

INSPECTION REPORT

Hillside Primary School
Stoke on Trent

LEA area : Stoke on Trent

Unique Reference Number : 124024

Headteacher : Mr. G. M. Loizou

Reporting inspector : Mr. P. Laverick
T 12846

Dates of inspection : 12th - 15th January 1998

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Information about the school

Type of school :	Primary
Type of control :	County
Age range of pupils :	5 to 11
Gender of pupils :	Mixed
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Appropriate authority :	Stoke on Trent City Council
Name of chair of governors :	Mr. P.M. Cooke

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Mr. J. Chisnall, Team Inspector	Science Design and Technology	The curriculum and assessment The efficiency of the school
Mrs. J. Carrington, Team Inspector	Under Fives History Geography Physical Education Special Educational Needs	Teaching
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Main findings

- 1 This good school, with some outstanding features, provides very good value for money. Hillside Primary School is situated on the north- east edge of Stoke on Trent. The catchment area is suburban, with an even spread between private and council housing. The school's mission statement is to 'develop the individual.'
- 2 When the children first start school there is a wide range in their abilities to learn. Overall, their attainment on entry is in line with national expectations for children of this age. By the age of five the children are above national expectations in language, literacy and mathematics and have made good progress. In these areas of learning they are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. The personal and social development for the under fives is satisfactory. The expected levels of attainment in physical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and creative development are broadly in line with the national expectations but there are limitations in these areas of learning.
- 3 At the end of Key Stage 1, the overall standard in English is above the national average. Pupils' standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing are above the national average. Pupils listen intently and usually speak with confidence and enthusiasm. The standard of reading is well above average and Year 2 pupils are able to use dictionaries successfully. Pupils understand how to write sentences and the range of written work is considerable. They can write legibly, use capital letters and full stops and skills in spelling are well developed. Pupils in Year 1 understand how to structure a story. Word processing is introduced at an early age. In 1997 the school's results in the national English tests were above average.
- 4 In mathematics, pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 are reaching national averages and a significant number are working above this level. Most pupils can add and subtract numbers up to and beyond twenty. During the inspection it was seen how pupils became confident in working with simple fractions. Pupils can tell the time in half and quarter hours. Pupils collect numerical information and draw graphs. Many are able to solve simple problems, use the correct words when weighing, and know about shapes and angles. Higher attaining pupils can count in twos, fives and tens. In the 1997 national tests, the number of pupils who were above the expected level of attainment far exceeded the national average.
- 5 In science, the pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 are above the national average. Pupils can explain how parts of the body work, describe how a rainbow is formed and understand how materials can change, for example by melting. Pupils can make predictions and understand the need for fair tests in scientific investigations. In the 1997 teacher assessments almost every pupil reached the national average and over a half were above this level of attainment. This is well above national standards.
- 6 Standards in art are well above national expectations. In Year 2 the children have produced some excellent paintings and prints. Very good use is made of the work of famous artists to inspire the pupils. Standards in information technology, history, geography, physical education and religious education are above national expectations. In music and design and technology, pupils reach the national standards.
- 7 In Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress in mathematics, science, history, geography, religious education and information technology. In English, art and physical education they make very good progress. With the inspection taking place in the first week of the Spring Term, some revision was necessary but the pupils showed how they could remember previous knowledge. Progress in music and design and technology was satisfactory. In the lessons of most subjects, the pace was good and fairly brisk.

- 8 At the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils' standards of attainment in English and mathematics are above national average. In science the standard is well above average.
- 9 During the inspection, pupils in Year 6 spoke clearly and with confidence when presenting an assembly and reading in class. They talk fluently about their work and use the appropriate technical language when discussing art and computers. Most pupils listen intently in class and also to other people's points of view including those of their peers. Many pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 are competent readers and have developed skills in using reference material. There is a good standard of written work in English lessons and also detailed descriptions in history, geography and science. However, not all pupils in Year 6 maintain a high standard of handwriting. In the 1997 national English test, the results were not significantly different from the national average.
- 10 At the end of Key Stage 2, in mathematics pupils are reaching standards which are in line with the national average. However, a considerable number of pupils are above this level. The higher attaining pupils are impressive in their speed and ability to solve problems in mental arithmetic. Most pupils are able to calculate the area and perimeter of rectangular shapes, construct tables and graphs, and continue to improve their results in the classroom tests in number. An excellent use of computer software is made which enables pupils to monitor their own performance in these tests. The results of the 1997 national tests were well above the national average. The school is seeking to improve upon this already impressive performance.
- 11 In science, at the end of Key Stage 2 the standard of attainment is well above the national average. Pupils understand basic ideas about heat insulation and the conduction of electricity. They also know about magnetism and that the energy of a moving object turns into heat when it stops. The results of their work are recorded accurately. Results in the 1997 national tests were well above average with over half of the pupils reaching level five.
- 12 Standards of attainment in science and information technology are well above national expectations. In history, geography, art and physical education, national standards are exceeded. In line with national expectations are design and technology, and music. The expected level of attainment in religious education, as set out in the Locally Agreed Syllabus, is also reached by the pupils at the end of Key Stage 2.
- 13 In Key Stage 2 pupils make very good progress in science and information technology. Good progress is made in English, mathematics, history, geography, art, music and physical education. The progress is satisfactory in design and technology and religious education. The school monitors progress and sets targets to raise standards. Targets are reached and in some cases exceeded.
- 14 Lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, sometimes make slow progress in Key Stage 2. The work which is set for these pupils is not always closely matched to what they can realistically achieve. The provision and support for these pupils is sometimes unsatisfactory. This issue was raised by parents at the meeting before the inspection.
- 15 One of the strengths of the school, is the successful implementation of the behaviour policy. Pupils in both key stages are polite, welcoming to visitors and have a mature approach towards learning. Relationships between pupils and adults are of an exceptionally high standard. No incidences of bullying or harassment were seen. There is a strong sense of harmony in the school and levels of attendance are good. The pupils' behaviour in class and around the school is usually outstanding.

- 16 Regular, good quality teaching is a feature of the school. In almost half of the lessons observed the teaching was good, sometimes very good and in two lessons excellent. In other lessons the teaching was sound but ten percent of lessons were less than satisfactory.
- 17 Teachers have a sound knowledge of subjects and plan their lessons well. They have high expectations of pupils and manage their classroom and pupils well. The higher attaining pupils are usually provided with challenging tasks and a brisk pace is a feature of many lessons especially in Key Stage 2 mathematics. Resources and teaching time are used effectively. The relationship between the teacher and pupils is very positive in both key stages. In one of the best lessons, the teacher was urging the pupils to take charge and demonstrate their skills and knowledge in the drawing of graphs. Teachers are hard working, highly conscientious and have attractive displays of pupils work in their classrooms and around school. Homework is effectively used to support learning and teachers mark work regularly.
- 18 In ten percent of the lessons, the teaching was unsatisfactory. Teachers sometimes made the introduction to lessons too long and reduced the opportunities for pupils to make progress. In a small number of lessons there was an unacceptable level of tolerance of restless behaviour. The main weakness in teaching is that in a small number of lessons, the work which is set for the lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, is too difficult or inappropriate and sometimes assumes that basic knowledge, especially in mathematics, has previously been learnt. Where pupils' knowledge was not secure, the pupils became confused and their progress is slow. These lessons were mostly in Key Stage 2.
- 19 Where classes are large and classroom space restricted, there is an impact on the range of curriculum activities, and teachers cannot move easily around pupils to support them in their work. However, the school works well to overcome these difficulties.
- 20 The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual development. Acts of worship are dignified and have a strong sense of occasion. Pupils are provided with opportunities to organise assemblies themselves and the prayers and singing are suitably reverential.
- 21 The curriculum for both key stages is broad and balanced and fulfills statutory requirements. Provision for the under-fives is strong in number and formal language skills, but provision is weaker in some of the other areas, partly due to the limited resources available.
- 22 A strong part of the school's ethos is the code of moral conduct which has been established. The behaviour of pupils is very good. They clearly know right from wrong and are highly trustworthy. The staff set a high example by their professional manner and conduct.
- 23 Plenty of opportunities are provided for the pupils to develop their social awareness and skills. Supervising the library, running a tuck shop and helping in the dining hall at lunchtime are some of the numerous instances where pupils are given responsibility and independence. These opportunities help the school to achieve its mission statement. The school regularly supports the work of a range of charities.
- 24 There is a satisfactory level of provision for pupils cultural development. The good teaching in art, history and geography includes examples of appropriate introductions to culture. Extra curricular activities also make significant cultural contributions through music, sport and educational visits. There are, however, limited opportunities for multi-cultural experiences.

