

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Astmoor Primary School**  
Runcorn

LEA area : Halton

Unique Reference Number : 111217

Headteacher : Mr K N F Rimmer

Reporting inspector : Mr M A Mackay

Dates of inspection : 15 November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707060

Inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary

Type of control: County

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

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Appropriate authority: Halton Borough Council

Name of chair of governors: Mrs K McPoland

Date of previous inspection: 6 December 1996

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Mr M A Mackay, RgI	English Information and communications technology Religious education Geography	Attainment & progress Quality of teaching Curriculum & assessment Leadership and management
Mr M Moore, Lay Inspector	Equal opportunities	Attendance Attitudes, behaviour & personal development Support, guidance & pupils' welfare Partnership with parents & the community
Mr N Wales	Mathematics Special educational needs Design & technology History Physical education	Staffing, accommodation & learning resources Efficiency
Mrs C Moorcroft	Science Areas of learning for children under five Art Music	Spiritual, moral & social development

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## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

- The pupils' attainment in the national tests for science at Key Stage 2 are above the national average
- When compared with the national test results of similar schools, the pupils attain above average standards in English and mathematics at both key stages and well above average standards in science at Key Stage 2.
- Since the last inspection, the school has successfully raised the level of its pupils' attainment at Key Stage 2 in English, mathematics and science.
- The school has successfully raised the pupils' level of attainment in religious education.
- The pupils attain very good standards in attitudes to learning, in behaviour and in their relationships with their teachers and each other.
- The pupils attain a good standard of attendance.
- A high proportion of the teaching is good or very good.
- The school provides a good curriculum for children under the age of five.
- The school makes good provision for the pupils' moral and social development.
- The school has very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance.
- The school has very good procedures for child protection and promoting the pupils' well being, health and safety.
- The quality of information provided to parents is very good.
- The school has a good development plan.

### Where the school has weaknesses

- The pupils do not attain the nationally expected standards in information and communications technology and design technology.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. This prevents them from making as much progress as they should.
- The school's use of assessment to inform curriculum planning is unsatisfactory, making it difficult for the teachers to improve how they plan and adapt the curriculum to meet their pupils' needs.
- The school's arrangements for supporting and monitoring teaching and curriculum development are unsatisfactory. As a result, it is not able to identify weaknesses quickly in order to address them.
- Some aspects of the teachers' planning are unsatisfactory. For example, teachers do not make effective use of links between subjects that would help to make the curriculum more manageable, and they do not consistently match the planned learning activities to the needs of pupils of different levels of attainment.

**What the school does well significantly outweighs its weakness. The weaknesses, however, will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of the pupils at the school.**

## How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school was last inspected in 1996 and has therefore only had three of the four years normally allocated for school improvement. The school has overcome most of the weaknesses identified in its last inspection, and it is better than it was because it has:

- raised the pupils' attainment in English, mathematics, science at Key Stage 2;
- raised the standards the pupils achieve in religious education at both key stages;
- made effective use of national tests and other assessments to improve overall attainment in English and mathematics;
- introduced schemes of work for all subjects;
- devised a good school development plan that allows all staff to be appropriately involved with future developments.

The school has not yet made satisfactory improvements to the following though these are planned for as a part of the school's own development plan following the last inspection report:

- its arrangements for ensuring that pupils in the same age group are provided with greater continuity in their learning, especially when they are in different classes;
- its procedures for systematically monitoring the quality of education and the progress made by the pupils in each subject.

**The school's improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The school now has a clearer vision for the future and good development plan to help it manage the necessary changes to its work. It is now well placed to make further improvements.**

## Whether pupils are making enough progress

This table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds in 1999 based on the National Curriculum tests:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	Key
English	C	B	<i>well above average</i> A <i>above average</i> B <i>average</i> C <i>below average</i> D <i>well below average</i> E
Mathematics	C	B	
Science	B	A	

In the 1999 National Curriculum tests the results for the pupils aged eleven were close to the national average in English and mathematics and above that expected nationally in science. These results are not significantly different from the results of the 1998 national tests. The pattern of attainment over the past two years is an improvement on earlier years' results and marks the school's success in raising the standards its pupils attain. Compared to similar schools, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard is above the average in English and mathematics and well above the average in science.

The 1999 national test results of the pupils aged seven are close to the national average in English and mathematics. This pattern of attainment is similar to that of the 1998 tests. When compared to similar schools, the proportion of pupils attaining the nationally expected standard in both English and mathematics is above average. The standards attained by pupils at the end Key Stage 1 have improved since 1996.

The inspection findings confirm the outcome of the most recent test results for English and mathematics, and judge the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in English and mathematics at both key stages to be close to the national average. The evidence of the inspection indicates that the proportion of the pupils

attaining the nationally expected standard in science at Key Stage 2 to be close to the national average. The pupils, at both key stages, attain standards appropriate for their age in art, religious education, geography, history, and physical education. At the end of Key Stage 1 the pupils attain standards in information and communications technology that are close to those expected nationally, but by the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils attain below the expected standards. By the end of both key stages, the pupils attain standards in design and technology below those expected for their ages.

### Quality of teaching

Teaching in	Under 5	5 – 7 years	7 – 11 years
English	Very good	Good	Good
Mathematics	Very good	Good	Good
Science		Good	Good
Information technology		Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Religious education		Good	Satisfactory
Other subjects	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

The teaching is satisfactory or better in 100 per cent of the lessons. It is good or better in fifty-four per cent of lessons. Good teaching is evident in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Very good teaching is seen in fifteen per cent of the lessons. This very high quality of teaching is seen mainly in the classes for the under fives including the reception class and in Year 1 at Key Stage 1.

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

### Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	The pupils' behaviour is very good. In most year groups the pupils behave very well, have very good attitudes to learning, are polite, and work well together.
Attendance	The pupils' attendance is a little better than the national average because the school has very good arrangements for monitoring absences.
Ethos*	The school has a good ethos. The pupils are keen to learn and the standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science are rising. The relationships in the school are positive and create good conditions for the care and education of the pupils. The staff is committed to raising the pupils' attainment.
Leadership and management	The leadership of the school is satisfactory overall. It provides clear educational direction for the school. It implements the school's aims and values effectively and it has good arrangements for planning educational developments. Its arrangements for supporting and monitoring teaching and curriculum development are, however, unsatisfactory, though changes to monitoring are planned.
Curriculum	The curriculum is satisfactory overall and good for children under the age of five. The school places an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy that is helping to raise the pupils' attainment. The school has satisfactory procedures for assessing its pupils' attainment but its use of assessment to inform curriculum planning is unsatisfactory in a number of classes. In some classes, e.g. under-fives, the use of assessment to inform teaching is good.

Pupils with special educational needs	The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved recently but is still unsatisfactory. There are pupils who should have individual education plans who do not have them. Provision for pupils with special educational needs in the early years class is good.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	This is good overall. The school provides a strong moral framework and is good at promoting the pupils' social development. The school makes appropriate provision for the pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	The levels of staffing and resources at the school are satisfactory. There are enough teachers and support staff, and sufficient resources to enable the school to teach the curriculum. The accommodation is adequate and is used effectively to support the pupils' learning.
Value for money	The school provides satisfactory value for money.

*\* Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

### **The parents' views of the school**

<b>What most parents like about the school</b>	<b>What some parents are not happy about</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school encourages parents to play an active part in its life;</li> <li>• The parents find it easy to approach the school with problems or questions to do with their child/ren;</li> <li>• The school handles complaints well;</li> <li>• The school gives parents a clear understanding of what is taught;</li> <li>• The school keeps parents informed about their child/ren's progress;</li> <li>• The school enables the children to achieve a good standard of work;</li> <li>• The school provides sufficient homework;</li> <li>• The school's values have a positive effect upon the pupils</li> <li>• Their child/ren like school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some parents do not think the school achieves high standards of good behaviour.</li> </ul>

The inspection findings support the parents' positive views on all the points except one – the school enables the children to achieve good standards of work. The school has successfully raised the level of its pupils' attainment to a standard close to the national average, but it does not consistently cater well for the lower and higher attaining pupils in ways which enable them to do their best. The inspectors do not agree with the small number of parents who feel that the school does not achieve a high standard of good behaviour among its pupils. In nearly all lessons, the behaviour of the pupils is good or better.



## **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

The governors, the headteacher and the staff should:

### **Raise standards in information technology and design and technology by:**

- Producing better curriculum planning which matches the needs of all pupils and better supports the learning targets of the school.
- Increasing the time available for design and technology
- Improving teacher's expertise in these subjects and in particular encouraging better use of assessment information.  
(Paragraphs: 11, 13, 30, 38, 119 – 125, 143 –147)

### **Improve the provision for pupils with special educational needs by:**

- making consistent use of the procedures of the Code of Practice to determine the level of support the pupils need;
- constructing individual education plans that state what each pupil must learn and how the learning will be achieved;
- providing appropriate professional development opportunities for teachers and classroom support staff to enable them to plan and to teach pupils with special needs more effectively;
- improving the ways the special needs co-ordinator, the learning support staff and the teachers co-operate when planning and delivering special needs provision;  
(Paragraphs: 15 – 18, 22, 26, 41, 54, 63, 99, 107, 109, 156)

### **Improve how the school plans the curriculum by:**

- having subject co-ordinators support teachers in adapting the acquired schemes of work to create a more manageable curriculum;  
(Paragraphs: 32, 40, 62, 101, 68)

### **Improve how the school uses assessment by:**

- devising and implementing procedures for using assessment outcomes for a range of purposes, in particular to address any weaknesses in teaching and learning and to improve the quality of curriculum planning
- devising and implementing an efficient method of recording the pupils' progress and attainment in the subjects of the national curriculum, and religious education;  
(Paragraphs: 35, 43, 44, 55, 62, 110)

### **Improve how the school supports and monitors the teaching and curriculum development by:**

- devising and implementing a schedule of classroom visits that focuses upon the weaker aspects of the teaching identified in the report;
- using the outcomes of monitoring to set a suitable programme for staff development;
- strengthening the role of the subject co-ordinators in supporting curriculum development and monitoring its implementation  
(Paragraphs: 40, 41, 65, 68, 69, 74)

## INTRODUCTION

### Characteristics of the school

1 Astmoor County Primary School is situated on the edge of the Castlefields area of Runcorn. It admits pupils into full-time education in the September in which they are five. It is a small school and has 167 pupils on its roll. The school serves an area of social and economic disadvantage. A significant proportion of the school population changes each year due to movement in and out of the area.

2 Of the pupils enrolled, fifty-three per cent are entitled to free school meals. This is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils on the school's register of special need, thirty-one per cent, is well above the national average. There are no pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need at the school, which is well below the national average. Children are admitted to the nursery class, on a part-time basis, in the September of the year in which they are four. Most children enter the school with attainment in all aspects of learning that is well below what is expected nationally.

3 The school publishes its aims in its prospectus. These are:

- to prepare the children for life, encouraging and developing a flexibility and adaptability of thought;
- to give every child the opportunity to be successful at something worthwhile and be valued for this;
- to fully develop the potential of each individual within the school by creating the conditions in which effective learning can take place;
- to work together as a staff to provide an atmosphere of love and warmth where there is no fear;
- to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum appropriate to age and ability.

4 The school has set appropriate targets to improve standards in literacy and numeracy. The school's current development priorities are:

- to establish the numeracy hour;
- to improve provision for the teaching of information technology;
- to implement the second stage of the school's literacy plan;
- to develop funding for special needs in order to provide a stable element of learning support.

## Key indicators

### Attainment at Key Stage 1<sup>1</sup>

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	16	12	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	13	13	12
	Girls	12	12	11
	Total	25	25	23
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	89 (77)	89 (77)	82 (85)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	13	12	13
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	25	24	25
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	89 (73)	86 (77)	89 (73)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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<sup>1</sup> Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

## Attainment at Key Stage 2<sup>2</sup>

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	8	15	23

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	5	7	8
	Girls	10	11	14
	Total	15	15	22
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	65 (62)	65 (62)	96 (81)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	5	5	7
	Girls	11	11	12
	Total	16	16	19
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	70 (38)	70 (57)	83 (57)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

## Attendance

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

		%
Authorised Absence	School	4.5
	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised Absence	School	1.1
	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

<sup>2</sup> Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

## Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	20
Satisfactory or better	100
Less than satisfactory	0

## PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

### EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

#### Attainment and progress

5 A very high proportion of the children enter the nursery with a level of attainment well below that which is expected nationally. By the time they are five, however, most of the children attain the standards expected of them for their age in most of the areas of learning.

