the inspection there were three questions about educational inclusion that were considered:-
- Do all pupils get a fair deal at school?
  - How well does the school recognise and overcome the barriers to learning?
  - Do the school's values embrace inclusion and does its practice promote it?

The school has an inclusion policy, updated in 2002, that values the individuality of all the children. The procedures in place to assess and monitor teaching and learning, achievements, attitudes and the well-being of every pupil, ensure that there is a regular focus on what teachers are doing and what the needs of individual pupils are. There are no discernable groups in the school that require specific attention regarding inclusion. Inspectors are satisfied that the school is paying very good regard to all matter of inclusion.

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

58. There are no major issues that the school is not already addressing through its school improvement plan. As part of this the school needs to give top priority to the continuing successful integration of the Foundation Stage and the introduction of the full range of infant classes.
59. As outlined in the school's improvement plan this includes:

Evaluating the effectiveness of the newly established Foundation Stage.

Ensuring maximum benefit is derived from the establishment of the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 with regard to quality, continuity and progression (*paragraph 51*).

It is recommended that the evaluations of quality, continuity and progression begin with mathematics (*paragraph 63, and 82*).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	93
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	75

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	9	29	42	13	0	0	0
Percentage	10	31	45	14	0	0	0

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

#### **Pupils on the school's roll**

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	613
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	59

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Special educational needs**

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	122

#### **English as an additional language**

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

#### **Pupil mobility in the last school year**

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	35
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	26

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	4.3
National comparative data	5.4

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.2
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 2 (Year 6)***

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	67	81	148

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	53	48	57
	Girls	63	50	64
	Total	117	99	122
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (79)	66(73)	82(96)
	National	75(75)	73(71)	86(87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	46	53	59
	Girls	60	59	70
	Total	107	113	130
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	72(83)	76(82)	87(98)
	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	527	1	1
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	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	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	5	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)	27.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	27.6

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

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	215

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	14
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	17

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	1195916
Total expenditure	1163109
Expenditure per pupil	1876
Balance brought forward from previous year	71383
Balance carried forward to next year	104190



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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	290
Number of questionnaires returned	114

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	39	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	48	3	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	51	2	1	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	56	8	2	2
The teaching is good.	54	42	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	23	55	19	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	35	1	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	45	0	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	26	61	9	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	48	45	3	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	39	55	4	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	26	43	16	2	11

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **THE FOUNDATION CURRICULUM FOR RECEPTION CHILDREN**

60. The school started admitting four year olds for the first time in September 2001, and has done well to achieve a good level of provision overall in such a short time. By the end of their reception year, the majority of children achieve most of the early learning goals in all six areas of learning. They achieve a high standard in personal, social and emotional development, gaining confidence, independence and generally behaving well. Most of them also attain a good standard in communications, language and literacy, with some achieving elements of the early levels of the National Curriculum in English. Their knowledge and understanding of the world increases well and their creative development is also good. Their mathematics and physical development is satisfactory. Teachers provide a curriculum that is rich in experiences and enhanced with visits out and visitors in. They plan effectively and are well organised. They manage support staff and resources well and use the time and space available to them efficiently. Occasionally, they do not have sufficiently high expectations of the higher achieving children, especially in mathematics.

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

61. Children's personal, social and emotional development is well fostered and they make good progress in this area. By the end of the foundation stage, the majority of children are likely to exceed most of the goals for learning outlined in the curriculum for the age group. They show interest and enthusiasm for activities. They concentrate and maintain attention well, for example, when gathered together listening to a teacher. Their confidence grows and the majority will initiate interactions with other children and known adults. They select and use activities and resources well and manage their own personal hygiene competently. They get along well together, playing and chatting alongside others in a friendly way, taking turns and sharing. When they go wrong, they accept correction and amend their behaviour. They develop a sense of being a class and they show interest in the celebrations and festivals of faith communities, such as Christians and Hindus. Children with special educational needs in this area are guided and supported well and they make good progress. Teaching is generally good. Teachers enable children to gain confidence and independence. They provide valuable contexts for children to develop personal and social skills. Most of the time, they manage children's behaviour well, making their expectation clear and correcting children appropriately when they go wrong.

#### **Communications, language and literacy**

62. The majority of children make good progress through the stage and by the time they reach Year1, many will have exceeded the early learning goals for communications, language and literacy. All the children take part in conversations with others, sometimes developing play together through language. They listen attentively and show by their responses that they are thinking about what they hear. They increase their vocabulary systematically, especially in topic work, for example naming animals from cold countries. They explain what they are imagining or creating in such activities as 'small world' and role-play. They increase their knowledge of sounds and letters systematically and make plausible attempts at writing words, for example in their diaries and topic workbooks. They write their names, using recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed. Books and reading play an important part in the daily programme and children develop appropriate early reading skills. Many children attain the early levels of the

National Curriculum in English. Teaching in this area is good. Teachers use well elements of the National Literacy Strategy and enable children to build up skills systematically. They provide good activities to stimulate mark making, drawing and early writing, such as a role-play post office. They join in imaginative activities and help children to develop the stories they create. Children with special needs in this area are well supported and make good progress.