- 25 Academic progress of the pupils is well monitored and they use self assessment to set targets. The higher attaining pupils are well catered for but those who need extra support for learning find some lessons difficult. There are effective policies for promoting pupils' behaviour and the rare cases of bullying are dealt with effectively.
- 26 The school has an effective Child Protection policy and procedures are understood by the staff but there is a need for parents to be aware of the school's role. Health and safety policies and procedures are good, some minor issues were reported to the school during the inspection. The school makes very good provision at lunch time and has gained an award for catering.
- 27 The information which the school provides for parents is good, with regular newsletters including one from the chairman of governors. However some parents state that more information on curriculum matters would be helpful to enable them to support their child at home. The annual report to parents on their children's progress does always emphasise what pupils can do and what they need to do next in order to improve their performance.
- 28 There is an active Parents Teacher Association, which raises substantial funds for the school and gives support to enhance resources and playground of the school.
- 29 One of the aims of the school is to maintain a partnership with parents. During the inspection only a very few parents were seen to be involved in classroom activities. The school is striving to involve parents but the response is sometimes restricted by the availability of parents to help during school hours.
- 30 The school is involved in a number of initiatives which make good links with the wider community. There are a range of visits by and to the school, for example, an excellent visit to the local museum on archaeology and soccer coaching by Port Vale Football Club. These all help to enrich the curriculum and promote pupils' learning.
- 31 The headteacher provides strong, effective and supportive leadership. He also sets a very high standard in his teaching. The headteacher is ably supported by a talented senior management team. The governors are well organised and they make decisions which have a positive impact upon the quality of education provided by the school, as seen in the development of information technology. The school development plan is excellent and makes an impact upon the quality of education. The systems for monitoring, for example the school's development plan and pupils' progress, are excellent. Teachers with curriculum responsibilities have a highly professional approach to their role in management.
- 32 The school's mission is to develop the individual and this it pursues with rigour and success. However, the lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, are sometimes not receiving effective support to enable them to fully develop. The curriculum for the under-fives is restricted by the planning and availability of resources for these children.
- 33 The school staff have been involved in the Investors in People initiative and this has made a significant impact upon many aspects of school improvement. The in-service training, whilst limited by the school's budget, is highly effective and staff are well qualified and share their expertise with colleagues. The generally adequate resources are efficiently used and the building is well maintained. The parents are very supportive in raising extra funds for equipment and resources.

- 34 The school finances are efficiently managed and monitored. Spending is closely linked to an excellent school development plan. The administration of the school's daily routines and procedures is outstanding. Visitors are made to feel most welcome, and the strong, positive ethos of the school is reinforced by high expectations for performance and a sincere care for everyone in the school community. When all factors are taken into account the school provides very good value for money.

Key issues for action

- 35 For this good school to continue in its mission to develop the individual, and improve the quality of education it provides, the governors, headteacher and staff should :
- (1) Improve the progress of pupils with special educational needs in Key Stage 2 by;
 - * providing a programme of work to accelerate the progress in pupils' reading and writing skills.
 - * providing more regular effective support.
 - (2) Extend the range of resources available for the under-fives so that a wider range of learning experiences, including outdoor activities, can be planned and provided for these children.
 - (3) Promote further the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 by continuing monitoring and focusing upon:
 - * the level of work set for individual pupils, especially the lower attainers.
 - * ensuring lessons are of an appropriate pace.
 - (4) Continue to pursue the aim of involving parents in children's learning both at home and school.

Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 36 The school is situated in a residential area on the north east edge of Stoke on Trent. The houses immediately surrounding the school, are privately owned and some are part of a council estate. There are 260 pupils on roll and all are from homes where English is the first language. On the school's register of special needs there are 41 pupils, two of whom have statements. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is 4.6% and in national terms this is low. The school does not have a nursery and the attainment of pupils when they start school is broadly in line with national expectations.
- 37 The school's mission statement is "Developing the Individual". This is detailed in six specific aims which include the acquisition of academic and social skills, respect for people, setting up partnerships between the school, parents and community, and encouraging a happy school environment.

Key Indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1
for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1997	20	21	41

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	19	17	19
	Girls	21	20	19
	Total	40	37	38
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	88%	90%	92%
	National	80%	80%	84%

Teacher Assessments		Reading	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	17	19	19
	Girls	20	19	20
	Total	37	38	39
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	90%	93%	95%
	National	80%	84%	85%

Attainment at Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2
for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1997	19	16	35

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	9	16	17
	Girls	11	14	15
	Total	20	30	32
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	57%	86%	90%
	National	63%	62%	69%

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	14	14	10
	Girls	15	14	11
	Total	29	28	21
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	82%	80%	65%
	National	63%	64%	69%

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year :

		%
Authorised Absence	School	7.1
	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised Absence	School	0
	National comparative data	0.5

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year :

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	27
Satisfactory or better	89
Less than satisfactory	11

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school

Attainment and progress

- 38 When children start school in the reception class there is a wide range in their level of attainment but, overall, they are meeting national expectations and the results of the most recent baseline assessment support this premise.
- 39 By the age of five the children are above national expectations in language, literacy and mathematics, and have made good progress in these areas of learning. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education in these subjects. In the other desirable learning outcomes, there are limited opportunities due to the lack of resources for children to develop their abilities including, personal and social skills.
- 40 At the end of both key stages the standard of attainment in English and mathematics is above the national average. At the end of Key Stage 1 the standard of science is above the national average and at the end of Key Stage 2 the standard is well above the national average. These high standards are a strength of the school.
- 41 In English at the end of Key Stage 1 the pupils standards in speaking and listening are well above average. The pupils reach above average standards in reading and the school builds upon the good start to writing which the pupils gain in the early years. In the 1997 tests the overall standards of English were well above the national average in all aspects of the subject. A significant number of pupils were above the expected standard of attainment.
- 41 At the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils have a secure knowledge of adding and subtracting numbers up to 20 and a significant group of pupils are beginning to work beyond this level and can count in twos, fives and tens. The pupils can work with simple fractions and are able to tell the time in half and quarter hours. They have a knowledge of shape are able use the correct words when weighing objects and have an understanding of shapes and right angles. The children are making good progress and significant number are working above the average level of attainment. In the 1997 national tests, the results were above national average.
- 42 At the end of Key Stage 1 in science, pupils can describe how the lungs and heart work, understand the properties of materials and how they can change and can explain how a rainbow is formed. The pupils' standard of attainment is above average and their progress is good. In 1997 the teacher assessment of pupils was above the national average.
- 43 In other curriculum subjects the pupils reach above average national expectations in history, geography, physical education, religious education, and information technology. Of particular note is the standard of art which is well above the expected levels of attainment. Standards in design technology and music are in line with national expectations. Progress in information technology, history, geography and religious education is good, very good in art and physical education and sound in design technology and music.
- 44 Standards of English at the end of Key Stage 2 are above the national average.

- 45 Most pupils speak with confidence and listen attentively. Most pupils read with expression and understanding. Pupils are able to use a library and reference books. The pupils' skills in writing are well developed and there is a good range of writing across the curriculum. The outcome of the 1997 national test showed pupils' attainment to be in line with national standards.
- 46 At the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils in mathematics are approaching average levels of attainment. A significant number of pupils are working at levels above the national average. Most pupils understand how to calculate the areas of shapes, are developing ways to calculate quickly in mental arithmetic, and can collect statistical information, and use computer programs to represent the data in a variety of ways. Pupils can interpret and draw conclusions from graphs and can discuss their work in a meaningful manner using mathematical terms. A few pupils were working with numbers which they did not understand. In the 1997 national tests, the results were well above the national average.
- 47 Standards in science are well above the national average at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils understand both thermal and electrical conduction and insulation, record their work accurately and draw very good conclusions. They also have grasped the basic concepts of energy and magnetism. The results of the 1997 national tests were in line with the national average.
- 48 Pupils' standards of attainment in information technology are well above national expectations, particularly in their use of computers. Standards in history, geography, art, and physical education are above national expectations. The national standard is reached in design and technology, and in religious education the level of attainment is in line with the locally agreed syllabus.
- 49 Pupils make very good progress in science and information technology. Good progress is made in English, mathematics, history, geography, art, music and physical education. In religious education, and design and technology, sound progress is made.
- 50 The progress which the lower attaining pupils make, including those with special educational needs, varies between sound and unsatisfactory. Where it is unsatisfactory it is partly due to the over demanding tasks which are set for these pupils, also the failure of teachers to ensure that basic concepts are secure with pupils before the next step is made, and the unsatisfactory level of support which is provided for these pupils. This was a concern raised during the parents' meeting held before the inspection. These issues mainly relate to Key Stage 2 and it is also here where the lower attaining boys are making slow progress in reading. In Key Stage 1 there is a more sensitive differentiation in the work set by teachers and classroom support is available more frequently.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

- 51 The personal and social development of the under-fives is generally satisfactory. They settle quickly and form effective relationships with teachers and other children. Children work well together, share resources and take turns when given opportunities to do so. They communicate readily with adults. Children are beginning to concentrate well and not give up when difficulties occur. They listen well even when the content of the activity is sometimes too difficult for them. They are learning to recognise the difference between right and wrong. They are less secure in their ability to take initiative and work independently.