#### Attainment in English, mathematics and science

6 By the end of Key Stage 1, most of the pupils attain the expected standard in English. They write sequences of simple sentences that describe events or form short stories. They are beginning to use punctuation accurately. Nearly all of the pupils write neatly and correctly spell simple, regular words. In mathematics, most of the pupils attain the expected standard in mental calculation, space and measure. The pupils attain an average standard in the different aspects of science.

7 Recent bench mark data and the results of the national tests in 1999 indicate that the performance of the pupils at age eleven in English and mathematics is close to the national average and above that of similar schools. The pupils' performance in science is above average when compared to all schools and well above that of pupils in similar schools. Taking the four years 1996 to 1999 together, the results of the tests show that the performance of the pupils in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science has improved steadily to a point where it is close to that found nationally. The evidence of the inspection supports the pattern of attainment indicated in the test results for the past two years. The pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science is close to the nationally expected standard.

8 By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils' attainment in speaking and listening matches that expected for their age. Most of the pupils support their views in discussion when they refer to the texts they discuss. They speak clearly and confidently when they talk about their work and about the authors they learn about. Many of the pupils use good expression when they read. They locate reference books and know how to use the contents and index sections of books to locate information. However, the pupils rarely use the school library for independent research to support their learning.

9 The inspection evidence indicates that the standards the pupils attain in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2 match those expected nationally of pupils aged eleven. They use and apply their mathematical knowledge appropriately in solving problems and are beginning to acquire useful strategies for doing mental calculations. The standards they attain in number, shape, space, measure and data handling are average

10 The pupils attain an average standard in science by the end of Key Stage 2 when they learn about materials and their properties, living things, and physical processes.

## **Attainment in the other subjects**

11 Until recently, the curriculum for information technology was not well taught and because of this the pupils' attainment is below that expected for their age at both key stages. Progress in the lessons seen during the inspection was at least satisfactory.

12 The pupils' attainment in religious education, by the end of both key stages, is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. The pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs and practices in the faith traditions they study.

13 The pupils at both key stages attain the nationally expected standards in all other subjects of the National Curriculum except in design and technology. The pupils do not attain a satisfactory level of attainment in this subject partly because it is allocated insufficient time.

## **The pupils' progress**

14 They children under the age of five make very good progress in their personal and social development and many are on target to attain the standards expected of five-year-olds. They make good progress in all of the remaining areas of learning including language and literacy, mathematics, physical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. The children make good or better progress because the teaching is effective and the curriculum is well planned.

15 Most of the pupils in the reception class and Year 1 make good progress in developing literacy skills because the teaching is good. The pupils in the current Year 2 class, however, do not make good progress because they do less work and because the teaching usually relies too heavily upon the use of worksheets. In this class, too, the higher attaining pupils and those pupils with special educational needs do not make sufficient progress because the work set for them is not consistently well matched to their needs. However, during the week of the inspection a temporary member of staff taught the class, and the teaching was satisfactory.

16 Most of the pupils in the mixed Years 4 and 5 class make at least satisfactory progress in acquiring literacy skills. Some of them make good progress, particularly in imaginative writing. However, the higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs sometimes make less than satisfactory progress because the work is not always well matched to their needs. The pupils in the mixed Years 5 and 6 class make satisfactory progress in developing the literacy skills they need. Some of them make good progress, particularly in responding to texts. For example, they make good progress in learning how to summarise the main points of the texts they read and they develop a neat style of handwriting.

17 In mathematics, at both key stages, most of pupils make satisfactory progress across the range of topics, but the higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs sometimes make unsatisfactory progress because the work is not always well matched to their needs.

18 In science, most of the pupils at Key Stage 1 make satisfactory progress. At Key Stage 2, most of the pupils make good progress in learning about living things, materials and their properties, and physical processes. Fewer of the pupils make satisfactory progress in developing the skills and understanding they need to conduct experiments and investigations with an appropriate degree of independence. The work set is not consistently well matched to the needs of the pupils with special educational needs because too few of them have individual education plans which teachers could use to help them plan effectively.

19 Because the school has begun to make more effective use of its resources for information and communications technology, most of the pupils are beginning to make satisfactory or better progress. This is mainly because teachers' subject knowledge is improving and the pupils have better access to computers.

20 In R.E., most of pupils make satisfactory progress towards the learning objectives identified in the planning. In some lessons, particularly those in Year 1, the pupils make very good progress.

21 The pupils make unsatisfactory progress in design and technology because too little time is devoted to

the subject.

22 Overall, the pupils on the school's register of special educational need make unsatisfactory progress because they receive insufficient support and because some pupils who should have individual education plans do not have them. This makes it difficult for teachers to plan work that matches the needs of such pupils.

### **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

23 Overall, the pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good. The pupils attain higher standards now than at the time of the last inspection. They develop very positive attitudes to learning. The children under the age of five in the nursery unit and in the reception class show enthusiasm and interest in their activities. They talk animatedly to the teachers and to adult support staff about what they do. The pupils at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 listen attentively to their teachers and are keen to ask questions and share ideas about their work. They do not get discouraged when the learning is demanding. They persevere with learning tasks and present their work neatly and attractively.

24 The children under the age of five learn to behave very well. The teaching and guidance they receive encourages the children to conform to the expected standards of behaviour. The pupils at both key stages behave well in lessons and at other times. They know the school rules on behaviour and abide by them. In lessons, they are polite to their teachers and to other adults. They share equipment sensibly and take care not to disturb each other.

25 The children under the age of five make good progress in developing the personal skills they need to become effective learners and useful members of their class. The pupils at both key stages have good personal skills. They co-operate well with each other and make good use of the learning opportunities provided by their teachers. The pupils who have been allocated responsibilities carry them out conscientiously and well. For example, the school librarians take their responsibility to maintain tidy, well-ordered shelves very seriously. The older pupils frequently help the younger ones at playtimes and lunchtimes. The pupils who represent their peers on the school council behave maturely and make a positive contribution to the life of the school.

26 Apart from a small group of pupils in Year 2, the pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to learning. They are well behaved and are capable of sustaining good levels of concentration throughout their lessons. The pupils work well with their peers.

### **Attendance**

27 The pupils' attendance record is good. For example, for the week prior to the inspection the attendance was nearly ninety-six per cent. Overall, the number of absences at the school for the latest complete reporting year was lower than the national average. The percentage of authorised absence was significantly lower than the national average – 4.5 per cent compared with the national figure of 5.7 per cent. The percentage of unauthorised absence, however, was twice as high as the national average - 1.1 per cent compared with the national average of 0.5 per cent. The pupils respond well to the school's arrangements for rewarding good attendance. Nearly all of the pupils arrive before the time for registration. Most of them bring notes from home to explain absences or variations in their pattern of attendance. The pupils respond sensibly to the registration procedures. They arrive promptly to their lessons and settle quickly to work.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

### **Teaching**

28 The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and is most often good or better. The teaching for the children under five is never less than good and in nearly half the lessons it is very good. The teaching at Key Stage 1 is most often good or better. It is very good in three in ten lessons. The teaching at Key Stage 2 is never less than satisfactory and is good in three in ten lessons.

29 The teaching in classes for the children under the age of five is very well suited to the needs of young children. It is informed by very good knowledge and understanding of the curriculum for the under-fives and by high expectations of the children's capacity for progress. The planning is very good. It takes account of the low attainment exhibited by most of the children at the time that they are admitted to the nursery unit. The planning is thorough and based upon the desirable learning outcomes. It identifies specific learning tasks for each child. The teaching makes very effective use of a good range of methods to introduce learning activities that are stimulating and appropriate. The teachers and classroom assistants work well together and support the children sensitively. The teaching makes very effective use of the available time and resources. It encourages the children to explore the world around them and to develop an appropriate measure of independence. The teachers keep good records of how they assess the children and make effective use the outcomes to plan future work.

30 At Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, the teaching is marked, in most subjects, by secure subject knowledge, particularly in the literacy, numeracy and science lessons. The teachers understand the frameworks for literacy and numeracy and make good use of the guidelines. They plan appropriate learning activities and effectively carry them out. They are skillful in asking questions and in providing explanations that help pupils acquire the knowledge and skills they need. Most teachers are able to draw on a range of contexts and resources to help the pupils understand the content of the lessons. The main weakness in the teachers' knowledge and understanding of the curriculum is in design technology and some aspects of information and communications technology. This had led to teachers paying insufficient attention to how the pupils will acquire the expected skills and knowledge for their age.

31 In most subjects, the teachers have high expectations of their pupils' behaviour and rate of work. In the subjects where the teaching is strongest, the pupils are challenged to deepen their knowledge and understanding. In literacy lessons, for example, pupils extend their knowledge and use of complex sentences and in numeracy they acquire more effective ways to a carry out mental calculations. Where the teaching is less secure, the pupils are sometimes asked to do work that does not sufficiently stretch them. This sometimes happens in religious education at Key Stage 2 when, for example, pupils spend too long illustrating work rather than investigating more complex ideas. In some lessons on information and communications technology, too, pupils are not always appropriately challenged.

32 The quality of the teachers' planning is not consistent and this is a weakness in the teaching. The teachers plan well for the literacy and numeracy lessons. They indicate the work to be covered, set clear learning objectives and identify the resources they will need and how they will be used. However, the short-term plans for many of the other subjects are unsatisfactory. They do not provide enough detail to support effective teaching and are not based securely enough upon useful medium term plans to ensure continuity and progression in what pupils learn. This is mainly because the school has adopted wholesale, schemes of work it has acquired from various sources. Whilst these schemes are of good quality, the teachers have not yet adapted them to meet the specific needs of the pupils they teach, nor have they considered how best to knit the various schemes of work into a coherent curriculum that can be taught efficiently.

33 In most of the subjects, the methods the teachers use, and the way they organise the pupils' learning activities, are good, particularly in the literacy and numeracy lessons. The teaching in many of these lessons is characterised by the teachers' effective use of well-structured and informative direct teaching and explanation. In these lessons too, the teachers used questions skillfully to probe the pupils' understanding and to challenge their thinking. The teaching for the younger pupils often makes effective use of purposeful practical activity to encourage the pupils to think about their work. For example, in a number of religious education lessons at Key Stage 1, the teaching made very effective use of religious objects, texts and music to help pupils develop a good understanding of religious practices in Sikhism and Hinduism. In an information and communications technology lesson for Year 1, the choice of learning activities for teaching elements of control technology, and the way the pupils were organised, contributed significantly to the pupils' good progress.

34 A significant strength of the teaching is the skill with which the teachers manage their pupils and maintain high standards of discipline. They develop a good rapport with their pupils, encourage lively debates and good-natured discussion and question sessions. Much of the teaching is characterised by good pace and purposeful activities. The teaching usually makes it clear to pupils what it is they are to do, and why they are to



do it. Because of this, there are very few instances of pupils disrupting lessons or drifting off task. Most of the teaching makes at least satisfactory use of resources to support the pupils' learning.

35 The teachers' use of day-to-day assessment is unsatisfactory overall. The teachers regularly and frequently mark the work that pupils do, but the marking is not often as useful to the pupils or the teachers as it should be. For example, the teachers often write positive or encouraging comments in response to the pupils' work, but they rarely annotate it in ways that would be helpful to pupils in moving them on to the next stage of learning, or in keeping them well informed about their progress. The teachers do not have effective records of their day-to-day assessments. They do not consistently use assessment outcomes to plan future work so that it matches the needs of all of the pupils, especially those with special needs and those who are the higher attaining pupils. These weaknesses are less marked in the core subjects of English and mathematics than they are in other subjects.

### **The curriculum and assessment**

36 The curriculum for the children under the age of five is relevant, well planned and of good quality. It takes full account of the nationally determined Desirable Learning Outcomes. The work planned for children under the age of five, both in the reception class and in the nursery unit, is well matched to the needs of individual pupils whatever their level of attainment.

37 The school provides its full-time pupils with a suitably broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. It meets the statutory requirements for all National Curriculum subjects and for religious education. Pupils of different gender have equal access to the curriculum but the arrangements for pupils with special educational needs and for those who are high attaining pupils, are not satisfactory because work is not consistently well matched to their needs. The exception to this is children under five years old who have a curriculum well matched to their needs. However, the school has recently increased its staffing to provide extra support for lower attaining pupils and it already has plans to improve how it sets about meeting the needs of its higher attaining pupils. The school has an effective personal health and social education programme that has a positive impact upon the pupil's development. The school makes sound provision for the teaching of sex education and drugs awareness. The curriculum successfully promotes the intellectual, personal and physical development of most of the pupils.