### **Mathematical development**

63. Children reach a satisfactory standard in mathematics and make satisfactory progress, with the majority achieving most of the learning goals by the end of their reception year. Children with special needs make satisfactory progress, but those who are high achievers do not always progress fast enough. All the children have many opportunities to say and use numbers in different contexts, for example they count children present, pennies in a purse and many other things as they play. They recognise and order numbers to 10 and through counting games and rhymes, develop understanding of adding and taking away one, to and from 10. They gain understanding of shape, space and measure in a variety of activities. For example, in craft work they compile pictures using common, regular shapes, and in sand play they find hidden coins and sort them according to value. In solving practical problems, children develop mathematical ideas and methods, for example they compile graphs to show such things as their pets and they classify various information in diagram form. Teaching in this area is generally satisfactory, but teachers do not sufficiently exploit the various opportunities there are to extend higher achieving children, for example at register time higher achievers could work out how many children were absent but they were not asked to do this, and in working with coins, higher achievers could total up coins in 2s, 5s and 10s but they were working on much easier tasks.

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

64. Children progress well in this area as many achieve all the early learning goals faster than expected before the end of their reception year. Through an appropriate range of topic work and activities, they acquire basic knowledge, understanding and skills upon which later work in science, design technology, information and communication technology, history and geography can be built. Much of the learning in this area is through discovery and some very good examples of starting points were observed, for example watching what happens to ice as it melts and listening to an excellent talk by an officer of the Royal Society for the Protection of Animals. Children look closely at things and their good questions and very good observational drawings show they have noticed details. Their answers to questions about how and why changes occur in such things as the weather and their baking show they are thinking. They build and construct with a good range of materials, such as plastic and wooden bricks, tackling thoughtfully such assignments as building a stable for Baby Jesus. They successfully shape dough and clay and join materials like paper and textiles to make such things as cards, candleholders and Christmas decorations. They use a computer mouse competently to control icons on a screen and use other technology, such as remote controlled vehicles, to support their learning. Adults support children well in investigating the past and their surroundings. The children make many visits in the locality and members of the community come to the school to talk about their work, or their hobbies. Children learn about various cultural events and beliefs. Teaching in this area is good. Teachers plan many interesting, enjoyable and worthwhile activities that engage children's interest and stimulate learning. They set up discovery situations and ask questions that prompt children to think. They give children time to consider and help them to express their answers coherently.

### **Physical development**

65. Children achieve most of the early learning goals in this area and make satisfactory progress. In the outdoor play area, which has been imaginatively developed, children run, jump, climb, balance and use a good range of equipment. They move freely, with pleasure, confidence and obvious enjoyment. In the large hall, children travel round, under, over and through equipment, as they learn to control and co-ordinate their movements. In the classroom, they use a good range of equipment competently and their skills in such activities as drawing, colouring in, cutting, threading, interlocking and shaping with their hands gradually increase. Teaching provides a good range of opportunities for children to develop physical skills, but at times, it is insufficiently focused on the skills to be developed. Lessons do not always have a balance of 'warm up' and 'cool down' activities and children would benefit from learning about the changes that occur to their bodies when they are active.

### **Creative development**

66. Children progress well in this area of learning and, by the end of the reception year, many will have exceeded the early learning goals. They enjoy a variety of opportunities to explore colour, texture, shape and form, for example in painting, modelling, printing and building. They swirl and spread paint on paper, roll, squeeze and shape dough and experiment with various construction kits. They use their voices to make different sounds, such as those of animals in songs and stories. They sing songs from memory and use percussion instruments to copy sound patterns and accompany their singing. They use their imaginations in many activities; in role-play and 'small world' play such as dolls' houses and model farms, reliving or inventing experiences. They are generally very responsive, expressing and communicating their ideas, thoughts and feelings in speech, drawings, painting and various other ways. Teachers enable children to explore and express well, providing some very good stimulus activities and experiences. They listen to what children say and focus their interactions with children on the senses, encouraging children to look, listen, touch, feel, smell and taste. They develop drawing techniques very well.

### **ENGLISH**

67. By the time pupils reach the age of eleven, standards of attainment in English are above average. This was not reflected in the national tests in May 2002 because of the nature of that cohort, but the present Year 6 pupils already show good standards in all aspects of English.
68. There are no Year 2 children in the school yet but children in Year 1 make good progress overall. Their speaking and listening skills are developing well. They listen attentively in a range of situations, including assemblies and whole class discussions. Older pupils in Year 4 are familiar with the 'hot seating' technique where they were seen enjoying role-play as shepherds. When questioned by 'reporters', who were pretending to prepare notes for a newspaper article, they explain what they were doing on the first Christmas Eve, what they felt, how they reacted, and the reasons why. By the age of eleven, most pupils can express their opinions clearly and maturely. They sustain concentration, and speak confidently with adults.
69. In Year 1 children continue to develop their phonic skills and this supports their reading. In the literacy hour they enjoy helping Father Christmas sort presents, in alphabetical order. They practise reading regularly, make good progress, and take books home to show parents what they can do. Throughout the school, a reading record booklet accompanies the books taken home and teachers and parents add comments on the child's effort and attainment.