- 52 Pupils at the school have a very good attitude to work, are keen to learn and are interested in all activities. However, they can lose interest when the teaching style is unsatisfactory and lessons are long, with little involvement from the pupils. Parents report that their children enjoy school and are keen to attend.
- 53 The pupils demonstrate very good self-discipline and there have been no exclusions. The behaviour around the school and on school visits is very good and the pupils are a credit to the school.
- 54 There are positive relationships between pupils and between pupils and teachers. The children talk openly and freely with other adults and respond well to outsiders. They work together on common problems and there is a harmonious atmosphere in the school. The school is producing confident pupils ready for the next stage of their education.
- 55 Pupils show an unusual degree of independence and initiative inside the classroom and elsewhere. They collaborate well with each other in class, in science, for instance, where they understand the value of working together to gain results. The very good class assembly held during the inspection was devised and staged by pupils from Year 6 with no adult intervention. Because the pupils feel that their views are valued they value and respect the views of others which facilitates working together. The school is recognised for its work with charities and receives many letters of thanks for its work.
- 56 Older children act as monitors and role models to the younger ones, ensuring orderly behaviour around the school, and they help the very young children at lunch time. Pupils had been asked in the past for suggestions to improve the school, and one suggestion to remove a bed of stinging nettles resulted in the raised gardens being built.

Attendance

- 57 Attendance at the school is good and pupils are usually punctual in arriving at the school on time. There is practically no unauthorised absence as explanations are obtained in nearly all cases. Compared to national standards, this minimal number of unauthorised absences is very good. However the authorised absence is only satisfactory due to the traditional 'Potters Holiday' fortnight. The school has figures that correlate poor attendance with poor academic achievement.

Quality of education provided

Teaching

- 58 Ninety percent of teaching is at least satisfactory. This includes 21 percent good teaching and 24 percent very good, and a small number were excellent. In ten percent of the lessons, teaching was less than satisfactory. The consistently good quality of the teaching is borne out by the standards evident in pupils' work in their books and on display. The proportion of lessons in which the teaching is very good is rather higher at Key Stage 1 than at Key Stage 2, but the quality of teaching is a feature throughout the school.

- 59 The teaching of the under fives is satisfactory and sometimes good. The children's capabilities are assessed after entry and the results are used to help plan the curriculum. Lessons are planned carefully but do not always show flexibility in the methods by which young children can learn. The nature of both the indoor accommodation and the outdoor space and equipment for the under fives, places some limitations on the range and type of activities which can be provided. Nonetheless good use is made of what is available.
- 60 At Key Stage 1 and 2 the strengths in teaching lie in good knowledge and understanding of the subjects taught. In subjects where some staff have limited expertise, such as music, the teaching is sound.
- 61 The teaching is supported by clear policies and good schemes of work for each subject. Teachers' planning fits into a structure of weekly, half termly and yearly plans. Planning of individual lessons is often careful and detailed. It is particularly effective when it identifies precisely what the pupils should learn and organises methods and resources accordingly.
- 62 The best teaching features a brisk pace which retains momentum of pupils' interest and learning. For example in a Year 1 English lesson the teacher times her introduction to the lesson and questioning effectively, and pupils are expected to complete several tasks in an appropriate length of time. Pupils make good progress in such lessons.
- 63 Expectations in most lessons are appropriately high for the differing levels of attainment within the class, for example, in English and mathematics, so that work and support are targeted to their needs. This often leads to pupils of higher ability being effectively challenged. However, the work is not always matched to the needs of the lower attaining pupils, for example, in mathematics.
- 64 The teaching of pupils with learning difficulties is variable. The tasks set which interest them and in which they can achieve success, generally prompt satisfactory progress. The teaching is unsatisfactory when it is pitched at a level which is not well matched. An example of this is when pupils in Year 3 are withdrawn for mathematics and the work they are asked to do is too difficult for them and causes confusion. The pupils with a statement of special educational needs are supported appropriately within the class. Pupils with particular learning difficulties, mostly at Key Stage 2, are withdrawn from class but the teaching programme and frequency of support is not effective to enable pupils to make satisfactory progress.
- 65 When the teaching leads to good rates of progress and high attainment, lessons have a good balance of methods and activities. A good example of this is in a Year 2 mathematics lesson when the teacher recaps on previous learning, gives pupils clear explanations and instructions and involves them practically in working out fractions of numbers using the P.E. mats.
- 66 Teaching is good when effective strategies are used to achieve the learning objectives. For example, in P.E., pupils are encouraged to evaluate their work and that of others to enable them to improve their performance.
- 67 All teachers have positive relationships with their classes. The best teaching is enthusiastic about the work in hand. Praise is used, not over used, to acknowledge real progress or achievement. In the majority of teaching, there is effective classroom management and high expectations of behaviour.

- 68 Resources are well organised and are used effectively. Classroom assistants have a clear educational role and add substantially to the effectiveness of the teaching. Parent volunteers support pupils well when given opportunities to assist in classrooms.
- 69 Teachers' informal assessment of pupils' learning within lessons is effective and this leads to modifications of pace and approach as necessary. Assessments at the end of units of work inform the planning of subsequent work programmes satisfactorily. Pupils work is marked regularly and errors are indicated. Although mistakes and misunderstandings are followed up orally in class, comments on written work, to which pupils can refer to see how to improve, are less frequent in some marking.
- 70 Homework is used throughout the school to extend and consolidate the work in the classroom. Reading, writing and mathematical tasks remain important components of homework, even in Year 6. A good range of other tasks is set. The home school reading diaries record pages and books read, but do not always provide for informal feedback to and from parents.
- 71 Shortcomings in the teaching are few. Occasionally the introduction to lessons is prolonged and pupils become restless. In some lessons restless behaviour is not dealt with immediately and this results in pupils not completing their work on time. Where classes are large and classroom space is reduced, there is some restriction on the kind of curriculum activities which can be carried out, for example, food technology and large model making. Restricted space results in some teachers being unable to move around pupils easily to support them with their work. Nonetheless, the school does its best to overcome these difficulties.

The curriculum and assessment

- 72 The curriculum for the under-fives is sound in language, literacy and mathematics. It relates more to Key Stage 1 than the learning outcomes expected for under-five children. Provision for personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development is limited. The curriculum for both key stages is broad, balanced and covers all aspects of the National Curriculum and religious education, and fulfils statutory requirements. The curriculum also includes appropriate provision for sex education, health education and learning about the misuse of drugs.
- 73 Short, medium and long term planning of the curriculum is good. Planning for the under-fives is strong in literacy, language and numeracy but weaker in other areas due to the limited resources and style of teaching. All subjects have good schemes of work. These are well designed to ensure that all aspects of each subject are fully covered. They are reviewed and revised regularly to continue to meet the needs of the pupils.
- 74 The school promotes equality of access to the full curriculum and makes satisfactory provision for pupils with special educational needs in the under fives and Key Stage 1. However in Key Stage 2 the work set for these pupils is often too demanding and leaves them with an unsatisfactory understanding of their work.
- 75 There is a good, wide range of extra-curriculum activities such as the choir, musical instrument tuition, drama productions, gymnastics, athletics, netball, football and swimming. There are many outside visits, including residential and overseas, that extend the curriculum provided.

- 76 There are satisfactory arrangements for assessment and recording of under-fives attainment using a base line on entry and extending this throughout the year. Across both key stages there are good procedures for this process which are included in teachers' short and medium term plans. Pupils' attainment is frequently reviewed and recorded by the class teacher, for example using short tests, and this is effectively used to modify the curriculum when necessary. In addition to the National Curriculum tests and teacher assessments, pupils are also assessed at the end of each year in Key Stage 2 using externally standardised tests. There is also a scheme for self-assessment used by all pupils in the school.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

- 77 Good provision is made for the spiritual development of pupils. The school fulfils its statutory obligation to provide daily a collective act of worship for all pupils. This usually takes the form of an assembly in the hall. Assemblies have a strong sense of occasion. Carefully chosen recorded music is played before and afterwards, and pupils show their respect for assembly by entering and leaving in a dignified way. The standard of hymn singing is high. A varied programme of themes is devised and a talk is given on a moral or spiritual topic, often reflecting the season of the Christian church's year. A class leads assembly once a week and visiting speakers, such as the local vicar or a representative of a charity, take part regularly. Assemblies held during the inspection over-ran their specified time and some of the talks were too long. Assemblies did not include a quiet time for guided reflection. Within the curriculum many opportunities for contemplation of spiritual dimensions of religion and the world occur, for instance, in poetry, art, history and geography and religious education.
- 78 The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. A strong moral code is a fundamental aspect of the school's ethos. A set of positive principles for regulating conduct was recently devised and accepted at a meeting of all pupils and staff. Pupils' behaviour is exceptionally good. They are thoughtful and trustworthy and at the same time enthusiastic and responsive. They clearly know right from wrong and their strong commitment to school is a fitting acknowledgement of the dedication of the staff who teach them.
- 79 Very good provision is made for pupils' social development. The ethos of the school encourages self discipline and pupils who take responsibility. This is achieved by guiding the pupils to be aware of the community that they are in and letting them operate as groups to solve problems. The school promotes the social development of pupils, who are able to exercise responsibility from an early stage as monitors in class. Pupils in Year 6 supervise the entry of younger pupils into the building in the morning and after lunch; amongst their many other duties, they run the tuck shop, organise seating for assembly, supervise in the library and the dining room and help maintain the school garden. Pupils learn about personal development and citizenship in personal, health and social education lessons. The police liaison officer visits regularly to talk to them Regular collections are made throughout the year for charities such as Barnardo's, Oxfam and Christian Aid. Other provision includes pupils helping at a recent fund-raising car wash organised by the parents.