38 The time allocated to each subject has been set to match the school's priorities and the need to improve the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The school has achieved this without slimming down the curriculum it offers for most subjects. For example, art and music are given sufficient status to ensure that the pupils have opportunities to be creative. As a result, the number of pupils attaining the expected standard in most subjects is rising. However, the school does not make best use of the time allocated to design and technology. Most of the pupils, therefore, do not reach the expected standards in this subject.

39 The school's arrangements for implementing the national strategies for literacy and numeracy are satisfactory. There is strong evidence to show that the literacy and numeracy skills of most of the pupils are improving steadily. Where they are not it is mainly because the school has not yet developed a consistent approach to matching work within the lessons to the needs of pupils of widely differing attainment.

40 At both key stages, the aims and objectives for the teaching of each subject are clearly identified in the curriculum policies. The school has adopted the following schemes of work issued by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority: English, mathematics, science, information and communications technology, geography, design technology and history. These are used in conjunction with commercially produced schemes for literacy and for other subjects, including physical education, music and religious education. Many of these have been recently adopted without being adapted to the needs of the school. The quality of the planning related to these schemes of work is, therefore, inconsistent. For example, the short-term planning for literacy and numeracy is detailed and useful, whilst that for many other subjects takes insufficient account of the needs of pupils of different ages and levels of attainment. A significant weakness in the planning of the curriculum is the lack of provision for ensuring that the literacy and numeracy requirements of other subjects are effectively met. Whilst the school's literacy curriculum matches the national framework it does not sufficiently support effective learning in other subjects. For example, teachers do not routinely assess the literacy demands of tasks in

science, history, geography or design and technology and use time in literacy lessons to teach the necessary skills and competencies. This reduces the time for learning skills and knowledge that are specific to the different areas of the curriculum.

41 The school is not fully implementing the Code of Practice for special educational needs. Consequently, some pupils who should have detailed individual education plans do not have them. The teaching of these pupils is, therefore, often not sufficiently well informed to meet their needs within the normal classroom environment. This is an important weakness because some classes have many pupils of low attainment who would benefit from lessons in which the teaching took greater account of their needs.

42 The school arranges an afternoon netball club and a lunchtime soccer club and at different times of the year, the school runs athletics and cricket clubs and there is a French club. It also arranges a programme of inter-school matches, but the range of extra-curricular activities is too narrow, and the number of the pupils involved is too small, to make a significant contribution to the pupils' personal, social and physical development. The curriculum, however, is enhanced by visits to the theatre, to museums and to places of historical or geographical interest. The school also arranges for pupils to take part in residential visits. This range of activities supports the pupils' cultural, social, personal and physical development.

43 The school has satisfactory arrangements for assessing the pupil's attainment and progress at the end of each key stage. It has well-established procedures for assessing the children when they are admitted to the school. The school complies with statutory requirements for assessing the pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science at the end of both key stages. However, it does not fully meet the requirements to use assessment outcomes to place the pupils who have special educational needs on the appropriate stage of the Code of Practice. It makes satisfactory use of standardised tests to monitor the progress of all the pupils in each of the year groups and to predict the number of pupils likely to reach the expected level of attainment at the end of Key Stage 2. In many subjects, the curriculum co-ordinators monitor planning but do not make effective use of assessments or the evaluation of lessons to determine what the pupils know, understand and can do. Nor do they routinely analyse outcomes of assessment to identify weaknesses in the curriculum or the teaching.

44 The school's policy on informal assessment is not implemented consistently across the year groups and the outcomes are not effectively used to inform future planning. The teaching, therefore, does not always provide learning tasks that are well matched to the needs of individual pupils, particularly the lower and higher attaining pupils.

### **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

45 The school provides well for the pupils' moral and social development and makes satisfactory arrangements for their spiritual and cultural development. This is an improvement when compared with the judgement of the last inspection that the school's provision across the whole range of aspects was unsatisfactory.

46 The school makes satisfactory provision for spiritual development of its pupils. Through the religious education curriculum, the pupils develop an understanding and appreciation of the spiritual aspect of life. The school provides for some aspects of spiritual development in other subjects. For example, pupils in a Key Stage 1 lesson in information and communications technology displayed delight and a sense of wonder at the beautiful shapes and colours they could generate when they explored the features of a graphics program.

47 In collective worship, the pupils are offered opportunities for prayer and reflection; they take part quietly and with a sense of reverence. They enter and leave the hall quietly to music in a manner that sets off the act of worship as a special event. The school has a good relationship with two local churches whose ministers make regular contributions to collective worship.

48 The school makes good provision for the pupils' moral development. The teachers, especially those who teach the youngest pupils, make special efforts during the first week of the autumn term, after the long summer holiday, to promote the kind of behaviour which they expect. The school has 'golden rules' that are expressed in

positive ways: for example, 'always be honest' and 'be considerate to others'. During the week of the inspection, the pupils' behaviour at playtimes and at lunch breaks, as well as during lessons, was very good. The teachers treat the children with respect, affection and trust and the children respond very well. The pupils show respect for their teachers, for one another and for their own and other pupils' property. The school's behaviour policy includes the use of 'assertive discipline' but, because the teachers have established high expectations in terms of behaviour, it is rarely used. No lesson was interrupted by the need to discipline children; there were no disruptions. There were no examples of unruly behaviour such as arguing or fighting, pushing, or snatching things during the play times or at lunchtime. Nearly all of the pupils behaved with commendable consideration and politeness towards one another as well as towards teachers and other adults.

49 It is clear that even the youngest pupils distinguish between right and wrong and act on this in a way that is appropriate for their ages. Pupils as young as three know how they should behave. Even in the nursery class, the children move about calmly, speak quietly and are willing to take their turn with equipment. Throughout the school, honesty is encouraged and the pupils are trusted. There was no evidence of bullying or aggressive behaviour during the inspection, and the school has very few problems of this nature. No pupils are currently excluded from attending the school. In an area of social deprivation, this is a commendable achievement.

50 The school provides well for the pupils' social development. It arranges visits to theatres and museums, as well as residential trips that make a valuable contribution to the pupils' social development and their sense of being representatives of the school. The pupils have good opportunities to meet people from the local community and from farther afield. Some of these experiences help to make the pupils more aware of the world of adult work. The pupils in the mixed class of Year 5 and Year 6 children elect some of their peers to take part in the 'School Council.' This is a useful forum in which the pupils and teachers share information and exchange views about what is happening in the school. For example, they learn about how the school spends some of its funds. They conduct surveys on the needs of people who use the school building for various purposes. One such survey revealed that access was difficult for those with push chairs, prams and wheelchairs. At a School Council meeting, the pupils asked about the cost of providing a ramp, and successfully requested one. There are pupils on the School Council who act as road safety officers. They meet the local authority's road safety officers and police in order to gain information to pass on to the younger pupils. They organise a road safety notice board in the school hall and have even produced a quiz for Year 3 pupils. These 'road safety officers' say that they enjoy doing this because 'the younger ones need to be shown how to be safe', 'we don't want them run over' and 'we can help them'. The pupils also realise that they themselves are learning at the same time. These activities make a very strong contribution to the development of the pupils' understanding of citizenship: they develop a sense of responsibility and learn about such things as elections and democracy. They also realise that they can make a difference to what happens in their local community.

51 The school has developed good links with the local community that provide many opportunities for the pupils' social development. For example, the pupils take part, with those from other local primary schools as well as secondary schools, in the Community Council of Castlefields' Schools in which they represent the pupils of their own school by contributing ideas as to how they would like to see the local community developed. In 1998, pupils from the school took part in a Children's Parliament, during which they debated local issues in front of an audience that included local councilors.

52 The school makes satisfactory provision for the pupils' cultural development. This aspect was judged to be unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection. In religious education the pupils learn about the faiths of people from different cultures. The children in the nursery learn about Indian dances and create mehndi patterns in art. The pupils have an opportunity to hear an Indian visitor speak about and show many items associated with her culture, including a sari and traditional Indian foods. The pupils in Year 1 learn about Sikhism in religious education: for a while, their classroom becomes a 'temple', complete with incense, artefacts and music. This enabled the pupils to experience the atmosphere of a culture that is very different from their own, as well as to learn about the ways in which Sikhs worship. The pupils also have opportunities to learn about the work of artists and musicians from a range of cultures: for example, when they listen to Indian, Mexican and African music. They learn about their own culture through studying significant English novels and poems and by visiting the theatre and museums. The school has a policy of taking the pupils to evening performances to enable them to experience the social, as well as the cultural, dimension to theatre going.

## **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

53 The school has good procedures for supporting and guiding its pupils and for securing their welfare. It makes effective use of personal and social education lessons. The school's high standards of support and care were recognised in the last report. The teachers and members of the support staff know the pupils and their backgrounds well. They establish good relationships with the pupils that enable the school to respond quickly and effectively to the needs of the pupils. This is reflected in the positive rapport that exists between adults and pupils at the school and by the willingness of the pupils to share their concerns with their teachers and with other members of the staff. The good support and guidance offered by the school makes a significant contribution to the self-esteem of its pupils. The school has effective arrangements for helping the pupils who join the school late in the year to settle down quickly. The school maintains useful records of the pupils' backgrounds. It makes good use of these records in managing its pastoral support of the pupils.

54 The main weakness in the school's otherwise good procedures is the provision it makes for pupils with special educational needs. The school does not make sufficient use of individual education plans to guide and support these pupils. Although the school consults parents and keeps them informed of the results of review meetings, it does not provide sufficient opportunities for them to become involved in the reviews themselves. The school maintains satisfactory links with support agencies and makes good use of specialist services when they are available.

55 The school's procedures for monitoring the pupils' academic progress is satisfactory overall but there are inconsistencies. The school maintains good records of the wide range of assessments it uses to monitor the progress of the pupils toward the standards expected nationally in English, mathematics and science. It does not have, however, effective arrangements for monitoring progress in the other subjects of the curriculum. The school has effective arrangements for monitoring the personal development of the pupils. It also has good strategies and procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour. The school has very good procedures for monitoring attendance and makes good use of its links with the welfare education officer. It works hard to promote good attendance and is successful in maintaining good standards.

56 The school has very good arrangements for child protection. The teachers and the members of the support staff are aware of the school's responsibilities. They are alert to the early signs of danger. The school has an effective policy and a named person with general oversight of child protection. It maintains good links with the appropriate outside agencies. The health and safety procedures are satisfactory and all statutory requirements are met. The school provides a safe and secure environment in which effective learning can take place.

## **Partnership with parents and the community**

57 The school's partnership with the parents and the community is good. It has made strenuous efforts to involve the parents and members of the wider community in its life, and with considerable success. Parents, grandparents, and other family members are encouraged to come into school on a regular basis to help with a range of activities, including assisting class teachers, accompanying pupils on visits out of school, and hearing the pupils read. The school makes effective use of other adult support when, for example, a member of the governing body assists with music lessons and when a previous head teacher of the school supports work in personal, social and health education.

58 The school's prospectus is very well presented and is written in an accessible style that makes it useful to the parents. It contains all the statutory information. The school also makes effective use of its regular newsletter to keep parents informed about the life of the school. The governors' annual report is informative and meets the statutory requirements. The school produces annual reports on its pupils that are shared with each child's parents or guardians. Each of the reports contains adequate details of the pupil's academic strengths and weaknesses and an indication of the pupils' personal and social development. Some parents return the report to the school for safekeeping. It is then included in the pupils' record of achievement and passed on to the high school before being returned to the parents. A very large proportion of the parents supports the work of the school. This was confirmed at the meeting of the lead inspector and the parents and by the parents' response to

the pre-inspection questionnaire. A table, showing the results for the questionnaire, is at the end of the report.

59 The school encourages the pupils to participate in a wide range of activities in the local community. For example, some of the pupils are members of the Castlefields Primary School Council and of the school's own pupils' council. The latter provides a useful forum in which the pupils raise issues that concern them. Some of the pupils represent the school at local singing festivals, and visit local churches, mosques and temples. The school choir sings in the local shopping centre and represents Castlefields at the Mayor's Christmas open day. The school encourages a wide range of visitors, including the local vicar, representatives of the British Legion, the Post Office and the local health centre. Through its links with the latter organisation, the school provides useful information to the pupils and their parents about important health issues.