70. Children in Year 4 have good reading skills that enable them to skim and scan newspaper articles. They have an excellent range of technical vocabulary associated with literacy and know, for example, that a pun is another word for a joke. In Year 5 literacy lessons, children have enthusiastic discussions, with a partner, about challenging books in their shared text work. They consider the motives of the popular children's author J K Rowling in her use of dialogue. They decide she deliberately shows the intellect of the main characters by what they say.
71. By the end of Key Stage 2, with the guidance of their teachers, children analyse challenging literature well. They express preferences for different authors and give reasons for their choices. They can draw conclusions from a variety of texts and refer back to the book or article to explain or justify what they say. Most children are able to find information efficiently from reference books, encyclopaedias or by using information technology.
72. In Year 1 children make good progress with their writing. They usually form letters correctly, with appropriate spaces between words. Their books show good evidence of work with phonemes and short poems they have written with repetitive language and some rhyming words. Children with special educational needs are supported well.
73. There is abundant evidence of older children's consistently good written work, both on display throughout the school and in their exercise books. A high standard of presentation is encouraged and initial drafts of writing are often improved with more interesting vocabulary. Sometimes clauses are manipulated to make them more effective. Examples of extended writing by children in Year 5, describing the 'Buddy' system in the school, are good evidence of revised work, with the final drafts word processed on a computer.
74. Drama is valued in the school and enjoyed by all. Year 6 children can write their own lurid spells and potions, based on those chanted by Shakespeare's three witches in Macbeth. They deliver their spells with great enthusiasm, ...'rabbit droppings, ear of cat...double double, toil and trouble' ...to delighted applause from the class.
75. In all lessons seen, children have a positive attitude and their behaviour is good or very good. They find their work interesting and try to complete the tasks they are set in the allocated time and to the best of their ability. Homework books show that most children have good parental support and work done out of school is set regularly and marked conscientiously by the teacher.
76. There was no unsatisfactory teaching observed in English during the inspection. In the lessons seen in Year 1, most of the teaching was good or very good. Lessons are well planned and work is matched to the differing needs of children. There is evidence of very good marking and assessment of children's work in all classes. Teachers make helpful and encouraging comments both orally in the lessons and by writing in children's books.
77. In Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching in all lessons was good or better and in over half it was very good or excellent. Teachers use the format of the National Literacy Strategy to advantage and the learning objective is always shared with the children. Lessons are challenging, conducted at a good pace, and well matched to the differing abilities of children. In the best lessons, the enthusiasm of the teachers is infectious and children respond well. In all year groups children's work is marked carefully and there is constructive feedback to show what they must do to improve. As there are more than 300 pupils in Years 5 and Year 6, the setting system, where children are arranged in ability groups across their year group for literacy lessons, is an efficient way of targeting children's needs.

78. Resources available for English lessons are good. There is widespread use of whiteboards, and overhead projectors for shared texts. A good range of high quality books for group and individual reading are neatly stored on shelves throughout the school. There is an appropriate quantity of fiction and non-fiction books and they are in good condition. The main library is situated near one of the information and communication technology suites and information on computers is readily available.
79. Literacy is used well to support other curriculum areas and this is especially successful when children read and evaluate a range of instructions for a journey from their room to a nearby mobile classroom. Elements of geography are evident and children's language and map reading skills are extended when they revise and improved instructions for other journeys.
80. Assessment in English is well established and the results of optional national standard assessment tasks are carefully analysed. Overall, management of the subject is very good.

## **MATHEMATICS**

81. Standards at eleven have been maintained since the last inspection and continue to be above national expectations. Results of national tests last year were lower than in the previous year, mainly because of the larger proportion of pupils with learning difficulties in the year group, but are likely to be significantly higher this year. The school has worked hard to analyse results and improve the teaching of areas that appeared to be weak. There is a broad and balanced curriculum in place and children's achievement is good in all aspects of the subject. Children with learning difficulties are well supported and able to take full part in lessons.
82. The quality of teaching and learning ranges from satisfactory to excellent and is very good overall. It is satisfactory in Year 1 where work is very well planned but is not always well matched to children's abilities. It is consistently very good in Year 6 enabling children in these classes to make very good progress. A significant feature of the teaching throughout the school is the provision teachers make for the wide range of children's ability. Older children are taught in sets across the year group so that they work with children of similar ability. There is further provision within each set as teachers plan work at different levels to match the range of ability within the set. The effectiveness of the strategy can be seen in the work of the Year 6 children. Higher attaining children can use a wide range of methods to solve number problems to 3 decimal places. They are developing a clear understanding of ratio and proportion and can read and plot co-ordinates in all four quadrants of a graph. Lower attaining children can solve number problems using all four rules of number, can attempt long multiplication and division and are beginning to work with fractions, remainders and percentages. Tasks are generally well matched to children's ability and ensure that they make good progress as they move on to new concepts. The match of work to children's abilities is less secure in Year 1. Very occasionally the work set is too hard and children struggle with the task and so do not make the progress they should in the lesson. Some of the work set is too easy for the higher attaining children and they do not have enough opportunities to record their work independently.
83. Teachers develop children's mathematical understanding very well by giving clear explanations of a mathematical process and by regularly asking them to explain how they have arrived at an answer. The very good relationships that exist in the school ensure that children are confident to speak up without fear of ridicule if they are wrong. Teachers stress the importance of learning to use correct mathematical language and this means that pupils can express

themselves clearly and articulately. Children are encouraged to use a variety of methods when solving problems and soon learn that there is more than one way of arriving at a correct solution.