80 There is a satisfactory level of provision for pupils' cultural development. A good range of opportunities exists for pupils to take part in extra-curricular sporting activities which include football coaching by representatives of Stoke City and Port Vale Football Clubs. Musical activities include instrumental tuition, a choir and regular public performances. Every class now makes at least one educational visit each year. Destinations have recently included RAF Cosford, Jodrell Bank, Tatton Park, Shugborough Hall and a wildlife park. Each year pupils in Year 6 attend a residential event in North Wales where they experience outdoor pursuits such as dry-skiing. The curriculum has been enriched by visits from a sculptor and a specialist in fabric painting. There are good opportunities in religious education for learning about world religions, but the provision for pupils' awareness of cultures other than their own is limited.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

81 The school makes sure that children are well supported before they start school. There is helpful and adequate information for parents and preliminary visits ensure that there is a smooth transition when children enter the reception class. Academic progress is monitored well and children carry out their own self assessment and also set their own targets. The school is aware of the need to monitor individuals and provide programmes of remedial learning to enable children who have slipped behind to catch up. Higher attaining pupils are catered for with work that will challenge them.

82 However, although there were procedures in place to identify pupils with special educational needs and then take action, this action did not always achieve the desired results. There are good policies to promote discipline and good behaviour, and a range of sanctions and rewards are in place. There is clear guidance on bullying and the pupils are aware of this and what to do on the rare occasions when bullying occurs.

83 There are good procedures and policies in place to monitor and promote good attendance. Registers are filled in promptly and accurately and any absence is followed up. The Educational Welfare Officer is in regular touch with the school and is called on the rare occasions when needed which is rare. The tradition of removing pupils for annual holidays during the "Potters Holiday" fortnight is a significant issue in relation to improving the levels of attendance.

84 Health and safety policies and procedures are good. Generally staff and pupils behave in a safe way when working in and around the school. Risk assessments have been made and actions taken as a result. The kitchens and canteen provide a safe place for the preparation and consumption of food. The food is freshly prepared on the premises to a high standard which has been recognised by an award.

85 The school discharges its responsibility for the care of the pupils by having an effective Child Protection policy and procedures which are understood by the staff. There are regular talks by a woman police officer on 'stranger danger'. Appropriate accident reporting, fire drills, and first aid provision are in place. The governing body are aware of their duties in this area and are pro-active in recommending actions.

86 However, the school needs to inform parents more clearly on its role in child protection and ensure that suitable reports go to the governing body so that it can adequately discharge its responsibilities for health and safety.

Partnership with parents and the community

- 87 Information to parents is good with regular newsletters and a very good letter from the chair of the governors explaining the background to several issues. Pre-school information is sent to parents on helping their child to read. Any special educational needs are discussed with parents.
- 88 However, some parents state that they would like more information, particularly on what their children are doing at school. Reliance on the children to tell the parents is not working in all cases.
- 89 The prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents do not include all the statutory information that is required. For example, full financial information is not sent to all parents, only those attending the meeting.
- 90 The annual reports from the school to the parents on their children's progress are not always informative on what the child can do, needs to do, and how the parent can help. Improving the quality of information to parents could help the school should achieve a greater involvement of the parents in their children's education.
- 91 Parental involvement in the school is less than satisfactory, although the school has recently sent a circular asking parents with skills to register these with the school so that they can be called in for help. This resulted in approximately 20 offers, but there were few parents in school helping on a regular basis at the time of the inspection. Some parents felt that help was not sought in reception, which is normally where parental involvement with a school starts.
- 92 There is an active Parents Teacher Association which raises funds for the school, but there is limited response to events unless they involve the pupils.
- 93 There was little evidence, apart from 'Helping your child to read', of informing parents on how to help their children. Parents generally do not speak as though they are partners in their children's education, which is the stated aim of the school.
- 94 The school is involved in a variety of community activities, for example, visits by police to cover a range of topics and health promotion school awards schemes. Guest speakers at assemblies include local clergy, school nurse, and a Jewish speaker. The school has worked with the Staffordshire Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) and nurseries. The school was one of the first in Staffordshire to gain the Investors in People award, which supports the mission of developing the individual and involved working with the TEC and outside consultants.
- 95 There are a range of visits by and to the school for example, an excellent visit to the local museum on archaeology and soccer coaching by Port Vale Football Club.

The management and efficiency of the school

Leadership and management

- 96 The governors, head teacher and staff with management responsibilities make significant and effective contributions to the quality and standards of education provided by the school. The governors have a clear, long term strategic plan which is making a positive impact upon the development of the school. The governors' decision to provide classroom assistance for the large classes is having a positive impact upon the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. Their enthusiasm and support for the development of pupils' skills and knowledge in the use of computers are one example of the governors' influence upon raising pupils' standards of attainment. Committees are well organised and meet regularly.
- 97 The headteacher provides strong, effective and supportive leadership. The headteacher sets a high standard of inspirational teaching as well as enabling teachers of large classes to work with smaller groups. The system for monitoring standards is excellent and strategies for measuring strengths and weaknesses are in place. Weaknesses which the school identifies are targeted and effective action taken. This has led to a number of improvements for example in the increase of educational visits and the pace of mathematics lessons in Year 6. The headteacher is ably supported by an efficient senior management team, who pursue rigorously ways of improving the quality of education. There is an excellent school development plan which makes a strategic impact upon the quality of education provided by the school.
- 98 Curriculum coordinators are competent and influential in monitoring standards. They are able to provide effective in-service training for their colleagues and are prudent in their use of the limited finance available for buying resources. There are detailed curriculum plans and policies, which are effectively implemented.
- 99 The mission of the school is to develop the individual. The school is very strong in the pursuit of its mission statement, however, pupils with special needs do not always receive effective support in Key Stage 2 to enable them to develop their skills in writing and reading and the curriculum for the under fives is limited by resources and restricts development in certain areas.
- 100 There is a welcoming and positive ethos and a commitment to achieving high standards. The impact of the school's participation in the Investment of People is evident in the open and friendly atmosphere and the sharing of expertise amongst all staff. Pupils are well cared for and staff are well supported by effective management structures. All statutory requirements are met with the exception of technical omissions in the annual report to parents.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

- 101 Teachers are suitably qualified and there is considerable expertise amongst the staff. Support staff assisting teachers in the classrooms are trained and well integrated with the teaching staff.

- 102 The school has used the techniques employed in Investors in People to prioritise training for the staff and develop them. Staff development policy is integrated within the overall school development plan and staff appraisals. The school uses funds available to it for in-service training. There is a cascade of information back to others after a course, which works well. However, the planning of courses on different topics is on a three year cycle and this can, in some cases, lead to a long delay before co-ordinators get a chance to see the latest information.
- 103 Essential in-service training is well planned but some staff commented that they could not get access to some courses due to budget restraints.
- 104 The buildings are generally in good physical condition, with no graffiti and are well cared for. However, some of the wooden window frames are rotten and need replacing. With large classes, some rooms are overcrowded and classes cannot be monitored adequately as it is difficult to move around the desks. There are limited outdoor areas in which the reception children can work and play.
- 105 The school is well provided with up to date computer equipment and resources for mathematics. Science resources are sufficient and well used. Resources are generally adequate but there is scope for improvement in some areas especially in the provision for the under five children. The school has arrangements with the high school for the loan of resources. The spending on resources is prioritised so that it is allocated to areas where resources are required.
- 106 Money generated by the Parents Teachers Association is spent appropriately on equipment or resources as required.
- 107 The library is not well stocked and many books need to be updated as they are not in a good condition. Some of the books in the reception class are out of date and do not reflect contemporary society.

The efficiency of the school

- 108 Finances are prudently managed and the headteacher and governors regularly review the budget. The governors' finance committee meets frequently and other governors receive regular budget updates.
- 109 The school budgets very carefully to maximise the use of its expenditure, and spending is linked to an excellent school development plan. For example, gas is now purchased from an independent supplier and the school employs its own caretaking staff, which makes a saving on the former charges.
- 110 There is very effective financial control by the headteacher who monitors the budget weekly. A recent independent audit reported many satisfactory features and its few recommendations have already been implemented. The school uses a computerised ordering and accounting system linked to the local authority mainframe. The school's administrative assistant manages this and the school office extremely efficiently.
- 111 There is effective use of teaching and support staff. Training and professional development are provided for all staff in line with the Investors in People Award held by the school, and are linked to the development plan.