60 The school maintains good links with other schools in the area, including the local high school with which it has a video link. It makes effective use of the link to support a programme of French instruction provided by staff at the high school. The school also has links with local training colleges. It provides opportunities for students to train at the school and work-experience opportunities for older high school pupils. These arrangements are well managed and have a positive impact upon the life of the school.

## **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

### **Leadership and management**

61 The school has made considerable improvement since the last report. The leadership of the school is now satisfactory. The headteacher and the governing body have devised a useful school development plan that provides a clear educational direction and appropriate strategies for moving the school forward. These have already helped to raise the standards attained by the pupils. The school has a good ethos: the teaching and support staffs collaborate effectively in creating an orderly and purposeful learning environment in which the pupils thrive and have very good attitudes to learning. The governing body is well informed and provides an appropriate level of support to the school. For example, it works closely with the headteacher to provide good management of the school's budget. It effectively monitors what the school does and evaluates progress towards the targets for improvement set out in the school development plan. It ensures that there is a full range of policies to guide the work of the school.

62 The school has responded satisfactorily to the issues raised in the previous report. For example, it has successfully raised the standards its pupils attain in English, mathematics, science and religious education by the time they are eleven. It now has schemes of work for each area of the curriculum. It has made a good start on clarifying the role of teachers who have a responsibility for managing areas of the curriculum. However, arrangements are too recent for the co-ordinators to have made an adequate contribution to curriculum development. The senior management team makes effective use of the school development plan as a vehicle for ensuring that all members of staff are fully involved with future developments. The school has made a start on developing strategies to ensure that pupils of the same age group are provided with greater continuity in their learning, especially when they are in different classes, but these are not yet as effective as they could be. The school has made some progress, too, in improving the way it monitors the quality of teaching and the progress of its pupils, but these are not yet sufficiently secure to have the desired impact upon standards. There are also weaknesses in the way teachers monitor the progress of their pupils and use informal assessments to help them match work to the needs of pupils of different attainment.

63 The senior management team analyses the results of national tests and other assessments and has set realistic targets for improvement. It collects and analyses useful data on aspects of pupils' home and school experience that are likely to affect learning, but this information is not yet used effectively to improve pupil's equality of access to the full curriculum. The school is fully aware of the shortcomings in provision for pupils with special educational needs which is unsatisfactory because staffing considerations, rather than educational ones, have taken precedence when determining whether or not pupils should have individual education plans. This has been due primarily to financial circumstances.

64 The quality of the latest school development plan is good and places emphasis on providing a broad and balanced curriculum. It is a good vehicle for communicating the school's commitment to improve and for

managing the changes needed to implement the school's aims, values and policies. The senior management team has effective strategies for implementing the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. The governing body and senior management team have satisfactory methods for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and its progress towards implementing the development plan. For example, nominated governors have responsibility for monitoring and supporting the provision of literacy and numeracy and several governors have regular contact with the school.

65 The school's arrangements for monitoring teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. They do not clearly identify weaknesses or provide sufficient information to support plans for improvement. However, the senior teachers have begun to address this aspect of their work in the most recent improvement plans.

66 Through the work of the senior teachers, the school maintains a close partnership with outside agencies and involves them appropriately in its provision for the pupils' well being, health and safety. The school meets all the statutory requirements for the curriculum and for collective worship. It also meets the statutory requirements for the effective management and administration of the school.

### **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

67 Overall, the staffing, accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory. This reflects the findings of the previous report. The school has an adequate number of teaching staff who are appropriately qualified and experienced to meet the demands of the National Curriculum. There is also a satisfactory number of support staff. They contribute significantly to the progress made by pupils.

68 The arrangements for the professional development of staff have not adequately addressed the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report. Some co-ordinators lack knowledge in subject areas for which they are responsible and find it difficult to adequately support and advise their colleagues, particularly in English, design and technology, information and communications technology, special educational needs and music. Sometimes, teachers are asked to take responsibility for a curriculum area without the necessary expertise. However, there have been effective arrangements made to train staff for the introduction of the Numeracy and Literacy Strategies.

69 The school has issued job descriptions but needs to review them to ensure that, for example, co-ordinators are working to the terms included in them. The school's arrangements for appraisal are being reviewed to take account of the recent appointments of new members of staff. There is a good range of information available to support the induction of new teachers, including staff, supply and newly qualified teachers' handbooks. The newly qualified teachers have mentors who support them. However, the school places a heavy burden of subject responsibility on newly qualified teachers which deflects attention from the main focus - to develop the appropriate class teaching skills. The school receives very good support from administrative staff and satisfactory and sometime good support from lunchtime supervisors. At the present time the school has a temporary caretaker and arrangements are being made for the appointment of a permanent maintenance officer.

70 The accommodation is satisfactory and enables the curriculum to be taught effectively. The building is suitable for non-ambulant pupils and there are plans to provide a ramp near the entrance as an alternative to the existing steps. The school has some spare classroom space that provides adequate accommodation for teaching groups of pupils with special educational needs. The school, in conjunction with Halton College, has established a very well resourced information and communications technology suite. The way the school uses it is beginning to have a positive effect upon the progress of the pupils. There is a small food technology area but there was little evidence during the inspection that it is used on a regular basis. The external accommodation is satisfactory. There is sufficient playground and playing field space.

71 The provision of resources is satisfactory overall. A sound start has been made in providing resources for the Numeracy and Literacy Strategies. There is a good range of information and communications technology hardware and more has been ordered. There is a need, however, to extend the range of available software to support all the curriculum areas. The resources for music are good. There is a good range of percussion instruments that includes instruments from other cultures. All other areas of the curriculum have a satisfactory

range of resources. The school stores many of its resources in cupboards in the hall. This detracts from the appearance of the hall and limits the space available for physical education lessons. Not all members of staff are fully aware of the resources that are available to support the curriculum, and some do not have sufficient confidence to make best use of specialist equipment in, for example, design and technology and information and communications technology. The library is adequately stocked with an appropriate range of books to support learning in the subjects of the National Curriculum.

### **The efficiency of the school**

72 The school makes satisfactory use of its resources. The headteacher and governing body provide good management of the school's delegated budget. Educational developments are detailed in the school's comprehensive school development plan and supported by suitable budget plans. The governing body is actively involved in decisions to appoint staff, including the recent appointment of a learning support teacher. The school is developing a useful strategic view of its future development. It is making good progress in prioritising projects in the school development plan and in ensuring that spending targets are based on future needs. The allocation of the budget is effectively planned by the headteacher in consultation with the finance committee. The curriculum co-ordinators receive a budget for their area of responsibility and are made accountable for how the money is spent. However, the role of the curriculum co-ordinators has not been developed sufficiently well to ensure that subjects are managed efficiently. In this respect the school has not yet adequately met a Key Issue of the previous inspection report though the implementation of the last action plan is not fully completed due to this earlier than anticipated second inspection.

73 The recommendations of a recent audit report have been successfully addressed. The school has good procedures for controlling its finances and day-to-day administrative tasks. The school makes effective use of the funds available to it. It has efficient procedures to ensure that there is an appropriate division of duties when equipment and materials are ordered and paid for. The school secretary undertakes the administrative procedures efficiently and unobtrusively thereby assisting the effective day-to-day running of the school. The funds for literacy and numeracy are spent effectively and resources are satisfactorily used to develop the pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. The funds for information and communications technology have been spent effectively to purchase hardware but there is a need for more software to support all the curriculum areas and for more in-service training for the teachers.

74 The school does not consistently use the expertise of the teaching staff in an effective way to improve the quality of learning, but it had this issue in mind when it made recent appointments to the teaching force. These are intended to strengthen the school's expertise in, for example, English, design and technology, and information and communications technology.

75 The school makes good use of a range of visits to places of educational interest, including theatre visits. It arranges a residential visit for Year 5 pupils that gives good opportunities for out-door adventurous activities. The school makes satisfactory use of visitors to the school to support work in a range of curriculum areas. It makes satisfactory use of accommodation and learning resources across the range of curriculum subjects. The school does not, however, make good use of the resources in its reference libraries and topic boxes to develop the pupils' research and independent learning skills. Whilst the school makes good use of the suite of computers, it does not make effective use of the classroom equipment for information and communications technology in order to support work across the curriculum. The teaching does make effective use of the available resources for design and technology.

76 Taking into account the above factors, together with;

- the unfavourable socio-economic context;
- the pupils' below average attainment on entry to the school;
- the steady improvement in standards in English, mathematics, science and religious education;
- the above average costs of the school compared with other schools;
- the progress pupils make;
- the school's success in developing among its pupils very good attitudes and behaviour;
- the high proportion of good or better teaching;

- the satisfactory response to the key issues of the last inspection; the school provides satisfactory value for money. The efficiency of the school has improved since the last inspection report.

## **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE**

77 The nursery has twenty-two children who attend on a part-time basis. The reception class has eight children under the age of five, attending full-time, who join the nursery for an hour and a half each morning. The school's baseline assessments indicate that the children's attainment on entry to the school is well below average. The children make good progress; their attainment on entry to Key Stage 1 is in line with the national expectation in all areas of learning.

78 The children's language and literacy development matches national expectations. The children's progress is often good and sometimes very good. The nursery is organised so that the teacher, nursery nurse and voluntary staff are always working with groups of children or having a direct input into whole-class activities. They effectively promote the children's linguistic development because they use well-planned discussions (they decide in advance which new words to introduce and which previous vocabulary to reinforce across the curriculum) and they use stories across the curriculum to support learning. For example, in their work in science, the children describe their observations of what happens to the level of water in a bucket when they add stones to it.

79 The teaching makes good use of class discussion and dialogue between children and adults to extend the children's understanding and use of language. In the course of the work on water, for example, the children responded to the question, 'What happens to the water when you put stones in the bucket?' with, 'It goes up.' The children's observations were confirmed by the nursery nurse who re-cast their language appropriately: 'That's right, it goes up – it rises.' This work was introduced through the re-telling of Aesop's fable of the crow and the pitcher of water. During physical activities, too, the teaching promotes language development: as the children tapped their 'dancing sticks,' the teacher used language associated with directions and positions: 'up', 'down', 'round' and 'to the side'. They often speak in sentences that are well constructed. The children listen attentively and respond to the instructions and questions of their teachers and other adults. They have good concentration. The children talk about their experiences, using a developing vocabulary. They enjoy books and are beginning to recognise the sounds represented by letters. They also enjoy writing: for example, both boys and girls were observed writing 'prescriptions' in the 'hospital' role-play area. Many of the four-year-olds are able to form some of the letters of the alphabet. They recognise their own names and some of the children can write them.

80 The children's mathematical development meets the national expectations by the time the children begin their full-time education. They make good progress. The nursery is organised in a way that promotes the development of numeracy across the whole curriculum: the role-play area, for example, includes equipment that bears numbers that represent temperatures and other measurements. Many of the songs they sing are number rhymes; counting takes place with regularity. By the time they enter the reception class, most children recite numbers to ten and count everyday objects such as 'one mouth' and 'two eyes.' Some of the children work with numbers up to ten and are aware of numbers much larger than this: for example, on a height chart, they know that what comes higher than one hundred are, in fact, numbers, even though they cannot say *which* numbers they are. They confidently use mathematical language, such as 'circle' and 'triangle' and recognise these shapes, among others. They recognise and re-create simple patterns using a range of materials.

81 The children's knowledge and understanding of the world is satisfactory by the age of five. Many of the children make very good progress: they talk about the area in which they live and about other countries, such as India. This is an improvement on the judgements in the last inspection report. It noted that the children knew little of areas other than their own. The children recognise objects that float and talk clearly about their observations of the properties of different of materials such as wood, metal and plastic. The children become familiar with a range of materials including water and sand because the teaching provides daily opportunities for the children to explore them. They get a variety of experiences because the teachers regularly change the



equipment. For example, the water tray has included equipment to encourage the children to investigate the properties of water – how it can be poured and used to fill containers. In the course of their play, the children learn to compare the sizes of containers with the amounts of water they hold. They discover, for example, that the same amount of water can occupy a tall, thin container or a long, shallow one. The teaching encourages the children to squirt water and to notice what happens. The children explore construction toys and mechanical objects such as telephones and torches. They learn about some of the bones in their bodies when they look at x-ray pictures. In their role-play activities, the children use a toy x-ray machine. They understand how the equipment is used in hospitals to discover bone fractures and other problems.

82 The children's physical development meets national expectations by the time that the children enter full-time education. Most of the children make good progress throughout the early years. They move confidently and imaginatively with increasing control and co-ordination. They become aware of space and of where other children are in relation to their own positions. In one activity, the children attained well when they learned a dance that involved movements in different directions: up, down, turning around and tapping sticks, to their sides and above their heads. They danced and tapped their sticks to the rhythm of the music with great confidence. The children also use large outdoor equipment such as bicycles, with confidence; boys and girls make good use of all the available space.