84. The concept of place value is taught very well throughout the school and teachers make good use of the mental maths starter activity at the beginning of lessons to reinforce learning. This starts in Year 1 when children learn to work practically with sets of ten and to partition two digit numbers such as 26 into 20 and 6. Teachers throughout the school use a wide variety of strategies to reinforce understanding. In a good lesson in Year 5 the teacher made very effective use of a 'function machine' to focus on the place value rules when multiplying and dividing a given number by 100. In Year 6 children worked out their answers to similar questions involving decimals on white boards. In both classes children demonstrated good understanding of the concept and could apply their understanding when dealing with larger numbers and decimals.
85. Children enjoy their work. They respond very well to the fast pace set by teachers in most lessons and enjoy the challenges of investigational work and problem solving. When given work to do in pairs or groups they work sensibly for extended periods and the quality of their discussions helps consolidate their understanding when tackling new problems. The majority take pride in presenting their work well, although some of the work seen in Year 4 did not match the high standards set in other classes. Teachers mark work conscientiously and many write comments in pupils' books so that they know how well they are doing. Homework is set regularly to support learning and frequent assessments are made to help teachers decide what to teach next.
86. The school has worked hard to develop an effective mathematics curriculum and is beginning to reap the rewards. Systematic monitoring of teaching and of test results has enabled training to be targeted at teachers that have needed support. Teachers make very good use of information technology to teach aspects of data handling, and plan opportunities for pupils to use numeracy in other subjects, for example when studying census data in history.

## **SCIENCE**

87. Standards at the end of Year 6 are above the national average. This is better than the National Curriculum tests taken earlier this year when standards were below average. The present group of children does not have such a high number of those with special educational needs, which was one cause of the lower attainment levels. Standards have improved since the last inspection and they rose steeply for three years before the drop in this year's tests. Children make good progress in their learning through Years 1 to 6 because of the good level of planning, assessment and teachers' expertise. The issue from the previous inspection regarding the better use of experimentation and investigation during lessons has been fully addressed.
88. Children in Year 1 make good progress and the teaching is good. They are able to talk about the five senses and understand that there is a relation between the sense of smell and taste. In an experiment undertaken in one lesson they were able to distinguish the tastes of different foods. They found difficulty in understanding about the experiment being a test rather than a game and therefore tried hard to find out what the samples were. Despite this, the planning for the lesson had been thought out well. The teacher gave emphasis to using first hand experience. She had developed a list of key scientific vocabulary to encourage the class to improve their language. As in all classes, those pupils with special educational needs were integrated well. They were able to record their results in pictures rather than words. The

teacher was disappointed that the experiment did not go to plan but had enough confidence to use it as an example of how investigation needs to be carefully evaluated. The planning for this year group shows a good understanding about all the strands of the subject and there is a good balance of these during lessons. The children are well behaved, excited and interested in what they are doing. They concentrate well and are well prepared for the more formal science work that they will undertake in the junior years.

89. Children in Years 3 to 6 also make good progress because the teaching is good overall. In the lessons seen it ranged from satisfactory to very good, the best lesson being seen in Year 6. The children in Year 3 are studying absorbency. They tested various materials to see which would hold water. From an analysis of the previous lesson the teacher had to spend some time ensuring that the pupils understood the concept and gave them practical examples. When they started the experiment they settled down well and came up with some good ideas. A strength of the teaching here was the way that the children were encouraged to work out their own experiment to test the hypothesis and then had to decide which were the best resources to choose. In Year 4, the children had a very relevant example linked to a topic on Christmas. They were making slippers for elves that would keep feet warm. In previous lessons children had been learning about the properties of different materials and the discussion showed how well the knowledge had been learnt. This was a good example of using previously acquired knowledge in a new situation.
90. In Year 5, a group of children with special educational needs were investigating sound and particularly the pitch and loudness of different drums. The work related well to their individual needs such as the development of scientific language and of abstract thought. There was a good balance of experiences that ensured children were absorbed in what they were doing. In Year 6, the children were studying reversible and irreversible change such as when water is added to plaster of Paris. Again, the teacher had found ways of exciting interest and in these lessons the class were very highly motivated. Evidence of excitement about scientific discovery was also evident in the scrutiny of work. In one experiment the class had looked at the properties of 'crazy' cornflour and in the evaluation talked about how interesting it was that there were some materials that could act like a solid or a liquid. The concepts here were above those that might be expected for their age. Following up in the lesson, pupils discussed how this was important and what other properties they could find. In another Year 6 class, children became highly excited about the effect of vinegar on baking powder and an animated discussion soon started on building comparisons.
91. The science curriculum has been thought out well. All elements of the subject are taught in depth and rely on the use of first hand experiences. Computers are used to help log the findings, type up experiments and to find out information through websites. Literacy is encouraged when writing up investigations and mathematical skills in looking at different graphs. Assessment is good. Standard tests are used to gauge how well the pupils are doing in relation to the national picture as well as to track individual progress.
92. The experienced co-ordinator has a good overview of the subject and knows the strengths as well as the areas for development. These are incorporated well into the school improvement plan. Resources are adequate and easily accessible. Teachers are consulted about their own needs for development and training has taken place to develop better use of independent learning through experiments. There are good links with other schools and visits and visitors are organised to link with work being done in the classroom.