- 112 Accommodation is generally well used, however outdoor play areas for use by children under five are insufficiently exploited. Resources are very prudently managed and allocated according to planned targets.
- 113 The very limited funds for pupils with special educational needs are allocated and used effectively.
- 114 Taking into account all the resources available, the ethos of the school, the quality of education provided, the levels of attainment on entry and the value added, the school provides very good value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

Areas of learning for children under five

- 115 During inspection week, over half the children in the reception class were under five. The class is staffed by a teacher and a classroom assistant, who supports the class almost full time.
- 116 The use of baseline assessment, as children enter reception class, reveals a wide range of ability. Overall, on entry, the level of attainment is in line with national expectations. The information, which is shared with parents, is used to help plan the curriculum in English and maths. The school is building effectively on the early reading, writing and number skills.
- 117 Learning takes place in a classroom designed for older pupils and consequently there are some aspects of its design and layout which are unsatisfactory for younger pupils. The cloakroom and washing facilities are sited at a distance from the classroom. Provision for food preparation and baking is restricted because of a lack of suitable facilities. There is access to an outdoor area, but its position and size limit the opportunities for exploration out of doors. Limitations in the accommodation and facilities reduce choice and the range of settings for structured play.

Language and Literacy

- 118 Attainment in language and literacy is above national expectations. The children listen well in small groups and when the whole class is working together. They are using a growing vocabulary. An example of this is when they use appropriate words to describe Red Riding Hood's journey along the pathway through the forest. The home corner offers limited opportunities for role play and drama, and scope exists to extend the provision to include other role play settings to extend children's spoken language. Children take home reading books regularly and make good progress in reading. However some of the books are old and in need of replacing. Opportunity for reading a range of good quality books is restricted because of a lack of suitable resources. Children have many opportunities to learn sounds and letter names.
- 119 Many children recognise sounds and words. They make good attempts at writing their own name. They copy sentences using letters which are well formed. Some children attempt to write for themselves.

Mathematics

- 120 Attainment in number exceeds the expectations for this age group. Opportunities to repeat patterns and count objects help children to develop their mathematical language and understanding. Children recognise numbers and count up to ten and beyond. They count confidently the numbers of children present, those taking packed lunch and dinners. Planning indicates that later in the year children will work with numbers to ten and beyond on adding, taking away and multiplying.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World.

- 121 Attainment is in line with the expectation for children of this age group. Clear explanations and well chosen questions in science help to sustain pupils' interest and encourage thoughtful responses. A good example of this is when children predict what will happen when the hyacinth bulbs grow. Some provision is made for experimenting with sand and water but its use is not fully exploited. The facilities out of doors are also restricted so that children's exploration of the environment is difficult to plan and implement. Children use construction equipment to make models, but a lack of resources limits the range of opportunities. They use the classroom computer with developing confidence and have opportunities to use the floor robot. Children talk about their families and their immediate environment. They are observed drawing simple plans of the route taken by Red Riding Hood. They learn about how things were different in the past, but sometimes the content of the work is not appropriately matched to their age and attainments. There are limited opportunities for extending children's knowledge and understanding of the world in a practical way.

Physical Development

- 122 Children's attainment in physical development is in line with expectations for pupils of this age group. Pupils move confidently and imaginatively and with a growing degree of co-ordination and skill in dance. They are observed performing their dances confidently to the music "Winter" by Vivaldi. The range of outdoor equipment is limited and restricts opportunities for vigorous activity and exploration out of doors. Nevertheless, the school makes good use of the equipment it has indoors. Children have opportunities to develop skills of cutting, gluing and manipulation of material. In one lesson they cut out outlines of Jack and Jill and stick them on to their picture with good levels of skill. Some children who find the task difficult, persevere and with appropriate support make good progress in cutting and gluing.

Creative Development

- 123 Children reach the national expected standards. There are some opportunities for drawing and painting from observation and imagination but some of the work observed during inspection week showed restricted opportunities for children to express their own ideas and feelings. Children have opportunities to explore sounds and musical instruments. They respond imaginatively to music through dance. The home corner provides limited opportunities for children to use their imagination. Displays enhance children's work and support learning, and the school needs to develop this further to help create a sense of awe and wonder in the learning environment.

Equal Opportunities

- 124 Teachers ensure that all children have equal access to what is provided. Children are helped to work at their own level in most activities with a suitable degree of support from an adult and those with special educational needs are identified at an early stage and additional help is given.

English

- 125 At the end of both key stages, the standards of attainment is above the national average. Results in English at the end of Key Stage 1 in the 1997 national test results indicate that overall, pupils are achieving well above the national average. In reading and writing the percentage reaching level 2 or above was above the national average and the number reaching level 3 was well above. In Key Stage 2 the number reaching level 4 or above was not significantly different from the national average, while the number reaching level 5 was slightly above average.
- 126 At the end of each key stage standards of speaking and listening are well above the national average. Opportunities for all pupils to speak are incorporated within most lessons, usually at the beginning. Pupils in Year 2 talked confidently about favourite days in the week and spoke enthusiastically about their Sunday activities. Careful questioning elicited detailed descriptions, resourceful vocabulary and much precise structuring of sentences. Pupils retain a good recollection of the plots and characters of stories they have heard and they enjoy predicting the next stage in a plot. Pupils make very good progress in speaking and listening. They listen very well to each other, and the receptive atmosphere encourages lower attaining pupils to make oral contributions which surpass expectation in perception and length. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils speak confidently. They can talk fluently about their work and use appropriate technical language, for instance, when describing their use of computers or techniques used in art. When reading round the class in Year 6, most pupils displayed a good grasp of character. Pupils listen regularly to a wide range of materials, including poetry, fiction and description. They listen keenly to the views of others in the class. They speak confidently within the classroom but were less successful in the small amount of role play encountered during the inspection. Drama is under-used as a teaching resource and as a means of developing expressive speaking in public.
- 127 Pupils' attainment in reading is above the national average at the end of Key Stage 1 and they make good progress; a high proportion of pupils have a reading age which exceeds their actual age. Pupils read enthusiastically. They make good progress by building up words phonically; they read regularly to the teacher and careful records of progress are maintained. Pupils in Year 2 can use a dictionary successfully. There is some reliance in Key Stage 1 on a reading scheme which has many strengths in terms of its use of grammar, sentence structure and punctuation, but which is well out of date in its stereotyping of characters. Pupils read regularly at home and the school has prepared a pamphlet to guide families in assisting with this activity. The school does not use parents as a resource on school premises to assist with reading. Attainment in reading in Key Stage 2 is above the national average. Pupils continue to enjoy reading and they make good progress. From Year 4 onwards most pupils select books on a free choice basis. There is less reading to the teacher but pupils' proficiency is regularly analysed. Pupils learn research skills, such as 'skimming' reading, and reading is used as a means of enhancing the mastering of grammar, syntax and vocabulary. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory and they generally make slow progress. Most of the pupils in Key Stage 2 who were heard reading during the inspection regularly use a library outside school, and most have well developed personal tastes in reading. The school's library is well used, particularly as a source of reference material.

- 128 Standards of attainment in written work in Key Stage 1 are above average and pupils make good progress. The school builds on the good grounding pupils have received in language as under fives and pupils produce a good volume of work in both years. In addition to careful letter formation, they learn about careful spacing, sentence construction and the function of a full stop. The range of writing produced is considerable. It includes stories, reactions to events, personal histories and book review. Pupils in Year 1 understand how to present events in a sequence and how to structure a simple story. Work is presented using information technology from an early stage. This is reflected in the use of word lists which pupils take home to learn. Work is well matched to the abilities of pupils, enabling all to make good progress through the key stage. Joined up writing is taught in Year 2. In Key Stage 2 a good standard of written work across the curriculum is a major priority of the school and pupils make good progress. The importance of this priority is reflected in the large amount and diversity of written work which is displayed. There is much reflective writing and poetry, for instance about 'The Sun' there is graphic and dramatic writing such as 'Wildlife in Danger' and 'The Brave Rescue', and there is demanding technical writing, for instance on 'How to Use the Telephone'. Much of the work shows the sophisticated use of information technology. While all the work re-drafted by hand for display is neat, a few pupils in Year 6 have not quite maintained their former high standards of handwriting in their exercise books. Examples of good writing occur in all subjects, for instance in history and geography. There are particularly good example in scientific accounts written by pupils in Year 6 which are personal rather than stylised in character.
- 129 Pupils' behaviour gives no cause for concern in any of the English lessons seen. Pupils remain attentive throughout and listen well to instructions. Relationships with other pupils and the teacher are good and pupils can be trusted to get on with their work conscientiously. They use equipment carefully and tidy up efficiently. In the small number of lessons where they were inadequately challenged, pupils remained well behaved and biddable.
- 130 The standard of teaching in English in Key Stage 1 is mainly good and sometimes excellent. All lessons are very thoroughly prepared, resources are carefully selected and appropriate. Tasks are well matched to the full range of ability in the class. Teachers have high expectations of pupils who are all constantly challenged. There are lively question and answer sessions to extend pupils' thinking and speaking. Time is carefully apportioned to tasks to ensure that lessons proceed at a good pace. Pupils receive individual attention whenever possible and there is encouraging assessment of work in progress to help promote high standards. Similar characteristics are found in teaching in Key Stage 2 where the teaching is mainly good and occasionally very good. In the small number of lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory, pupils were inadequately challenged and the pace of learning was too slow. Work is marked thoroughly and regularly by all teachers. In Key Stage 2 there is some inconsistency of practice, such as in the use of National Curriculum levels on pupils' work.
- 131 The schemes of work in English meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. A high standard of planning exists in English and there is an effective overall system of co-ordination. The subject co-ordinator assists and monitors the detailed planning which is carried out by the two key stage coordinators. There is a detailed policy for English which enables continuity and progression to be incorporated into the teachers' planning. Different aspects of the subject are targeted from time to time for intensive development; a recent focus was spelling. The results of in-service training are effectively disseminated amongst colleagues and their classroom practice is monitored from time to time to promote higher standards. Assessment and record keeping are very thorough and results of assessment strongly influence planning. There is good liaison with those who teach pupils with special educational needs to ensure that the pupils receive their full curricular entitlement. The quality and range of resources for English are good.