83 The children's creative development is very good. This represents an improvement upon the judgement of the last inspection when it was reported as being satisfactory. The children make very good progress. They explore texture, shape and colour and show very good control in processes such as printing, painting, drawing, gluing and modeling with clay. The teaching regularly provides materials for drawing, painting and modeling with dough. A strength of the children's attainment is their creative use of computers for art; four-year-olds confidently use screen tools to select colours with which to draw; they use the mouse to draw lines and then click it to find a palette from which to select new colours. The children do well in this area of learning because the teaching is good and provides good opportunities for the children to explore the available resources. The children enjoy dressing up in the role-play area. During the week of the inspection they looked at real x-rays then role played 'doctors', 'nurses' and 'patients' and performed 'x-rays' with some very realistic looking equipment.

84 The children's attainment and progress in music is good because there is regular provision of a wide range of musical instruments that the children use with obvious pleasure: they listen with great concentration to the sounds they make, then repeat them and experiment with different ideas. During group activities, the children are shown how to use these different instruments and the teacher or other adult discusses the sounds they make. One such activity was very imaginatively presented: the children imagined they were disk jockeys in the 'hospital' and chose nursery rhymes to play to the 'patients'. They play the instruments to the rhythm of the nursery rhymes as they sing them. Some of the children sing complete verse of rhymes such as 'Baa, Baa, Black Sheep' and 'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star'. They respond very well to music from other cultures when they dance to the rhythm of music less familiar to them such as Indian music. The children are already well on the way to attaining the national expectations for pupils beginning their full-time education.

85 The children's personal and social development is good because the teachers plan their lessons well. The teacher, nursery nurse and full-time voluntary assistant have high expectations and, although some of the children have attended the nursery for only two and a half months, they are helped to approach all activities purposefully. Children as young as three play together, rather than side by side; they talk to one another about what they are doing, and they share equipment and co-operate extremely well. For example, boys and girls took 'x-rays' of one another in the 'hospital', taking turns to use the 'x-ray machine' and looking after their 'patients' with care. Others co-operated when they built things using construction material and one child even set up a clear screen on the computer so that another could use it.

86 The children's attitudes to learning are good. The children show good concentration and they enjoy taking part in activities. There is no 'flitting' from one activity to another; all of the children carry out activities long enough to learn from them. There are occasions when the children's response is very good and even excellent. During their Indian dances, for example, their faces beamed with delight and they asked if they could do it again and again and they did so with impressive concentration. There is a calm atmosphere in the nursery and in the reception class; the children clearly see school as a place where they work and take part in interesting and enjoyable activities.

87 The quality of teaching is very good – an improvement upon the last inspection, when it was judged to be good. The teachers, nursery nurses and voluntary assistants work as a team in which all members are valued. The teaching creates very attractive, stimulating and secure learning environments in the nursery and reception classrooms. The teaching interprets the Desirable Learning Outcomes imaginatively in both classes. The activities that have a focus on one area of learning are skillfully organised so that they also contribute to others. For example, stories are used across the curriculum and opportunities are taken, wherever possible, to develop the pupils' vocabulary and their ability to count and to recognise letters and colours. Their work in art, for instance, was combined with mathematics: they threaded triangles and squares of tissue paper to make garlands and they glued paper triangles on to sheets of paper. In both activities, the adult working with the children talked to them about the shapes and colours they were using.

88 The teaching ensures that the children have equality of opportunity. Boys and girls take part equally in all activities, and teachers and other adults take steps to avoid gender stereotyping: for example, in the role-play area girls are encouraged to be 'doctors' and boys to be 'nurses'.

89 The school makes very good provision for the children who have special educational needs, encouraging them to make very good progress. This good progress is the result of the teachers' high quality planning to meet the children's individual needs, and the good use the teaching makes of assessments of the children's progress. The teachers successfully plan further learning activities on the basis of these assessments. The eight youngest children in the reception class spend some part of each day in the nursery classroom where they experience activities well matched to their needs. This provision makes a positive contribution to their development in all areas of learning.

## **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

### **English**

90 In the 1998 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard (Level 4) was close to the national average. When compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, however, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard was well above average. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected level is close to the national average. The school has successfully raised the pupils' attainment since the last inspection (December 1996) when standards at the school were below average.

91 The 1998 results for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 indicate that the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard (Level 2) in reading was close to the national average, but the proportion attaining the nationally expected standard in writing was below average. In comparison with similar schools, however, the proportion attaining the expected standard in reading was well above average and that for writing was above average. In the 1999 tests the performance of the pupils in reading and writing exceeds the national average. The school has steadily raised standards in reading and writing since 1996.

92 The inspection findings confirm the levels of attainment indicated in the test results for Key Stage 2. By the age of eleven, an average number of pupils attain the expected standards. The inspection evidence indicates that, by the end of Key Stage 1, the proportion of the pupils attaining the expected standard or above is close to the national average. The recent ill health and absence of one of the teachers at Key Stage 1 is affecting the progress of the pupils. This may account for the difference between the most recent test results and the findings of the inspection.

93 By the age of eleven, the proportion of the pupils attaining the expected standard in reading is close to the national average. The pupils read a wide range of texts including poetry, fiction, information and reference books. Most pupils spend at least some time reading local or national newspapers. Some of the pupils use their local library, but few of them frequently use the school's library resources to do independent research. In their book reviews, the pupils are beginning to show a sound understanding of how themes, setting and character are used by authors to create and sustain the reader's interest. Most of the pupils have a satisfactory or better

understanding of how the school library is organised and know how to consult the reference chart to locate books.

94 Most pupils write in a wide range of forms and in different styles. They are beginning to adapt their writing techniques to suit different purposes and audiences. For example, they make brief notes, summarise the main ideas and events in the texts they study and write poems, play scripts and stories that show a growing confidence in how they handle character and setting. Their writing displays satisfactory awareness of the conventions for punctuating sentences. They vary their writing by using a range of different sentence forms, including simple, compound and complex sentences, and they organise their work into paragraphs. They accurately spell common polysyllabic words and use a legible, joined script. Most of the pupils speak clearly when they express opinions, give reasons for their opinions and ask sensible questions. They listen attentively when engaged in class discussions or when a teacher or a pupil is reading aloud.

95 By the time they are seven, most of the pupils accurately read a broad range of fiction and information books at the expected level. They form opinions about the events and ideas in the stories, poems and information texts they read. Nearly all of the pupils use more than one strategy to read unfamiliar words and establish their meaning. For example, pupils were observed using their knowledge of letter sounds, the shape of letter strings, their knowledge of word order and the context of their reading to make sense of what they read.

96 The pupils in Year 2 have not produced enough written work to allow the inspectors to arrive at secure judgements about the standards likely to be attained by them at the end of the key stage. The inspectors, therefore, scrutinised the work of the pupils in Year 3 and used the evidence of lesson observations in Year 2 to judge the levels of attainment of the pupils who will be seven before September 2000. By the end of the key stage, it is likely that a smaller proportion of the pupils than is usual will write confidently in an appropriate range of forms; including simple stories, news, letters, poems, lists, instructions, posters and recipes. Fewer pupils, too, are developing their ideas in interesting simple sequences of sentences or using interesting words. Many of the pupils, however, are beginning to form the most common joins correctly. They write legibly, make their letters consistent in size and maintain a uniform alignment. Most of the pupils use capital letters and full stops correctly and accurately spell simple, familiar words.

97 The rate of progress of pupils at Key Stage 1 is inconsistent. Most of the pupils in Year 1, including those with special educational needs and those who are higher attaining pupils, make at least satisfactory progress in speaking, listening, reading and writing. A significant proportion of the class makes good or very good progress, because the teaching is very good. The pupils in Year 2 make satisfactory progress in reading. The scrutiny of the written work they have done since September indicates that the teaching does not ensure that the pupils benefit from sufficiently challenging work, or that they do enough writing to secure satisfactory or better rates of progress. In particular, the lower attaining and higher attaining pupils are not being provided with work that is well matched to their needs.

98 Most pupils make at least satisfactory progress throughout Key Stage 2 because the teachers are successfully implementing the National Strategy for Literacy across the year groups. The pupils in Year 3 make satisfactory or better progress in most aspects of English. They make good progress in reading and good progress in understanding how words are formed. In the mixed Years 4 and 5 class, the pupils make satisfactory progress in reading and good progress in some aspects of writing when, for example, they write poems about how they think future technological changes will affect their lives. Some pupils wrote appealing and thoughtful poems about what they thought life would be like when they reached the age of sixty-eight. Most of the pupils in the mixed Years 5 and 6 class make at least satisfactory progress across the full range of aspects, but especially in understanding the grammar and use of complex sentences. Across both key stage, the pupils with special educational needs do not make consistently satisfactory progress because the learning activities are not consistently well matched to their needs. Some pupils who should have individual education plans to support their learning and inform the teaching do not have them. This makes it difficult for the teachers to identify the pupils' needs and meet them with effective and appropriate learning activities.

99 Overall, in the lessons seen, the quality of teaching was good. The teaching at both key stages ranged from satisfactory to very good with the greater proportion of good and very good teaching seen in one class at Key Stage 1. At both key stages, the teachers exhibit secure subject knowledge in the way they plan and teach the literacy hour and make use of homework to support the pupils' learning. They have high expectations of

most of the pupils and they use methods that are well matched to the learning objectives identified in the planning. The teachers makes good use of the available time and resources and organise learning tasks effectively. A significant strength of the teaching is the way the teachers manage their pupils: lessons begin promptly and are orderly and purposeful. The standard of discipline is very good and so is the quality of relationships between pupils and teachers and among pupils themselves. This enables the teachers to teach effectively and the pupils to learn quickly. The strengths in the teaching account for the pupils' very good attitudes to work, their ability to co-operate in shared learning activities and their willingness to persevere with tasks. For most pupils, learning in English is enjoyable. In a Year 6 lesson for example, pupils delighted in demonstrating the breadth of their reading of classic literature. They spoke confidently about work they had done on such authors as Shakespeare, Dickens, Chaucer and Kipling and could name more than one work by each of them.

100 The main weaknesses in the teaching are the planning for aspects of English outside the literacy hour and the teachers' use of marking. Whilst teachers produce satisfactory plans for literacy hour they do not plan well for other elements of the English curriculum such as drama and extended writing. The planning misses opportunities to provide a more coherent and efficient curriculum by including relevant learning material from other subjects. There is some inconsistency, too, in the quality of teachers' marking and the use teachers make of it to assess what pupils know, understand and can do. The teachers do not routinely annotate their pupils' work with comments that would help the pupils to improve

## **Mathematics**

101 In the 1998 National Curriculum assessments at the end of Key Stage 2, the standard the pupils attained was close to the national average. When compared with schools that have pupils from similar backgrounds, their performance in the tests was above the national average. In the 1999 National Curriculum assessments, the percentage of pupils at the school attaining the average level has increased. The school has steadily improved its results since 1996.

102 In the 1998 National Curriculum assessments at the end of Key Stage 1, standards at the school were close to the national average. The percentage of pupils attaining the average level was similar to the national picture but the percentage attaining the higher level was well above the national average. Since 1996, results show that standards have steadily improved. The 1999 results indicate that the higher standards have been maintained and are close to the national average. At both key stages, the teachers' assessments are similar to the test results. There was no significant difference between boys and girls.

103 The inspection findings confirm that standards are in line with the national average at the end of both key stages, although the pupils' attainment in number and in using and applying mathematics is higher than that in shape, space and measure and data handling. Bearing in mind the attainment of pupils on entry to the school, the pupils make at least satisfactory progress to attain these standards.

104 By the end of Key Stage 1, many of the pupils have good mental arithmetic skills and a secure grasp of basic number skills. The Year 1 pupils are able to describe and extend number sequences to 20, count on and back in twos and are learning to recognise odd and even numbers. In Year 2, those pupils with average and high attainment recognise multiples of ten and use coins up to 50p. They order numbers to 100, and are beginning to recognise and understand tens and units. They sequence numbers when adding and subtracting in twos and threes and are beginning to understand and use the language of mathematics, for example, they confidently use terms such as 'more than', 'less than', 'longer', 'shorter', 'heavier' and 'lighter'. The pupils solve simple mathematical problems and puzzles well by the end of the key stage. They show an ability to think mathematically and respond to questions put to them by the class teacher. The pupils know about two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes and solids such as rectangles, circles, triangles, squares, cones, pyramids, cylinders and spheres. They construct simple graphs and talk about the data in them.