## **ART**

93. Attainment in art is very good and, by the age of eleven years, children achieve standards well above what is normally expected for their age. Younger children in Year 1, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in their creative ability and in their knowledge and understanding of art.
94. In Year 1 children work practically and imaginatively with a range of materials to create drawings, paintings, collage and models. They work from their own design ideas and produce Christmas trees made of clay, based on triangular shapes. They learn about the properties of clay and the use of 'slip' as a means of sticking pieces of clay together. Others in the group use triangles of clay, of appropriate size and thickness, to make stars. The children carefully decorate their trees and stars with sequins and are pleased with the result.
95. By the age of eleven, children create pictures of a high quality combining the many techniques they have learned using collage materials, objects for printing, paints and washes, charcoal, pastels, and crayons made of oil and wax. They know how to use hard and soft pencils to good effect and can draw what they see with a high degree of control and accuracy. In Year 3, children study the skeleton and its importance in posture, gesture and movement in pictures. They apply this knowledge when sketching groups of people; similar to those groups they have seen in pictures by Giotto.
96. In Year 5, children make very good use of their sketchbooks, recording impressions, ideas and techniques to use later in their work. They try out colours, test pencils for tone, and practise drawings using perspective. All children illustrate their work well in cross-curricular topics and this is valued and presented in meticulous displays throughout the school. There are some outstanding examples of collage and textile work on display.
97. Children take pride in their artwork, take care in its execution, and enjoy discussing it with other children and adults.
98. In the limited number of lessons seen, the standard of teaching was good. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and planning is thorough. Space is limited in the school, so the enthusiastic new subject co-ordinator has invited visiting artists to come later in the academic year, when large-scale three- dimensional models can be made outdoors.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

99. The standards of work seen throughout the school are better than those found in most schools. Good improvement has been made since the previous inspection and children are making good progress as they move through the school.
100. Children are taught effectively to use the appropriate process for designing and making products to meet a specific purpose. They are given good opportunities to make products from a range of materials. This allows them to experience how different materials require different techniques in order to shape them or join them together. In one project in Year 1, children design a fruit salad and in another they design a healthy drink. In this project they are advised by a local chef who works with them and is an effective link with the local community.

101. Older children design a container and when most of them choose to make a purse, they have a wide variety of materials to choose from. Previously learnt skills include types of stitching and different ways of fastening materials. This thorough preparation helps children to consider their designs carefully and seek ways to improve them. In a Year 5 lesson, children were taught about the operation of cams. Children considered what they had learned to make a simple working model. The planning for the lesson was too ambitious for the available time, but children nevertheless made sound progress and most succeeded in making their model and they sought ways to improve it.
102. Year 6, children work on designing and making slippers. In the lesson seen, children communicated their ideas through drawings and were well informed because of the effective work that had gone before. They have written about slippers, considered the deconstruction of a bought slipper and know the details of the product they are designing. One child shared his thoughts on a decorative addition to his slipper and another child challenged him to show the drawings that supported his ideas. Their focussed discussion showed clearly how well children work together and consider one another's ideas.
103. Good teaching is based on clear planning and a sound practice of good design methodology. Teachers constantly question and challenge children's thinking and in the lessons seen this helps children to learn and make good progress that is regularly assessed. Children remain firmly on task and the best learning occurs where the pace is challenging and teachers have a secure knowledge that enables them to ask varied probing questions to extend children's knowledge.
104. The management of design and technology is good. The newly appointed co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic. Staff are more confident in teaching the subject since the previous inspection and sound priority is given by the school to its place in the curriculum. Electronics is an area that has been identified for future development and the co-ordinator is liaising with a local grammar school before introducing it to the curriculum. The school is well placed to continue to raise standards in design and technology.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

105. Standards in geography are good and better than those achieved in most schools. Children make good progress in Year 1 and at age 11. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
106. Younger children enjoy the exploits of Barnaby Bear as he travels away on holiday and goes home with them at weekends. This helps them to make links with other places as they relate with enthusiasm to Barnaby's travels. They are also able to confidently use large-scale maps of the world to locate countries like Australia, Canada, Lapland and the United Kingdom.
107. Older pupils use maps, study their locality, rivers, mountains and make field trips to places like the seaside resort of Skegness. On this occasion they learned about issues like sea defences, erosion and deposition. In a Year 6 lesson, children considered the design of sea defences and are quick to learn and adopt new vocabulary, such as *groynes*. This work is effectively linked with mathematics as they produced graphs to show their findings. By age 11, the work in children's books shows a good understanding of the topics covered. Children often show real pride in the presentation of their work and in the displays in classes and around the school.

108. The lessons seen and a scrutiny of children's work and displays around the school, show that the teaching of geography is good. Teachers plan well on a topic cycle and adopt a brisk pace that effectively challenges children's thinking and keeps them firmly on task. Teachers' knowledge and understanding enables children to develop the correct geographical vocabulary and build on skills from year to year. Expectations of behaviour are consistently high and this creates a good learning environment that ensures children's experiences of the subject are sufficiently substantial and well defined. Assessment occurs after lessons and at the end of units of work so that future planning is effectively informed and targets are set for what children need to learn next.
109. The management of geography is very good. The newly appointed co-ordinator has good previous experience and her energy and enthusiasm are infectious. The monitoring of the subject includes work sampling and pupils' discussion to check that what has been taught has been understood. The school is well placed to continue to raise standards in geography.

### **HISTORY**

110. The standard of work in history is better than that typically found in other schools by age 11. Progress in pupils' learning is good throughout the school and standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. The planning of history is good in all classes and includes the nationally recommended scheme of work.
111. Children in Year 1 have considered what schools were like long ago. They are challenged to compare differences like seating in classrooms and that drill was done instead of physical education. This early history investigation is useful in helping young children to understand simple chronology and to take note of changes around them. Their topic books are used to record their studies and their work is well presented at a level that is at least appropriate for their age.
112. By age 11, children achieve well. They have broadened and deepened their historical knowledge through the study of the ancient Egyptians, the Victorians, life in Britain since 1948 and invaders and settlers like the Romans and the Celts. Children continue to learn about chronology and to explore the differences between today and times past. The school has a good range of resources and reference books and these make lessons and displays interesting. They help children to learn and develop an enjoyment of studying history. In a Year 5 lesson, children learned about the wretched lives of poor Victorian children and how Lord Shaftesbury used his position as a member of parliament to help them. Children can write a story from the point of view of a Victorian child and this helps them to understand the plight of others. Their books show good coverage of the topics they study and their neatness and presentation is consistently good in all classes.
113. Observation of lessons and a scrutiny of displays and children's work show that the teaching of history is consistently good. Teachers plan well and present lessons briskly and with enthusiasm. This motivates children and helps them to learn and develop an enjoyment of history. Many lessons include "hot seating" where a child plays the role of someone they are learning about and the rest of the class interviews them. This activity enables them to reinforce their knowledge and understanding about how others feel. Children behave very well and this provides a good learning environment. Teachers make use of other subjects like literacy to link with the current history topic. For example, a Year 3 class uses historical text about the Romans to make good progress in learning the skills of note making and reading for key information.