Mathematics

- 132 At the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils are reaching national averages and some are working at levels above these standards. The children are able to discuss simple fractions, add and subtract numbers up to 20, have a secure knowledge of shape, and some have a clear understanding of how to draw lines of symmetry. A considerable number of pupils can tell the time in half and quarter hours, recognise right angles and understand basic words in the weighing of objects. Most pupils can collect data and draw simple graphs. The higher attaining pupils can describe their mathematical thinking, count in twos, fives and tens, and can work out problems such as finding a quarter of twelve. In the 1997 national tests, the results were above the national average and a significant number of pupils reached standards beyond this level.
- 133 At the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils are reaching the national average standard and a significant number are working above this level. Most pupils are secure in their knowledge of numbers up to 1000 and can use their knowledge to solve problems. They have a firm understanding of how to calculate perimeters and areas of shapes, and can explain their work using the correct mathematical terms. Particularly impressive is the pupils' performance in mental arithmetic and the higher attaining pupils ability to solve problems. The pupils make excellent use of their computer skills to record and represent their test results. The results of the 1997 national tests were well above the national average.
- 134 Pupils in Key Stage 1 usually make good progress and tests used in Year 4 show that this progress is maintained. Most pupils in Key Stage 2 also make good progress especially those whose level of attainment is average and above. The progress of pupils whose level of attainment is below average, including those with special educational needs, is sometimes less than satisfactory. In class lessons and group work, the tasks set for these pupils is often at a level beyond their understanding. The pace of lessons is also too quick and the pupils fail to acquire the necessary basic concepts which will enable them to make further progress. A number of these pupils have not reached a firm understanding of place value and have little secure knowledge of multiplication tables. The work which is sometimes set for these pupils assumes that such knowledge and understanding is in place.
- 135 Pupils in both key stages listen carefully in all lessons and are enthusiastic. They are co-operative and often confident and keen to take part in practical demonstrations. In a Year 2 lesson the pupils enjoyed the group activity of learning about fractions.
- 136 Pupils in Year 5 accepted the challenge of showing the teacher how to draw graphs. High levels of concentration are a feature of many lessons and pupils' behaviour is usually of a very high standard. They usually present their work in a neat and systematic way.
- 137 In most all the lessons in both key stages the quality of teaching is satisfactory and frequently better. Teachers plan their lessons well and the quality of teaching in a third of the lessons is good and sometimes very good. One excellent lesson on fractions in Key Stage 2 was observed. Almost all lessons were well planned with appropriate activities and good use of time and resources. There is clear evidence that all attainment targets are taught and that effective records and assessment takes place. Results of standardised tests are analysed and targets set for groups of pupils. The targets are achieved and in some cases exceeded. In other subject areas mathematics is used effectively, especially in dealing with data and drawing of graphs. In geography climate statistics were well presented. A feature of good teaching in Year 6 was the pace of tests in number work. Teachers hold high expectations of their pupils and this is reflected in the work.

- 138 A small number of unsatisfactory lessons were seen and in these lessons and sometimes others, the expectations were too demanding for the lower attaining pupils. Other features of unsatisfactory teaching were long introductions by the teacher followed by activities which some pupils quickly completed. In some lessons, question and answer sessions were poorly constructed and far too many concepts were introduced in the same session. For a significant number of pupils these lessons confused the development of their mathematical knowledge. This was apparent by the answers to some questions.
- 139 The co-ordinator is provided with opportunities to monitor standards and set targets. During the inspection a comprehensive revised scheme of work was produced. It also gives guidance on intended target levels for each age group.

Science

- 140 By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils' attainment is above the national average and their progress is good. In the 1997 teacher assessments, the results were above the national average especially for higher levels of attainment.
- 141 At the end of Key Stage 2 their attainment is well above the national average and they are making very good progress. In the National Curriculum test of 1997 standards were well above the national average.
- 142 Investigative work is well developed across both key stages, for example, Key Stage 1 pupils understand and use the concept of a fair test well and make good predictions of the outcomes they expect. Older pupils record very accurate results, present them as line graphs and draw very good conclusions from them.
- 143 In the reception class older pupils recognise the name of the main parts of a plant, whilst by the end of Key Stage 1 they can also understand their functions. Older pupils describe and understand the function of the main organs of the body such as the heart and lungs.
- 144 Properties of materials are well understood, with younger pupils being able to describe and explain simple changes such as melting, whilst at the end of Key Stage 2 pupils understand both thermal and electrical conduction and insulation.
- 145 Across both key stages pupils have a very good appropriate knowledge and understanding of electricity, forces, light and sound. For example, pupils in Year 2 can explain simply how a rainbow is formed and those in Year 6 understand that the energy of a moving object is turned into heat when it stops. In Key Stage 1 the pupils make good progress and, in Key Stage 2, they make very good progress.
- 146 Almost all pupils are very enthusiastic, extremely well behaved, work very hard, concentrate very well and display great enjoyment during their lessons. Pupils work very effectively by themselves and their collaboration in teamwork is exemplary; they discuss their results and listen to each other in an excellent manner.

- 147 The quality of teaching in over three quarters of lessons is good and often very good. In a small number of lessons, teaching is unsatisfactory. The best lessons are well planned and have clear learning objectives. Teachers have very good subject expertise and pace their lessons very well. They enjoy excellent rapport with all pupils and give strong support to those with special educational needs. Teachers use a variety of appropriate teaching techniques, for example, they expect high standards of work, use humour to sustain interest, ask challenging questions to elicit understanding, and end lessons with effective summaries. Pupils are encouraged to use proper scientific language and develop good scientific curiosity. Homework is used effectively to extend classroom learning. Classroom assistants, particularly at Key Stage 1, are used very effectively. They are well aware of the planning and lesson objectives. Safe working during experiments is strongly emphasised. In the unsatisfactory lesson, pupils' progress is not adequately monitored, lesson objectives are vague and unsatisfactory behaviour is tolerated.
- 148 The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject very well. He provides very good support and training for all teachers. Effective use is made of the science scheme and it is monitored to ensure coverage of programmes of study and continuity of progress between classes.

Other subjects or courses

Design and Technology

- 149 Only a few lessons, towards the end of Key Stage 2, could be observed. Additional evidence was gained by observation of records and photographs of previous work, models on display and by talking to pupils.
- 150 By the end of both key stages attainment is in line with national expectations and pupils make satisfactory progress.
- 151 At Key Stage 1 pupils understand simple mechanisms such as wheels and axles, how to make a simple plan, make a range of simple things and use construction kits. For example they designed and made a push-along toy for young children. They also understand safe working practices to avoid hurting themselves and others.
- 152 Pupils at Key Stage 2 understand well the principles of good design, for example, they planned and made a tea cosy to fit a particular tea-pot and redesigned a model car to improve strength in a crash. They are able to evaluate their own work and that of others effectively, taking into account choice and limited availability of suitable materials and the need for a good appearance.
- 153 In both key stages there are good cross curriculum links such as the making of Viking houses to support history and a puppet theatre model used to present a short play.
- 154 All pupils are very enthusiastic about their work and keen to learn. They show obvious enjoyment and concentrate well for long periods. They are exceptionally well behaved and show excellent self-discipline when collaborating in teams, listening well to each other and sharing ideas.

- 155 The quality of teaching is very good in Key Stage 2. Lessons are expertly planned and have good learning objectives. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject and pace lessons very well. They use a good range of appropriate techniques such as challenging questions to enhance understanding and assessing work jointly with pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported, appropriately challenged and have access to modified equipment such as special scissors for a pupils with poor grip.
- 156 The co-ordinator leads the subject well, supports colleagues with training and monitors progress by exchanging lessons. However the quality of recording and reporting pupils' progress is inconsistent across the school and there is insufficient use of food technology at Key Stage 2.