105 By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils perform formal routine calculations with whole numbers up to 1000. They manipulate fractions and are beginning to use decimals with an appropriate degree of confidence. They change percentages to fractions, use calculators and are acquiring an understanding of simple algebra. The pupils solve problems linked to time, money and pure number. They construct line and block graphs, know

about grams and kilograms and measure angles using a protractor. They accurately tell the time and solve problems involving minutes, hours, days, weeks and months. At both key stages, the pupils' mathematical skills are not developed satisfactorily through work in other curriculum areas. For example, the pupils do not use information and communications technology sufficiently to support mathematics, particularly in developing higher order data-handling skills.

106 The pupils make satisfactory progress throughout both key stages though there are some weaknesses. The pupils who have special educational needs and those who are higher attaining pupils make unsatisfactory progress when work is not planned to meet their needs. Many of the pupils on the special needs register have been placed on Stage 1 of the Code of Practice when they should be at another stage. For this reason, they do not have individual education plans that set future targets for them to attain or that help teachers plan effectively to meet their pupils' needs. At both key stages, the school's assessment and record keeping is not used effectively to inform planning. On occasions, this leads to unnecessary repetition of some topics and prevents pupils from moving on to more demanding work. In lessons and in the scrutiny of pupil's work, there is evidence of lack of progress in shape, space and measure and data handling. However, the school has planned to cover these topics in more detail in the coming months as part of its preparations for the National Curriculum tests.

107 The pupils' attitudes are good in most lessons and sometimes very good. The pupils are keen to answer questions and participate in whole class discussion. The pupils with special educational needs concentrate well and, when work is matched to their needs, show an ability and willingness to answer questions. A minority of pupils in Year 2, do not concentrate fully and their work rate slows when the teacher cannot devote all her time to them. This slows their progress. A significant proportion of the pupils show initiative when asked to solve mathematical problems, particularly as part of the introduction to numeracy lessons when they are asked to use a range of mental strategies. They think mathematically and come to logical conclusions. In Key Stage 2, there is evidence in the pupils' books of well-presented work and pride in what they do. However, at both key stages, but especially in Key Stage 1, there is an over-reliance on commercially produced workbooks and teacher-prepared worksheets. This inhibits the ability of the pupils to develop their writing skills and methods of logical setting out of mathematical work.

108 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. The teaching is good in three out of eight lessons. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. Most teachers have good subject knowledge and plan tasks carefully so that all resources are readily available and no time is lost. The teaching uses a narrow range of methods for tasks which pupils do in their independent group work that sometimes does not meet the requirements of pupils with special educational needs or the needs of the higher attaining pupils. Teachers make good use of discussion and use questions in ways that effectively promote the pupil's understanding. The teaching is based upon good relationships between the teachers and the pupils that create good conditions for learning. The teachers win the respect of their pupils and succeed in making them feel valued. As a result, there is rarely a problem of control or discipline. Teachers have made a suitable start in implementing the National Numeracy Strategy though, on occasions, time is not managed well enough to allow sufficient time for the plenary session to be used effectively.

109 The Numeracy Strategy, supplemented with other commercial materials, is being used as a scheme of work. The school has not yet decided how best to use these materials. It does not set out in sufficient detail its own targets for what the pupils should know, understand and do from year to year nor how these aspects of learning should be assessed and the outcomes used to inform future work. It is because of this that the school sometimes does not fully meet the needs of higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs by providing appropriately challenging work.

## **Science**

110 The results of the statutory assessments in 1998 showed that the pupils' overall attainment in science at the end of Key Stage 2 was above the national average. In the 1999 national tests the proportion of the pupils attaining the nationally expected standard, ninety-six per cent, was well above the national average. The pupils' attainment in the national tests since 1996 show a significant improvement.

111 The evidence of the inspection indicates that the pupils' attainment is at least in line with national expectations and often above it. Most of the pupils in Year 6 and some in Year 5 are already working at Level 4 - the standard most pupils are expected to attain before the end of Key Stage 2. The present cohort of Year 6 pupils has a higher proportion of lower attaining pupils than is usual. This may account for the slightly lower levels of attainment expected by the end of the key stage this year. The pupils know that some changes in materials can be reversed and that others can not. They are beginning to use this knowledge to make predictions about changes to materials that they observe, such as the changes to substances such as salt and sugar when they are dissolved in water. They confidently describe processes such as sieving, filtration and evaporation. Some of the higher attaining pupils are able to suggest how to regain dissolved materials from water. They know, for example, that filtering would not work because 'the pieces went through the filter', but that allowing the water to evaporate naturally, or boiling it to speed up the process, would allow them to recover the salt and sugar.

112 The proportion of the pupils at Key Stage 1 who attained the nationally expected standard in the 1998 teacher assessments was well below average when compared to all schools, and below average when compared to similar schools. The results of the 1999 teacher assessments indicate that standards at the school have improved and that the pupils are now attaining close to the national average. The pupils' attainment is close to that found at the time of the inspection in 1996. In the more recent national tests there was a significant difference in the pupils' achievement in different science attainment targets. For example, their attainment in knowledge and understanding of materials and their properties and physical processes is much higher than their knowledge and understanding of life and living processes.

113 The inspection evidence, including observations of lessons and scrutiny of the pupils' past work, confirms this pattern of attainment. The work of the pupils in Year 2 shows attainment that is in line with national expectations. Most of the pupils know, for example, that electricity is dangerous. They give examples of the precautions that should be taken when using electrical appliances. Scrutiny of the pupils' previous work indicates that most of the average and higher attaining pupils successfully identify everyday items that are operated by electricity and know the difference between mains power and power stored in batteries. The pupils know that electricity 'goes along wires' and one or two of them know that the wires have to be made of metal (but not why). However, many of the girls have no idea what is inside an electrical flex. Many of the boys, on the other hand, are able to relate their schoolwork on electricity much more successfully to their practical experience and observations at home. This is not because of their experiences at school, but because they have watched or helped parents and grandparents wire plugs or carry out other work. No significant difference was noticed between the attainments of boys and girls in other aspects of the subject.

114 The pupils' response to learning is good at both key stages. At Key Stage 1, they listen attentively, are eager to share their ideas and observations and show good concentration. At Key Stage 2, the older pupils work without supervision. They collaborate well in activities and are prepared to put a great deal of thought into their work. Most of the younger pupils also work well in a group, sharing their ideas and listening to one another.

115 The pupils at Key Stage 1 make satisfactory progress. They learn about some of the properties of materials relating to texture or appearance. By Year 2, several pupils know about materials that are natural and those that are manufactured or processed. Some of the pupils describe the ways in which materials are affected by stretching and they classify materials as 'flexible' or 'rigid.' At Key Stage 2, the pupils' progress in science is good. For example, the pupils in Year 3 learn scientific ways in which to classify materials, particularly with respect to magnetism. They learn that most metals (but not all of them) are attracted to magnets and that the opposite poles of a magnet attract and that like poles repel one another. In Years 5 and 6, the pupils learn to identify common materials that dissolve in water and learned how several familiar materials may be mixed with water then separated by sieving, filtration or evaporation.

116 The teaching of science is never less than satisfactory and some of it is good. The lessons are well planned and well organised. The teachers demonstrate good class control and establish sound working routines. They have high expectations of the children's behaviour and of their attainment. The teachers have a conscientious approach to science: they know what they want their pupils to learn and they plan suitable learning activities. They have secure subject knowledge and some of them show good subject knowledge because they take the trouble to read about the subject and to try out, in advance, the activities they undertake with their classes. Some of teaching displays a very imaginative approach to the subject.

117 The school has satisfactory arrangement for meeting the needs of the Year 5 pupils in the way it allocates them to the mixed-age classes (Year 4/5 and Year 5/6). However, it is a weakness across the school that within the different classes the work is not consistently well matched to the needs of the higher and lower attaining pupils. In some classes there is an over-reliance on photocopied worksheets, some of which were not well matched to the needs of the pupils. Some of the teaching makes better use of such resources because it uses them judiciously to support the pupils' learning, especially in helping the pupils to record their findings. In the best teaching some of the worksheets were effectively used to help the teachers assess the pupils' attainment.

## **OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

### **Information and communications technology**

118 By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils' attainment is below national expectations. This is mainly because the teaching, until recently, has not provided the pupils with sufficient opportunities to gain the knowledge, understanding and skills they need. By the age of eleven, however, most of the pupils know how to use some of the basic tools of a word-processing program. They create texts that include poems, stories, labels and posters. They know how to access information on CD ROMs in a range of subjects. They use simple graphics programs with an adequate degree of confidence. They investigate some basic features of spreadsheets and databases but they do not have sufficient knowledge, understanding and skill to make effective use of them to support learning in other subjects. Some of the pupils make effective use of an internet video link with a local high school to support their learning of French, but the pupils have not had sufficient opportunity to explore the uses of the world wide web or e-mail. The school has a partly constructed web page, but this is not used effectively by the pupils. The pupils are not confident about using control technology or technology for modelling and monitoring.

119 By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils' attainment is close to what is expected nationally. The pupils work with an adequate range of simple programs. They use computers to create simple texts. They are beginning to understand how they can change the appearance of texts by altering the style and size of the font. They use the key tools of a simple graphics program to produce pictures and patterns. Most of the pupils develop sufficient control of the mouse and keyboard to allow them to make effective use of programs that support learning in other subjects.

120 Nearly all of the pupils at Key Stage 1 make satisfactory progress in acquiring the skills and knowledge they need to make effective use of information and communication technology. For example, the older pupils in the reception class use programs to help them develop the skills and confidence they need to manipulate the mouse and keyboard successfully. They use these skills to work with programs that support learning in other subjects, such as mathematics. In Year 1, the pupils learn to control a floor robot by pressing keys to instruct it to move a certain distance and turn left or right. In Year 2, the pupils learn to use some of the more common features of a graphics and paint program when they study and then replicate the work of abstract artists such as Mondrian.

121 Although the overall progress of the pupils at Key Stage 2 is unsatisfactory, recent improvements to the school's provision for the subject have begun to have a positive impact upon progress. These improvements consist of better access for the pupils to the available resources together with better, more consistent teaching. In the lessons seen, for example, all the pupils made satisfactory or better progress in developing a range of skills in word processing and knowledge and understanding of spreadsheets. Their progress, in becoming sufficiently independent users of information and communication technology to significantly support learning across the curriculum, is still unsatisfactory. The teaching does not yet provide pupils with sufficient reason and opportunity to make best use of the available resources.

122 The quality of teaching is now satisfactory, but this is a recent development. It is partly the outcome of the school's partnership with a local college and partly the result of appointing a teacher who has initial training in the subject. Both developments have encouraged teachers to make more use of the resources available to them and have improved their levels of confidence, knowledge, understanding and skill in most aspects of the subject. Consequently, in the lessons seen during the period of the inspection, the teaching was never less than

satisfactory and was sometimes good.

123 The main weakness in the teaching is the teachers' lack of subject knowledge. This weakness makes it difficult for teachers to identify the best ways to promote learning among pupils who now have to make up lost ground. A useful start, however, has been made in teaching basic information and communications technology skills because the teachers now make much better use of the facilities of the computer suite. They have less confidence in finding opportunities for pupils to extend their range of skills by applying what they know to tasks that support learning in other subjects. The school has recently adopted a good scheme of work that is helping teachers to secure an appropriate measure of continuity and progression in what they teach. The teaching does not, however, match the learning needs of all the pupils – especially those who are the higher and lower attaining pupils. The main strengths of the teaching include the good levels of order and discipline in lessons. The teachers quickly establish a good rapport with their pupils that permits them to teach without disruption and to maintain a brisk pace to the lessons. The teaching now exhibits, more consistently, appropriate expectations of what the pupils can achieve, and how quickly the pupils can acquire proficiency in the basic skills. The teaching now makes at least satisfactory use of the available resources.

124 Although many of the pupils lack confidence in handling information and communications technology, they develop good attitudes to learning because the teaching is more confident than it was and because the teachers have good general skills in managing their pupils and encouraging them to work hard. The pupils stay on task, help each other and share resources sensibly. They show great delight when they accomplish tasks successfully or acquire new skills. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, pupils expressed great pleasure and wonder when they saw how they could use the tools of a paint package to produce attractive abstract patterns in the style of the artist Mondrian. In a Year 4 lesson, the pupils' self-esteem visibly strengthened when they succeeded in changing the order and appearance of their texts to draw the reader's attention to the important points in their argument.