114. The management of history is very good. The new co-ordinator is enthusiastic, has been trained and has a clear vision for the future. She has identified the use of information and communication technology in history as a priority for development and has a subject leader's action plan that accounts for the inclusion of pupils in Year 1 and, in the future, Year 2. The co-ordinator and the shadow co-ordinator are working hard to compile an exemplar file so that staff can easily and securely assess the attainment of pupils in all their history work. Current action, taken by the school, as well as plans for the future, will help to ensure that standards in history are raised even further.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

115. Standards at the end of Year 6 are above those expected nationally and children in all years make good progress in their learning and achieve well. While this is a similar finding to the time of the last inspection there has been substantial improvement in the quality and range of computers, the use of the Internet and the expertise of teachers. This is ensuring that all children have good access to the various strands of the subject and longer time each week to learn and practise their skills.
116. When children enter the school they have technological skills that are broadly similar to those nationally although there are a number of children who are below this. Work in the reception starts to improve these skills and this is continued in Year 1. Children progress well and are able to open and save programs, log on to the computer and work the various programs. Teachers use detailed plans to ensure that the requirements of each unit of work are comprehensively covered. In one class, children were learning to programme the movement of a shape around the screen. This work had been preceded by the use of a programmable toy before the more abstract concept had been started on the screen. In this way, children could see the relevance of what they were doing and were able to correct some simple mistakes as they occurred. In discussion, they could talk about turning left and right, forward and backward and this was helping build their language skills.
117. Children in Years 3 to 6 build upon these early skills. Again, work is thought out well to ensure all aspects of the subject are covered in depth. Year 3 children are learning to use the computer to make a brochure. They were able to build up type and graphics and to design their front cover. This is as might be expected, but in addition they are also able to talk at a higher level about how to use the program to collect better graphics and to decide what would work best on the page. They showed very high levels of concentration and worked well together in their pairs. Year 4 children were programming a screen turtle. This had built well on the lesson seen in Year 1. The children were able to explain why they turned the turtle through ninety degrees and how they could form a triangle. They were beginning to build up a short sequence of instructions that they could then repeat. The program they used was relatively difficult but many were able to overcome the difficulties with help. The teachers in both these classes had a good understanding about what they needed to do and expertise in using the hardware and software.
118. Older children in Year 5 and 6 also showed that they had made good progress. Spreadsheets were being used to devise a party plan. The series of lessons had built up a set of new skills. Children were able to work out simple formulae and total the columns. They could see the relevance of sorting out the different foods as the teacher had cleverly given them a set budget within which to work. As a result, some interesting discussion took place about whether there should be more cake or sausage rolls. The use of a real life example helped children to

understand how computer programs such as these were helpful in their everyday lives. This particular element in the lessons is very strong. Each class has two sessions in the computer suite. One of these is to learn new skills and another to build up their understanding and link work to other areas of the curriculum. In the scrutiny of work there were examples connected to literacy, numeracy, science, geography, history and design and technology.

119. The curriculum for the subject has been very well devised. There is a long-term plan that relates strongly to the half term and weekly planning. Teachers, having undertaken a national information and communication technology training programme, have the expertise to devise their own working examples for the class. While the major objective for learning is the same, the actual work differs between classes. This gives teachers the opportunity to make the work exciting and relevant. In all the lessons seen, the teaching was never less than good and, overall, it was very good. Learning was equally very good because of the way that lessons linked so well. Children have very good levels of concentration, work hard and become very excited about what they are doing. They show increasing levels of maturity. The oldest children have thorough discussion about what they are doing and share the use of keyboards together. Children with special educational needs are given the support of those better on the computers and on some occasions the use of a learning support assistant.
120. Assessment is at an early stage of development although a number of different formats have been trialled. The newly appointed co-ordinator has set this as a priority within the good subject development plan. A technical assistant who deals with any day-to-day problems with the machines supports him well. Resources have improved since the last inspection and the school now benefits from the use of two computer suites. The funding from the National Grid for Learning (NGfL) has been used wisely to provide up to date hardware and fast telephone connections.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

### **French**

121. Children make very good progress in French and, by the end of Year 6, a significant number achieve elements of level one of the Key Stage 3 curriculum normally used in secondary schools, which demonstrates the very good standards achieved. Strong points are the very positive attitudes that children have to learning French and their relaxed use of the French they know. The last inspection stated that French made a positive contribution to the children's cultural understanding, but no details were given about standards.
122. At the time of the inspection, there was no Year 2 so a judgement cannot be made on attainment by age seven. Children in Year 1 understand simple classroom commands and respond briefly, for example they answer the register in French. Their pronunciation is approximate, but understandable. They show interest in learning about life in France, for example what shops are called and what is 'typical' French food.
123. By the end of Y6, children have made considerable advances. They understand and respond to a number of classroom commands and questions. For example, they stand up and sit down to instructions in French and they respond to questions about the weather. Their pronunciation has improved and they can speak without an immediate model to copy. They copy words correctly, labelling diagrams of such things as parts of the body and they compile, write and use short paragraphs, for example linking the weather with what they are wearing. Their knowledge and understanding of French culture has increased and they are able to talk about such things as

typical meals, celebration days and landmarks in Paris.