Information Technology

- 157 At the end of Key Stage 1 the standard of attainment is above the national expectations. Although only limited use of information technology was seen, the work on display demonstrated that pupils are able to use computers competently. They can collect data and use appropriate programs to draw graphs of favourite toys. In the reception class, the children can use a concept keyboard in order to construct sentences.
- 158 At the end of Key Stage 2 the attainment is well above the national expectations. Pupils can confidently use keyboards, a mouse, enter data onto spreadsheets, interrogate information and construct a wide range of graphs in numerous subjects. The evidence included the height of waterfalls, temperatures and ways that pupils travel to school. Pupils are also able to create merit certificates and their own audio-tape guides. They are able to speak with some knowledge about the programs they are using and the work which they have done.
- 159 From the tentative start which they make in the reception class, the pupils make good progress in both key stages and at the end of Key Stage 2 they are very articulate and enthusiastic about the subject. They can use the CD ROM material to further their knowledge in other subjects and good use of a history program was seen in Year 3. It is intended to introduce voice activated programs to older pupils.
- 160 In Key Stage 1 the quality of teaching is good and, at the end of Key Stage 2, very good. Teachers use information technology skills in a range of subjects including the study of volcanoes, mathematics, English and art. The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has a very good knowledge of the subject. He has set targets for staff training and for access to the Internet. These have been achieved and the school is now seeking to start video-conferencing with a local primary school. It is already involved in the National Grid for Learning project and acquired valuable extra resources. The school governors have actively supported the development of this subject.

History

- 161 During the inspection only a small sample of history teaching was observed. However, on the evidence from scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussions with pupils, it is evident that pupils are on course to meet and in the majority of cases exceed the attainment expected at ages seven and eleven.

- 162 At Key Stage 1, pupils are introduced to the lives of people in the past. Through photographs they see how they and others have changed over time. They have opportunities to handle objects from the past. Pupils in Year 1 note the different styles of clocks and materials used to make them and are able to place them in sequence. They use appropriate language to describe the passing of time and the differences between then and now.
- 163 Progress in history is good in both pupils' knowledge and understanding and the ability to use skills of enquiry. Pupils in Year 2 make good progress in learning about enquiry skills. They find out what happened in the past at the school from the school's log book and progress to finding out about the Great Fire of London from pictures and the diary of Samuel Pepys.
- 164 At Key Stage 2, pupils gain a good understanding of chronology. Educational visits to places of interest, including museums which depict life at different periods of history, help pupils to come to an understanding of life in past times. The insights which these visits provide are evident in pupils' work. The workshop of "Digging Detectives" at Hanley Museum is a good example of this. Pupils demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of the periods they are studying. By the end of the key stage, they explain the cause and effects of events and changes and identify or contrast the different characteristics of past periods and societies.
- 165 Pupils make good progress towards the end of the Key Stage 2 when they make a good start in developing an understanding of the processes of historical enquiry. The gains are particularly strong when pupils have the opportunity to use primary documentary evidence.
- 166 Pupils' attitude to learning and their interest in history are strong. They enjoy hearing stories about the past and seeking out for themselves information for their own projects. Their enthusiasm and interest are particularly good when they are engaged in first hand experiences, for example, when given the opportunity at the museum to handle a piece of rock which is 5,000 years old.
- 167 The teaching of history is good, leading to above average attainment and progress. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. The teaching encourages active participation of pupils in discussion and in finding out information. Lessons usually have clear objectives and are planned effectively. The generally practical approach with good use of resources holds the interest of lower attaining pupils and those with special needs and they make satisfactory progress. Information Technology is used well to support the work in history.
- 168 A policy and guidelines are in place, which usefully set out the aims of teaching and learning and the ways in which historical knowledge and understanding is to be developed. Pupils are covering more history than is required in the National Curriculum and some slimming down of the study units is planned. Some of the study units planned for the youngest pupils at the beginning of Key Stage 1 are in need of review to provide a better match to the age and abilities of pupils. The co-ordinator is very effective in monitoring the coverage of the curriculum and the standards of work achieved. She has produced a moderation file of pupils' work for each year group and this is used to help teachers assess pupils' work.
- 169 A useful range of book resources and other learning materials linked to the various study units is being built up. Scope exists to extend documentary sources and artefacts.

Geography

- 170 Only a small sample of geography teaching was observed at Key Stage 2. However, on the evidence of discussions with pupils, scrutiny of their work and teachers' planning, it is clear that pupils are attaining national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and with many pupils exceeding the national standards at the end of Key Stage 2.
- 171 Pupils in Year 1 are developing a simple but accurate geographical vocabulary when they compare the British Isles with Haiti. The topic is enlivened by letters from a penfriend, who describes life on the island. Pupils are introduced to drawing simple plans, for example a bird's eye view of the classroom, and later on more complex maps. They begin to use large scale maps and identify locations on atlases and globes. Progress within the key stage is satisfactory and geographical knowledge is extended effectively. By the end of the key stage pupils can identify the area in which they live and the constituent countries of the British Isles.
- 172 In Key Stage 2 pupils' progress is satisfactory. Pupils make very good progress in Years 5 and 6. They are involved in a wide range of geographical tasks and activities in which they gain a secure knowledge and understanding of different places, locally, nationally and in more distant locations.
- 173 Pupils make good progress in map skills. By the end of the key stage, pupils handle four figure grid references confidently. They use their knowledge of standard symbols and keys to extract information from maps of different scales. They make good use of photographs and compare them with maps of the same location.
- 174 At Key Stage 1 pupils' attitude to learning are good. They show interest and enthusiasm for their work and listen carefully to their teachers. At Key Stage 2, pupils' attitude and interest are very good, including pupils with special educational needs, who talk confidently about their work. Standards of presentation are often good.
- 175 The teaching of geography is never less than satisfactory and sometimes good, leading to above average attainment and progress, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Subject knowledge is secure. Lessons are planned well and methods involve the pupils actively in their learning. Resources are used effectively. Generally, the work is well matched to attainments and capabilities of pupils. Fieldwork and visits make a positive contribution. Information technology is used very effectively to support the work. A good example is seen in Year 6 when pupils produce spreadsheets to show the numbers of visits to Heritage Sites and population density in different places.
- 176 There is a useful policy and scheme of work in place. The co-ordinator is effective in monitoring the coverage of the subject and the standards of attainment. She is building up a moderation file of pupils' work to help teachers with their assessments. The school has good plans to reduce the number of localities to be contrasted to enable more in-depth study. Resources are of good quality generally and are effectively managed.

Art

- 177 At the end of Key Stage 1 the standard is well above the national expectation. The pupils can mix colour skilfully, work in a wide range of media, make detailed observational drawing, and they use their skills well in the making of three-dimensional objects. Of particularly high standard are the prints from cogs which were an extension of the study of a bicycle which included a display of excellent drawings. The pupils' ability to use colour effectively is seen in some stunning pictures of dahlias and daisies. In these and other pictures the pupils show a very good sense of design, pattern and shape. Pupils ability to work in the style of other artists is also of a very high standard. The inspiration of Paul Mondrian has stimulated the pupils to produce excellent compositions in a similar style.
- 178 The progress which the pupils make in Key Stage 1 is very good.
- 179 The standard at the end of Key Stage 2 is above the national expectation and there are some excellent features. Through the study of William Morris and his wallpaper designs, the pupils have developed skills in making patterns and the use of techniques in wax resist. Excellent examples of batik are displayed in the school.
- 180 The pupils can use charcoal effectively, discuss the making of pots and use the correct terminology, and transfer their skills to work in other curriculum areas. In the lessons observed the standard of drawing and use of pastel was satisfactory They make good use of computers and art programs.
- 181 The pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress including those with special educational needs and continue developing their skills acquired in the earlier stage. Symmetrical designs help to develop their mathematical thinking and their colour awareness is extended by working with textiles to create tonal and atmospheric tapestries. Pupils with special educational needs have their confidence developed in art lessons.
- 182 The pupils are enthusiastic and usually work diligently. In lessons they watch and listen intently. In the lessons observed, some pupils had a tendency to work too quickly or pay insufficient attention to detail and the resulting work, especially in sketch books, was not of the high standard which the school frequently achieves. At the end of lessons pupils are very cooperative in helping to collect materials and tidy up.
- 183 Two Key Stage 2 lessons were observed and the overall standard of teaching was good. The teachers have a sound knowledge of the subject, use suitable language for the subject and good use is made of the work of artists. Lessons are well planned and resources used efficiently. Art work is well displayed around the school and the subject is effectively linked to other areas of the curriculum. The coordinator has developed considerable expertise, provides in-service training for her colleagues and is making an impact upon the standards of attainment. The school portfolio contains some very impressive examples of printing. Excellent drawings are the outcome of a visit from a sculptor.