### **Religious education**

125 The pupils are attaining better now than at the time of the last inspection. By the end of both key stages, the pupils attain standards that meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. By the age of eleven, most of the pupils have an appropriate understanding of the principal ideas informing a range of world religions. The pupils have some understanding of Judaism and know that it has followers in many countries, including Britain. They compare the beliefs and traditions of other religions with those of Christianity and are beginning to appreciate that there are similarities as well as differences. They know, for example, that Hindus worship many gods and that Christians and followers of Judaism share a belief in one god. Because the school establishes good links between what is taught in religious education and what is taught in personal and social education, and in its acts of worship in assemblies, the pupils understand that religion can teach people about aspects of their own lives. For example, many pupils developed a deeper understanding of actions and consequences as a result of learning about the biblical story of the houses built upon rock or sand.

126 By the time they are seven, most of the pupils know the main events in the life of Christ. They know that there are different religions and have studied some aspects of Hinduism. They understand that the main religion in this country is Christianity. The pupils know that the Bible is a special book for Christians and that it contains stories that help them learn about God. They know that other faith traditions also have sacred texts. They understand that people of all religious traditions use prayer as part of their worship, and that each faith has special festivals in which important events and ideas are celebrated.

127 The pupils make at least satisfactory progress throughout both key stages. In some lessons, the pupils make good or very good progress. This happens most often when the teaching is imaginative and provides pupils with opportunities to explore artefacts from other faiths, listen to religious music and to role play aspects of the festivals they study. In a Year 1 lesson, for example, the pupils made very good progress in understanding that some people, including many followers of Hinduism, conduct formal acts of worship in their own homes.

128 The pupils who have special educational needs do not always make sufficient progress because their



learning needs are not clearly identified in appropriate individual education plans that would help teachers to plan work which matched their needs.

129 The quality of teaching is not consistent across the key stages but it is never less than satisfactory. The teaching at Key Stage 1 is mostly very good. In these lessons, there is a lively approach to exploring religious ideas and practices that helps the pupils acquire an appropriate knowledge of the subject and that supports the pupils' development of spiritual values. The learning is constantly enriched by the teachers' skilled use of questions and discussion. This helps the pupils to a deeper understanding of the religious significance of objects used in worship. In these lessons, the teaching made effective use of the time available, very good use of resources to facilitate learning, and good use of methods that excited the pupils and provided them with suitably challenging tasks. As a result, the pupils develop very good attitudes to learning. They become absorbed in their tasks and ask lots of questions.

130 At Key Stage 2, the teaching in the lessons seen was satisfactory. Teachers have secure subject knowledge. The teaching in all lessons was characterised by good class management and control. Teachers skillfully develop a good rapport with their pupils that enables them to focus the teaching on the subject rather than on establishing and maintaining the pupils' interest and co-operation. The main weakness in the teaching is the use of inappropriate learning tasks. For example, in some lessons the pupils spent too much time recording in pictures what they had learnt and the teaching missed opportunities to challenge the pupils' understanding of the significance to Christians of the Bible stories they studied. The pupils' learning is less well focused as a result of the weaknesses in the teaching, nevertheless, the pupils maintain good attitudes to learning. They participate willingly in class discussions and share ideas.

## **Art**

131 The pupils attain standards in line with the national expectation for their ages at both key stages. They are reaching standards similar to those achieved by the pupils at the school when it was inspected in 1996. Some of the pupils' displayed work shows high attainment. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils develop confidence in the way they use different media to express their ideas and feelings. Many of the pupils accurately represent images in paint. The Year 6 pupils, for example, show high attainment in their watercolour paintings of flowers: they use the medium with confidence in a way that conveys the delicate appearance of the subject matter. They show considerable skill in mixing colours. There was little work available on which to form a judgement of the pupils' knowledge and understanding of art; they had been introduced to the work of artists from different period and different countries. The Year 6 pupils use a limited range of art and craft vocabulary. For example, they know and use the terms 'watercolour', 'charcoal drawing' and 'self portrait'. The pupils in Year 4 remember having looked at pictures by Van Gogh and are able to describe, in detail, paintings they study. They could not, however, remember the titles of the works describing them as 'the one was a swimming pool with lots of children in it', and 'there was a fish tank with coloured fish'.

132 By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils show a developing ability to represent their observations and ideas. The displays in their classroom indicate that the pupils successfully mix colours and are confident when working with paints. They use embroidery thread to stitch simple patterns on to binca canvas. There is little evidence of the pupils working with materials to create three-dimensional work.

133 The school has successfully addressed an area of weakness that was noted in the 1996 inspection. The pupils now confidently mix paints of different colours to achieve the shades they need. This is now a strength of the pupils' knowledge and use of the medium. However, the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the work of artists, an area noted as a strength in the previous report, is now no more than satisfactory.

134 The progress of the pupils is satisfactory overall at both key stages. It is good in some aspects of art; for example, painting, drawing and weaving. Some other aspects are less well developed, particularly the pupils' three-dimensional work and knowledge and understanding of principal artists and schools of art. The 1996 inspection report noted that the pupils have few opportunities to develop skills in three-dimensional materials. This remains the case.

135 The older pupils in the reception class show good progress the skills they acquire when learning to weave with different materials on a very large-scale collaborative work. They make very good progress throughout Year 1 when the pupils develop an ability to work with a similar colour palette to an artist whose work they have studied. They make, for example, drawings of brightly-coloured flowers, based on their study of the work of Van Gogh. The work the pupils do in Year 2, helps them to consolidate previously learned skills, but does not help them to make further progress.

136 The pupils have further opportunities to make progress in developing an appropriate range of skills in weaving in the work they do at Key Stage 2. The pupils in Year 3 weave with a wide range of materials. They make satisfactory progress in drawing and painting, and sometimes make good progress, as noted in Year 6 pupils' watercolours of flowers. The collage work demonstrates the pupils' dexterity in cutting and gluing and a developing ability to select fabrics and paper for particular effects. The pupils in Years 4 and 5 make collages of Henry VIII with materials that convey the richness of the fabrics worn by royalty of the Tudor period. The pupils also make attractive frames for their paintings of Henry VIII's wives by gluing pieces of string on to card and then spraying them gold.

137 The pupils work mainly with a range of two-dimensional materials, such as fabrics, paper, card and computer software. They use a range of techniques including painting, drawing, printing and weaving but the teaching does not consistently ensure that the pupils do not work repeatedly at the same level with the same materials. For example, leaf-prints are produced throughout Key Stage 1. The Key Stage 2 pupils make good use of sketchbooks to record their ideas and observations. The attainment and progress of pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory in most aspects of the subject.

138 The quality of teaching is satisfactory at both key stages. The teachers make the pupils' tasks clear and they organise the pupils and classrooms well. They help the pupils to establish routines and to make good use of them. Where appropriate, the teachers demonstrate techniques with care: for example, in Year 2, the teacher skillfully demonstrated to the pupils how to stitch on to binca canvas and, in Year 6, how to draw a face with the correct proportions. There are examples of the teachers making imaginative use of materials. For example, the Year 1 pupils are shown how to make pictures by arranging natural materials, string and paper on to sheets of clear plastic, which are then laminated.

139 The teachers' planning is based on the National Curriculum's Programmes of Study. It adequately describes what the pupils will learn and the activities they will do. It does not, however, consistently provide a sufficiently sharp focus on the desired learning outcomes or on how these will be assessed. As a result, the planning does not inform the teaching well enough to secure a satisfactory level of continuity and progress in what pupils learn, or provide sufficient evidence to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching and the curriculum for art. The teaching, however, succeeds in creating equality of opportunity in art because all of the pupils have equal access to the materials and equipment used.

140 The pupils' response to the teaching is good at both key stages; the pupils develop good attitudes to learning, work hard and sustain their efforts throughout the activities. During the lessons observed, there was a good working atmosphere, with the pupils enjoying their work and showing willingness to talk about it. The pupils sensibly clean and put away their own equipment after completing practical activities.

141 The art curriculum of the school is in line with National Curriculum requirements. The school has adopted the art scheme from one of the London boroughs, but has not adapted it in any way to make it distinctive to the school. However, some of the teachers interpret it imaginatively. For example, recently, the Year 3 pupils worked with the local community artist to produce a large-scale landscape that will be displayed in a coffee shop in Runcorn town centre.

## **Design and technology**

142 There was only one lesson of design and technology taught during the inspection. Standards are below those expected nationally and have declined since the last inspection. This is because the subject is under-represented in the planned curriculum for both key stages. The amount of time allocated for the subject is insufficient. The pupils at both key stages, including those who have special educational needs, make unsatisfactory progress.

143 The school retains little evidence of the subject at Key Stage 1, apart from photographic evidence of party hats and support staff indicating that gingerbread men were made with Reception class pupils. The lesson seen in the Year 1 class indicates that, when pupils are enthused and challenged by very good teaching, they make good progress. For example, in following a topic on houses in the area, they were actively taught to make simple hinges through an investigation of different methods and techniques and to understand their uses. The pupils know that hinges allow doors and lids to open and close or join two things together. They develop appropriate language in learning how to cut, score and fold. They use straws very well to hold the hinges together. The pupils were supported in this lesson by very good teaching which made effective use of very good questioning and discussion. The teaching includes high expectations of what the pupils can achieve, makes effective use of good quality resources and involves active participation by the teacher so that the pupils know exactly what they have to do. As a result the pupils enjoyed the lesson, responded to the teacher, concentrated hard and behaved well. The pupils made good progress.

144 No teaching of the subject was seen in Key Stage 2. A scrutiny of work and photographs indicated that Year 3 pupils make robots out of waste materials for drama productions. In Year 4 and 5 pupils design and make purses that are sewn together and include a fastener. In Years 5 and 6 they design a picture and complete it using cross-stitch. They also make and test land yachts. In science a frame is made out of wood and strengthened appropriately at the corners. The frames are then used to mount traffic lights and an electric circuit to power a picture wheel. They also design and make book covers.

145 The school uses an externally produced scheme of work but there is little evidence that this is used to promote continuity and progression from year to year. Planning, designing, making and evaluation are under-represented at both key stages. There is little evidence of the teaching of food technology. The school has not fully thought out how the subject is to be incorporated into the wider curriculum. The pupils are given insufficient opportunities to use constructional apparatus, specialist tools and an appropriate range of resources. The teachers' subject knowledge and confidence in teaching the subject are insecure. The school does not have a clear educational direction for its work in this subject that would enable staff to identify what knowledge, skills and understanding constitute design and technology. The school has not provided sufficient in-service training to ensure that design and technology contributes effectively to developing the pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding of the subject.

146 The school has recently appointed a co-ordinator for the subject but this positive step has yet to have an impact upon the quality of provision. There is still insufficient planning for pupils to use a range of resources and specialist tools. Pupils are not being introduced to the skills they need in a sufficiently systematic way.

## **Geography**

147 Only one lesson was seen during the inspection. The inspectors' judgement that the pupils at both key stages attain standards expected for their age is based upon scrutiny of the pupils' work and the teachers' planning, discussion with some of the pupils and with the headteacher, who has interim responsibility for the subject.

148 The pupils make satisfactory progress throughout Key Stage 1. The older pupils in the reception class learn about the environment of the school and about habitats in other countries. The pupils in Year 1 successfully extend their knowledge and understanding of the school and its neighbourhood when they investigate how they can make the local area safer for its inhabitants. They also learn about the similarities and differences in the lives of children in other parts of the world. In Year 2, the pupils study an island home and a British seaside town. They develop, too, a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of climate around the world.

149 The pupils make satisfactory progress throughout Key Stage 2. The pupils in Year 3 study what life is like in Cairo. They develop an appropriate set of skills to help them read and understand maps and plans. The pupils successfully extend their knowledge and understanding of environmental issues when they study the local area. They investigate its important features and learn to make sensible suggestions about how the area could be improved. The pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 follow a rolling programme in which they successfully acquire geographical knowledge and understanding of the topics they study. For example, they learn about life in a village in India. They study the town of Llandudno and compare and contrast its features with those of their own town. They build upon mapping skills acquired at Key Stage 1 and they make satisfactory use of their knowledge and skills when they investigate rivers and mountains. There was insufficient evidence upon which to base judgements about the progress of pupils who have special educational needs.