124. Teaching in this subject is generally very good. In spite of some teachers' stated lack of knowledge of the subject, they successfully convey interest and pleasure in it. They plan carefully and include interesting lessons on French culture. They actively praise and encourage children, so children are willing to use the French they know. Teaching methods are mainly oral and practical and this gives children plenty of practice at basic vocabulary. Written work is appropriate, for example diagrams to show vocabulary and drawings of landmarks with notes. Teachers use well the opportunity to break down harmful stereotypes.
125. The subject is very well led. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable. She gives good support to other members of staff, with ideas for lessons and resources, and helps to develop their own skills. Current development is focused on setting up a programme for Key Stage 1 and the Foundation Stage. The school is used as a model of good practice for other primary schools to observe if they wish to develop French teaching and learning.

## MUSIC

126. Taken overall, children make very good progress in music and a significant number reach a very high standard by the end of Year 6. At the last inspection, standards were above those typically found in other schools and this attainment has been, at least, maintained and, in many cases, improved upon. Particular strengths are the number of opportunities given to children to participate in musical activities and the very good leadership and management by the co-ordinator.
127. At the time of the inspection, there was no Year 2 in school so a judgement cannot be made on standards at age seven. Children in Year 1 sing a variety of songs very well. Their singing is well pitched and tuneful, the words are clear and enhanced with dynamics. Their unaccompanied singing of a Christmas carol in the candlelit school hall, showed a very good awareness of a sense of occasion. Children play percussion instruments and develop awareness of duration, beat and rhythm. They compose short pieces and play these to other children. They listen to a variety of recorded music from different times and cultures, often in connection with broader topic work. Many children join a recorder group where they learn to read simple music notation.
128. In Years 3 to 6, children's musical experiences are broadened, extended and enriched. In singing they perform accurately and confidently for various audiences in different contexts. For example, the school choir practiced for a performance in church and a class group refined a piece to be sung at the wedding of their teacher. The diction in their singing is very good and phrasing and dynamics are well controlled to add expression. Children plan short compositions, selecting instruments and using different tempos to convey a planned effect. For example, children in Y6 worked in groups to select instruments to recreate the sounds of specific weathers. They then created different ostinato patterns to make sixteen beat melodies, recording these in standard musical notation. They performed their pieces for others and evaluated their own and each others' choices and creations very well, clearly recognising how musical elements and resources can be used to communicate mood and effect. Children listen to a very good variety of music and can talk and write sensitively, using musical terms, about the characteristics of different pieces of music, identifying how music is affected by time and place. Many children take part in extra-curricular musical activities, learning to play recorders, guitars and percussion instruments, to sing in the school choir, to play an instrument in the school orchestra, or to dance and move in different ways to music. Fifty children undertake instrument tuition on the violin, cello, double bass, flute, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet and cornet. Some of these children enter local musical festivals and examinations and achieve a very high level of performance. Many children take part with enthusiasm and confidence in high quality performances at Christmas time and during the summer term.
129. Teachers give children some excellent opportunities to participate in and benefit from musical activities. Several teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of the subject and effectively convey their great love for music to children. In teaching singing, they set a very high standard and teach skills systematically, so that children can achieve and maintain this standard. They plan music lessons carefully and make very good use of natural links with other subjects, such as science, history and geography. For example, in connection with topic work on mini-beasts, children performed 'Mini Beast Madness' which included singing, chanting, sound effects and moving to music.
130. The subject is very well led. The co-ordinator successfully conveys his vision and passion for music. He gives other members of staff very good support to use and develop their own skills.

He leads training sessions and compiles useful documents, such as a portfolio of photographs and written work that indicate levels of attainment. He keeps a close account of resources and makes some very imaginative and inspiring choices in material resources. Current development is appropriately focused on incorporating Key Stage 1 and Foundation Stage and increasing staff expertise in using music computer programs.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