Music

- 184 At the end of both key stages standards of attainment are in line with the national expectation. In Key Stage 1 pupils sing energetically and in tune. They can play a steady beat on untuned percussion instruments and successfully put into practice the idea of loud, soft, crescendo and diminuendo. They know the names of instruments and are proficient at sustained listening. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are well versed in the elements of music prescribed in the National Curriculum, such as rhythm, pitch and dynamics. They understand the principles of graphic scores and can interpret them confidently. A class in Year 5 possessed a good knowledge of Tudor instruments and musical style. In the small amount of composing observed, pupils were unsure of the rhythmic qualities of good fanfares and results were simplistic. The practical nature of all activities enables pupils of all abilities to participate purposefully. The quality of the singing in assembly is a good feature of the school's music, not least when accompanied on the piano by a pupil.
- 185 Progress in lessons in both key stages is satisfactory and sometimes good. There is clear development of performing and listening skills throughout both key stages. Pupils find the activities interesting and effort is well sustained through most lessons but, where lessons last an hour or more, the pace is inclined to diminish when activities involve only listening and performing. Pupils in Year 1 made good progress throughout a long lesson where the variety of tasks included performing and the making of simple percussion instruments. Pupils behave well in lessons. They are attentive and show restraint and care when using instruments. They work together purposefully on practical assignments and maintain good relationships with other pupils and the teacher.
- 186 The standards of teaching is satisfactory and occasionally good in both key stages. The majority of teachers are non-specialists but teach music to their own classes. Lessons are well prepared. The planning of lessons is good and music is often used to support topic work in other areas of the curriculum, such as history and English. Resources are carefully chosen and deployed. Where taped radio broadcasts are used there is purposeful intervention by teachers to reinforce teaching points. At all levels the purposeful use of question and answer extends pupils' speaking, verifies their understanding and helps establish a purposeful pace of learning. There is occasional use of information technology, as in the lesson on Tudor music where a CD ROM program was used to demonstrate period instruments.
- 187 Co-ordination of the subject is efficient and non-specialist teachers are well-supported. The level of resources is good in most respects although there is some sharing of text books. The scheme of work meets statutory requirements but criteria for assessing pupils' composing are inadequately clear. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop socially and culturally through learning instruments and taking part in extra-curricular musical activities, such as choir and recorder groups. There are regular performances for parents and every two years a large-scale musical event is staged.

Physical Education

- 188 At the end of both key stages the pupils are exceeding national expectations.
- 189 In Key Stage 1 the standard of performance observed in dance is above average. Pupils move imaginatively, creatively and are able to put together a sequence of expressive movements. Pupils in Year 2 show good control of movements and awareness of space when they perform their dances. They push up and down, twist and turn with strong, controlled movements in response to music on the theme of machines.

- 190 Pupils in both key stages make good progress. There was visible improvement of performance in each lesson. This was achieved mainly through directed observation and critical analysis of the work of other pupils and, as a consequence, individuals strive to make their own performance more imaginative and creative and to refine their skills. Pupils progress over time is quite marked, particularly in the reception class, where after only half a term in school, pupils show very good levels of self-discipline, respond to teachers instructions quickly and have a good range of dance skills.
- 191 At Key Stage 2 pupils work with confidence and skill and develop high standards in all aspects of physical education. They work well on apparatus and the floor and develop stamina and strength as well as precision in movement. Pupils work safely in co-operative games and competitive tasks. They make good use of the opportunities to develop skills in several games. They practise and refine ways of sending, receiving and travelling with balls on the ground and in flight. Appropriate emphasis is placed on techniques of attack and defence. Pupils in Year 3 make good progress when they are introduced to the skills and techniques of hockey. In swimming, the great majority of pupils become confident swimmers. Residential visits and day courses provide pupils with experiences of outdoor and adventurous activities.
- 192 The response of pupils to physical education is very good. They thoroughly enjoy taking part in all forms of physical activity and show a desire to improve their skills and performance. Pupils with special educational needs in other areas of the curriculum, also make good progress.
- 193 Teaching of physical education ranges from unsatisfactory to very good with the majority of teaching good. The best lessons have detailed planning, pupils know what is expected of them and good relationships and positive coaching allow them to achieve the objectives. The teaching of dance is particularly good. Real encouragement is conveyed to pupils to develop effective expression and improve their individual performance.
- 194 In games, good use is made of the skills of the professional coach from Port Vale Football Club. The teaching of skills has a marked impact upon team and competitive performances. Pupils achieve a high degree of success in competitive games. Teachers, for the most part, have good subject knowledge and use good skill development strategies. Weak teaching occurs when the teacher's subject knowledge is insecure and the lesson is not structured well, and as a consequence pupils become restless.
- 195 There is a policy and scheme of work in place which provides good guidance for teachers. The resources and spaces available for physical education are both good in and out of doors. The equipment available is suitable for gymnastics and games and is well maintained. A broad range of activities within the curriculum is offered and these are complemented by good opportunities to take part in extra curricular clubs.

Religious Education

- 196 Only three religious education lessons took place during the inspection. Judgements include evidence from a scrutiny of written work from all classes.
- 197 Standards of attainment in religious education are above the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus in Key Stage 1. In Year 1 pupils know about Christian festivals such as Advent and Christmas. At an early stage they consider relationships and their roles as members of a family and pupils. They explore human feelings such as jealousy, anger and trust and their effect on themselves. Pupils in Year 1 spoke vividly about physical mishaps in their lives and produced careful and often extended written recollections of them which were carefully illustrated. Pupils are aware of the existence of other faiths and know about some of the festivals and objects associated with Judaism and Islam. At the end of Key Stage 2 standards of attainment are broadly in line with the expectation of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils extend their knowledge of Christian and other festivals and explore concepts such as 'belonging' and 'community'. They consider further moral issues and, for example, in Year 3, devise their own Ten Commandments. Pupils in Year 4 extend their knowledge of major festivals connected with chosen world religions and gain a thorough knowledge of the symbolism of church buildings and religious artefacts. In Year 6, pupils write sensitively about Zacchaeus and in a topic on 'friendship and duty' consider the differences between moral and legal duty. A good standard of creative work is exemplified in prayers for hospitals composed in Year 6. Lower attaining pupils contribute well to discussions in class but generally produce less fluent and accurate written work.
- 198 Progress is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. There is clear development in the level of written work through both key stages. Pupils' understanding is developed through the use of discussion which is a feature of most lessons. In the lesson inspected in Key Stage 1 pupils responded well to sensitively paced of questioning and discussion. Pupils of all abilities were actively involved and made good progress. In a lesson in Key Stage 2 progress was unsatisfactory where pupils received too much information with too little opportunity for reacting to it and actively learning from it.
- 199 Pupils behave well in lessons and, where the task permits, they work in a sustained and independent way. Instructions are carefully carried out and all pupils are keen to respond positively when writing or speaking.
- 200 In the small number of lessons seen, teaching varied between good and satisfactory. All teachers plan well and produce a good range of materials. Where the teaching is best the pupils' response rather than the teacher's presentation is the focal point of the lesson. There is a careful pacing of information and challenge which enables pupils to develop their ideas and understanding confidently. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, pupils were spectators for too long and had no time to benefit meaningfully from an impressive display of vestments and objects from various world faiths.
- 201 The scheme of work for religious education closely follows the Locally Agreed Syllabus except for its recommendations on assessment. A good balance is maintained between Christianity and other faiths and the development of pupils' understanding of abstract moral and spiritual concepts is an important feature. Visiting speakers make a significant contribution to the subject from time to time. The handbook is detailed and helpful. Resources are varied and well organised and the impact of the subject is enhanced by a high standard of display.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

Summary of inspection evidence

- 202 The inspection of Hillside Primary School was undertaken by a team of five inspectors including a lay inspector, over a period of four days. In total, they completed 19 inspection days in school.
- 203 The inspectors spent a total of over 50 hours observing lessons. In addition to this, time was taken talking to pupils, attending acts of worship, sharing in school lunches, observing break times and accompanying pupils on an educational visit. Ten hours was spent looking at samples of pupils' work and the same amount of time interviewing members of staff, governors and parents at various times during the inspection. Overall, almost 80 hours were spent in all types of observations. A visit to the school was made prior to the inspection. A meeting with parents, and another with the governors, was also held before the inspection.
- 204 The inspectors heard children read and attended registration periods. The documentation which was examined included the school's development plan, budget, curriculum planning, reports to parents, the most recent auditor's report, governors minutes and notes on management meetings.

Data and indicators

PUPIL DATA

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR - Y6	260	2	41	12

TEACHERS AND CLASSES

Qualified teachers (YR - Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)

10

Number of pupils per qualified teacher

24.7 : 1

Education support staff (YR - Y6)

Total number of education support staff

2

Total aggregate hours worked each week

59.5

Financial year:	1997
	£
Total Income	357,142
Total Expenditure	344,676
Expenditure per pupil	1,281
Balance brought forward from previous year	17,880
Balance carried forward to next year	30,343

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

260

Number of questionnaires returned:

85

Responses (percentage of answers in each category)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	33	39	7	6	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	49	33	0	3	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	21	46	10	3	1
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	18	52	6	8	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	33	41	2	8	1
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	46	34	4	1	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	25	43	15	2	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	28	47	4	5	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	42	34	8	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	41	41	1	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	52	31	1	1	0