150 There is insufficient evidence upon which to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching at both key stages. However, the teaching in the single lesson observed was satisfactory. The inspectors' scrutiny of the pupils' work and the teachers' planning indicates that the teaching provides pupils with a satisfactory range of skills and appropriate knowledge and understanding of important geographical topics. The work the pupils do suggests that they develop good attitudes to learning. For example they talk with enthusiasm of what they know about the local area and they take care over how they write and illustrate their work.

## **History**

151 At both key stages, the pupils attain standards appropriate to their age. They make satisfactory progress across a range of aspects including developing a sense of chronology and an understanding of some of the principal events and changes that characterise the periods they study. The school has maintained standards since the last inspection. However, many of the pupils with special educational needs make unsatisfactory progress because work is not well matched to their needs.

152 By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils study an appropriate range of famous people such as Guy Fawkes and Florence Nightingale and events such as the Great Fire of London. They gain an understanding of the passage of time by comparing their childhood with that of their grandparents. The younger pupils in the reception class compare and contrast 'Teddy Bears', ordering them from oldest to newest and discuss the characteristics of old and new bears. They learn the story of how bears came to be called 'Teddy'. In the Year 2 class, pupils compare homes from different periods of history. They learn about the water supply to their own homes and know that in years gone by water was taken to homes by water carriers. They know that household objects used for washing have changed over time.

153 By the end of Key Stage 2, the older pupils have a sound understanding of recent times. They study the Victorian era and World War 2. Younger pupils know about the ancient Egyptians. They learn about mummification, the River Nile, the ruling system and the Pharaoh, Tutenkhamen. Year 4 and 5 pupils know about the Tudors, in particular Henry VIII and his wives. They use a written description of Henry as a guide for drawing his portrait, and answer questions using a portrait as a source of evidence. They suggest reasons why information from various sources is different. Year 6 pupils also study the Ancient Greeks. However, the school

places too little emphasis to local history studies. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use the library or information and communications technology for independent research. Too many of the lessons are based upon commercially produced worksheets so there are few opportunities for pupils to develop extended writing skills. The school is in the process of building up its range of resources and artefacts to support learning. The teachers plan a satisfactory range of visits to local places of interest and further afield, such as Speke Hall and Chester, that enhance the curriculum. There is little evidence that visitors to the school, other than grandparents, contribute significantly to the history curriculum.

154 In the history lessons seen, the pupils responded well overall, though some pupils in a Year 2 class were restless. Nearly all of the pupils are very well behaved and have good attitudes to their work. They listen attentively and are eager to answer questions. They work with sustained interest and concentration and show the ability to share resources and discuss sensibly among themselves.

155 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and much of it is good. Most teachers have secure subject knowledge and use effective questioning. This impacts well on the pupil's progress and confidence. In the Year 4 and 5 lesson, pupils were encouraged to reason and develop their own thoughts. The teachers' planning does not take into account the needs of pupils of different abilities. There are occasions when both higher and lower attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged at their own level of ability. The school does not have effective procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress. It uses an acquired scheme of work but it has not yet adapted it to meet the particular needs of the pupils.

## **Music**

156 The standards the pupils attain are in line with the national expectation at both key stages and have not significantly changed since the last inspection. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils recognise differences in tempo between two contrasting pieces of music and they produce the same tempi using various percussion instruments such as castanets, triangles and maracas. They successfully identify two different tunes that occur within a piece of music.

157 By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils sing a variety of songs, including hymns, traditional songs and songs from different cultures. For example, they know songs and tunes from India, African countries and Mexico. They explore the sounds that can be made using percussion instruments and use them to represent sounds in their own surroundings, such as the sounds made by different kinds of weather.

158 The pupils make satisfactory progress at both key stages. The report on the last inspection indicated a similar rate of progress. In Key Stage 1, the pupils make satisfactory progress in developing an interest in, and enjoyment of, music. They learn how to select suitable instruments in order to produce a particular quality of sound. For example, in Year 2, the pupils experiment with different instruments and with the sounds they produce using their voices and parts of their bodies until they can select the most appropriate methods with which to produce the sounds they need. They do this successfully, for example, when attempting to express, in musical form, the sounds made by rain, wind and thunderstorms.

159 In Year 3, the pupils describe the atmosphere of a piece of music and say how it makes them feel. Most of the pupils recognise differences in volume and say when the clapping rhythm they produce becomes louder or quieter; one or two of the higher attaining pupils learn the terms 'crescendo' and 'diminuendo' to describe what they notice in the music. However, several pupils confuse volume and pitch; some of them clearly recognise the difference, as shown by their individual demonstrations, but use the wrong words ('high' for 'loud' and 'low' for 'quiet'). In the mixed Years 5 and 6 class, the pupils recognise 'fast' or 'slow' tempo in the pieces they study. They make good progress in some lessons. For example, in one lesson about three-quarters of the pupils learned to recognise musical phrases in a number of pieces that had two or four beats to the bar. They played these rhythms accurately on a range of percussion instruments. The attainment and progress of pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory because the teaching ensures that all the pupils enjoy equal access to the instruments and are included in the class discussions and demonstrations.

160 The quality of the teaching is satisfactory at both key stages. Some of the teachers play instruments, but do not claim to be experts. The effects of the lack of subject expertise are mitigated by the teachers'

effective use of the available published schemes and by the good use they make of outside help. For example, a school governor provides assistance in lessons and plays the keyboard during assembly. The teachers are clear about what they want the pupils to learn and they plan their lessons accordingly.

161 The pupils' response to the teaching is good at both key stages; they want to succeed and they work hard throughout the activities, even when they find them difficult. During the lessons observed, there was a good working atmosphere. The pupils enjoy their music lessons and, particularly in Years 5 and 6, show a willingness to ask questions in order to further their own learning.

## **Physical education**

162 By the end of both key stages, the pupils attain standards that are appropriate for their age. They make satisfactory progress overall. Standards are similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection.

163 By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils develop satisfactory ball control skills. They bounce, catch and roll a ball with increasing accuracy. They learn to use space appropriately and to travel around the hall showing an awareness of different directions, such as forward, backward and sideways. They know about high and low levels in movements and are able to put them together into sequences. The Year 1 pupils develop their sense of balance on various parts of their body and explore different ways of supporting their weight. In a dance lesson with a 'Snowman' theme, the pupils planned, practised and performed a set of linked movements. The higher attaining pupils are beginning to produce movements of appropriate style and quality. All of the pupils are making sound progress in understanding the vocabulary of special terms used in physical education.

164 By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils work with partners when putting together a series of synchronised movements. They show an appropriate understanding of the language used in the lessons and they try hard to achieve success. The pupils occasionally demonstrate a lack of control and of quality in some of their movements. For example in a sequence involving running, jumping and landing, the landings were performed without a proper degree of style or control. In Years 4 and 5, the pupils learn to balance on different parts of their body and to link two different balances. They explore and make up different ways of approaching pieces of apparatus. The Year 3 pupils travel around the hall making sure that their body shapes are symmetrical. At both key stages there is a weakness in dance because the school has not yet developed a scheme of work for this area of the curriculum. The pupils benefit from the school's involvement with the 'Top Sport' scheme because it provides a range of equipment for games activities. The older Year 5 pupils benefit from a residential course at Menai and are able to experience out-door adventure activities such as orienteering, climbing and sailing. The school also provides opportunities for the pupils to participate in competitive sport against other schools when, for example, it arranges matches in soccer, cricket, netball and athletics. The school enjoys considerable success in these areas. At the time of the inspection, however, the only extra-curricular club being run was for soccer. The club is open to boys and girls.

165 The attitudes and behaviour of the great majority of pupils are very good. With the exception of a small group of pupils in Year 2, the pupils have developed good routines in the subject. They all wear appropriate clothing, come into the hall in a sensible manner and demonstrate enjoyment in what they are asked to do. They listen to the instructions of their teachers and co-operate very well with each other. The pupils are aware of the safety aspects of physical education and know that they must put out, and use, apparatus sensibly and carefully.

166 The teaching is good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection. The teachers have developed good routines for establishing and maintaining behaviour appropriate to the subject. The lessons begin appropriately with a warm-up session and usually, though not always, end with a cool-down session. Most of the teachers wear appropriate clothing and set a good example to their pupils. The most successful teaching occurs, as in a Year 1 lesson, when the teacher joins in with the pupils, whenever possible, and acts as a good role model. The teachers, even though they may lack some subject knowledge and confidence, successfully encourage the pupils to be enthusiastic about their learning. This has a beneficial effect on the progress the pupils make. The teachers do have effective ways to assess or record the progress of their pupils, except in swimming.

## Swimming

167 The inspection of this school included a focussed view of swimming, which is reported below.

168 In 1998, eighty-five per cent of the pupils could swim at least twenty-five metres by the time they left the school. In 1999, the number rose to ninety-five per cent. By the year 2000 it is expected that at least ninety per cent of the pupils will achieve or exceed the National Curriculum requirements. The higher attaining pupils are successful in attaining one or more of the Amateur Swimming Association bronze, silver or gold awards. Some of the pupils go onto the life-saving awards. Those who are not making sufficient progress towards attaining the National Curriculum required standard at the end of the key stage are taken in a small group where they receive extra attention from the swimming instructors or class teacher.

169 The pupils in Years 5 and 6 take part in swimming lessons. In the autumn term, the Year 6 pupils have twelve, sixty-minute sessions. In the spring term the Year 5 pupils also have twelve, sixty-minute sessions. There is no swimming in the summer term. The time allocated to swimming is satisfactory, though it has been reduced from three terms to two. The pupils overcome their fear of water and learn to breathe correctly. They are taught different stroke techniques and they make continuous improvement during the two years they attend swimming lessons. The pupils live very near a canal and, for this reason, the school regards it as important that they learn to swim well. The quality and effectiveness of the instruction is very good. The school keeps records of pupils' progress and uses assessments to determine the level of teaching needed by individual pupils. The programme for swimming is organised and carried out jointly by the teachers of the school and by the paid instructors at the pool. As such, it is part of the whole school curriculum though it is not included in the school's physical education scheme of work. The school takes part in area swimming galas each year.

170 The school arrangements for swimming are good. The pupils are well supervised when they walk to the pool. The class teacher makes effective use of voluntary adult support to ensure the pupils' health and safety. The changing accommodation is satisfactory. When they changing for swimming, the pupils are properly supervised by the class teacher and the helper.

## PART C: INSPECTION DATA

### SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

171 A team of four inspectors spent fourteen inspector days at the school for the inspection. The inspectors:

- observed fifty-six lessons or parts of lessons;
- spent sixty-one hours gathering evidence from lessons, from discussions with pupils and from samples of the pupils' work;
- sampled the work of pupils of different levels of attainment in each of the year groups;
- examined a sample the pupils' records and reports;
- heard three pupils from each year group read individually;
- observed registration sessions and assemblies;
- observed the pupils at play times and lunch times;
- observed the pupils as they arrived and left the school;
- examined a range of school documents, including: school policies, teachers' lesson plans, curriculum plans, the school's financial records; the minutes of the governors' meetings and the school development plan;
- interviewed teaching and support staff about their roles and responsibilities;
- held discussions with parents, members of the governing body and the head teacher;
- took note of the views of the parents who attended meeting held before and during the inspection;\*
- analysed the parents responses to the inspection questionnaire\*\*

172 Two parents attended the meeting with Mrs. B Matusiak-Varley, who was the original lead inspector. Three parents attended the meeting with Mr. M. A. Mackay, the replacement lead inspector.

173 There were twenty questionnaires returned to school.

## 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	167	0	51	88
Nursery Unit	11	0	0	0

### Teachers and classes

#### Qualified teachers (YR - Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)

7

Number of pupils per qualified teacher

23.9

#### Education support staff (YR - Y6)

Total number of education support staff

2

Total aggregate hours worked each week

58.5

#### Qualified teachers (Nursery unit)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)

1

Number of pupils per qualified teacher

11

#### Education support staff (Nursery unit)

Total number of education support staff

1

Total aggregate hours worked each week

11

Average class size:

27.84



## Financial data

Financial year:

1998-1999
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	£
Total Income	354,949
Total Expenditure	354,877
Expenditure per pupil	1,792.31
Balance brought forward from previous year	16,786
Balance carried forward to next year	16,858

## PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

130
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Number of questionnaires returned:

20
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### 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	42	58	0	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	70	30	0	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	47	42	11	0	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	53	47	0	0	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	58	37	5	0	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	53	47	0	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	44	44	11	0	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	65	25	10	0	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	53	47	0	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	53	42	0	5	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	80	20	0	0	0