131. Standards of attainment for children aged eleven are good as they are higher than those typically found in other schools. Children experience a wide range of activities including team games, dance, gymnastics and swimming, and achievement is good. Children with learning difficulties are supported well in lessons and they are encouraged to take a full part by both adults and other pupils. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall, and particularly for children in Year 6 where some teachers have considerable expertise.
132. Children in Year 1 were observed taking part in an outdoor lesson in which they practised ball control skills. Good teaching ensured the lesson developed well as children learned to tap the ball with the side of their foot and pass it with reasonable accuracy to a partner. In spite of the bitter cold they tried very hard to follow instructions and worked sensibly together in pairs to improve their passes. Their ability to control their movements is typical for their age.
133. Consistently good teaching in Years 3 to 6 helps children to maintain and improve their standards. Lessons are very well planned to ensure that skills are developed and practised systematically. Teachers have very good class control and lessons move at a brisk pace. All lessons start with very effective warm up routines. Children understand the need to exercise key muscles and the importance of aerobic exercise in keeping healthy. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and some have specialist skills and training which enables them to teach key skills and coach children to improve the quality of their movement. In an excellent dance lesson in Year 4, the teacher's high expectations and focus on the quality and accuracy of movement ensured all children made very good progress. Children could link together a sequence of controlled movements in time to music, working individually, in pairs and in groups to create pyramid shapes to link with a study on Ancient Egypt. Dance has a high profile in the school. Some teachers have considerable expertise and interest in the subject and have enthused many of the staff and children. Dance workshops have been provided to improve teachers' confidence and dance clubs for older children are well attended by both boys and girls.
134. Teaching in Year 6 is consistently very good. The pace of lessons is impressive and teachers place a strong emphasis on the importance of accurate and high quality movement. They give excellent demonstrations so that pupils are clear about what they are aiming for. Children are encouraged to strive for improvement and evaluate their own and one another's work. The results of the high quality teaching and learning were demonstrated in a very good gymnastics lesson in Year 6, in which higher attaining pupils could devise and perform a series of contrasting movements with a partner, demonstrating imagination and control. Lower attaining pupils could put together interesting sequences but some of their movements were not as precise.
135. In some lessons in other years where teaching is not as strong as it is in Year 6, weaknesses are due to the slower pace of learning. On occasions, children spend more time than they should watching demonstrations, or they are required to practise skills that they have already mastered



over and over again. In all lessons children enjoy their work and take great pride in it. Their behaviour is usually exemplary and they co-operate very well in pairs and groups. They have very positive attitudes to teamwork and support one another at all times.

136. Teachers provide a very wide range of after-school clubs and activities that contribute to the high standards being achieved. The school regularly enjoys success in local sports tournaments and competitions, such as the six-a-side football tournament that they had recently won. There is a successful swimming programme in place and almost all children can swim reasonably well by the time they leave the school. The school has adequate outdoor playing areas and a good-sized hall but the large number of classes in the school means that teachers cannot use it as often as they would like to. This limits the time for physical education when the weather is wet or cold. The subject is very well managed and there are good plans in place for taking the subject forward.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

137. At the age of 11, children's knowledge and understanding of religious education are generally above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for the subject. By end of Year 6 most children have a sound understanding of key teachings about Christianity and some major world faiths, and a good understanding of how they can learn from the religious beliefs and practices of others. The quality of learning is very good overall and pupils, including those with particular needs, achieve very well.
138. The quality of teaching is very good. It is consistently good in lessons and some lessons have excellent features that contribute to the higher than average attainment. The quality of teachers' planning is very good. Teachers plan their lessons thoughtfully to ensure that they achieve a balance between factual teaching about religion and opportunities for children to make a personal response to what they have learnt. In a good lesson in Year 4 in which children made Christingles as part of their preparations for Christmas, children learned about the origins of the custom, constructed their own Christingles and then spent time in quiet reflection as the teacher guided their thoughts to the meanings behind the symbols. Candlelight and choral music contributed well to the calm and reflective atmosphere within the room. By the time they reach Year 6, children recognise the importance of symbol within religious beliefs and can identify some symbols that are important to each of the four main religions studied. For example, Year 6 children studying a unit of work on Sikhism had learned about the tenets of the religion. They could give clear explanations of their significance in Sikh life and worship.
139. Teachers make very good use of religious artefacts, visits and visitors from different faith groups to bring lessons alive and generate pupils' interest. This was evident in work done by Year 5 children on churches in the local community. They had visited three different local churches to compare and contrast the buildings and forms of worship, and heard from members of the different churches about their particular beliefs and practices. The high quality learning that had taken place as a result was evident as children enthusiastically prepared group presentations to deliver to the rest of the class. These lessons very successfully enabled children to work from personal experience, so they all had something to contribute, and made a very positive contribution to children's personal development as they worked co-operatively on their presentations.
140. Teaching and learning is particularly effective when teachers develop the learning through other areas of the curriculum such as art, music, dance and drama. In an excellent lesson in Year 6,

pupils working with Sikh artefacts and symbols deepened their understanding of the faith by interpreting the meanings in their own way through short mimes and tableaux. Religious music is used well to contribute to some lessons and examples of religious art were seen in pupils' work, for example in Hindu Rangoli patterns.

141. Teachers have made good use of the guidance provided by the locally agreed syllabus for religious education to draw up a scheme of work for the subject and this ensures that major world faiths are taught systematically. Pupils know that there are different beliefs but that many have common features. They know that each major faith has its important buildings that are a focus for worship and have an understanding of some common elements of worship such as prayer. Where there are gaps in some pupils' basic understanding of Christianity it is because some teachers assume children know more about the faith than they do.
142. Children respond very well to their learning. They are willing to offer answers and personal opinions because they know that their views are valued. They are interested to learn, particularly when they have the opportunity to contribute to the lesson. All teachers use the subject very well to promote children's personal development. They use the work on other faiths to encourage children to understand the variety of opinions and beliefs, and to respect and value different ideas. Teachers take opportunities in assemblies and in circle time, where children gather together in a ring, to develop aspects of religious education and these experiences enrich children's learning. The way the subject is taught, with its opportunities for reflection and response, and its emphasis on respect for other views, makes a positive contribution to the caring ethos that the school promotes.
143. The subject is very well managed and this has contributed significantly to the good standards. Teachers make good use of visits to local churches and one class has visited the nearest mosque to develop pupils' understanding of similarities and differences in worship. The school is very well resourced with books and artefacts, and teachers are currently working on systems for assessment that will help to improve standards further.