

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Halton Lodge Primary School**  
Runcorn

LEA area:Halton

Unique Reference Number:111229

Headteacher: Mrs G Dickson

Reporting inspector: Mrs C A Field  
9479

Dates of inspection:22<sup>nd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number:707065

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school	Infant and Junior
Type of control	County
Age range of pupils	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
School address	Grangeway Runcorn Cheshire WA7 5LU
Telephone number:	01928 564053
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev D Felix
Date of the previous inspection:	September 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs C A Field, Registered Inspector		Attainment and progress Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Teaching Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Mrs P Edwards, Lay Inspector		Attendance Support, guidance and welfare Partnership with parents and the community Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Mrs J Taylor	English Art Equality of opportunity	
Mr D R Carrington	Mathematics Information technology Design and technology	Leadership and management The efficiency of the school
Mr G Warner	Science Music The provision for children under five Special educational needs	
Mr J Gould	Geography History Religious education Physical education	The curriculum and assessment

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## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

- Gives a good start to education for children under five and pupils in Key Stage 1, which enables good progress to be made in learning.
- Achieves good standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 1 compared to similar schools.
- Through good quality teaching, enables pupils to make good progress in religious education, art, design and technology and music throughout the school.
- Makes good provision for pupils' special educational needs so that they make good progress in achieving individual targets.
- Promotes very positive relationships expects and, achieves high standards of behaviour, all of which make a positive contribution to the quality of education provided.
- Makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Receives outstanding help from parents and friends of the school, in supporting both teaching and learning in classrooms.
- Has effective management that provides a calm, orderly, purposeful and productive ethos for learning.

### Where the school has weaknesses

- I. Standards at Key Stage 2 are not high enough in English and mathematics.
- II. The identification of exactly what knowledge and skills will be taught and learned in planning is inconsistent, and in some lessons the pace of learning is too slow.
- III. Some monitoring, assessment and evaluation practices lack rigour and are not yet guiding the school's work sufficiently in boosting standards.

**Halton Lodge has many good qualities and is an improving school. There are more strengths than weaknesses but the weaknesses will form the basis for the governors' action plan that will be sent to parents or guardians of pupils at the school.**

### How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made steady progress in responding to the key issues raised at the time of the previous inspection. However, insufficient priority has been given to raising standards in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2, and this remains a key issue for school managers to address. The provision for science and information technology, which was unsatisfactory before, has improved significantly. Subject guidance is now appropriately in place to support teaching across the curriculum, but some planning and practice still lack sufficient focus on promoting best rates of progress. Community links have been very well extended and very good use is made of visits and visitors to school to enhance the opportunities for pupils. Attendance is better than it was, although still slightly below the national average. Resources are at least adequate in all subjects. Assessment, although better than it was, lacks precision, and is not yet used consistently to support the next steps in learning. Monitoring and evaluation practices are at an early stage of development and as yet are not yet enabling the school to see clearly what has to be done to give an urgent boost to lifting standards.

• **Standards in subjects**

The 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	
English	E	E	<i>well</i>
Mathematics	E	D	<i>above</i>
Science	E	E	<i>average</i>
			<i>below</i>
			<i>well</i>

The results above are well below average overall when compared to both national standards and those of similar schools. Although slightly better than they were at the time of the previous inspection, they have not been lifted to the level anticipated. The findings from inspection confirm that standards are average in English, mathematics, religious education and information and communications technology and above average in science at Key Stage 1. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are below average in English and mathematics. They are average in science and information and communications technology, and in religious education are above those set by the locally agreed syllabus. Results show a rising trend at Key Stage 2 due to improvements made this term to staff development, successful implementation of National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies, the curriculum, pupils' attitudes to learning and the emphasis placed on basic skills development. The school's capacity for making sustained improvements is good.

**Quality of teaching**

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 - 7 years	7 - 11 years
English	Good	Good	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Good	Good	Satisfactory
Science	N/A	Good	Satisfactory
Information technology	N/A	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Religious education	N/A	Good	Good
Other subjects	Good	Good	Good

The quality of teaching throughout the school is good overall and much better than when the school was inspected previously. Ninety two per cent of teaching is of satisfactory or better quality, and eight per cent unsatisfactory. The best teaching is in reception classes, Year 2 and the single age Year 6 class. Here teachers have high expectations of what all pupils can achieve and through good practice ensure that the objectives they set to move learning forward are met. The unsatisfactory teaching was all in Key Stage 2 and was largely to do with weaknesses in class management, methods and organisation, all of which impeded satisfactory rates of learning. The great majority of teaching is enabling most pupils to make sound progress over their time at school. The best quality teaching practice in the school is currently insufficiently shared.

*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	Good. Pupils respond very well to teachers' consistent approaches in promoting positive behaviour. Most pupils are keen and willing workers and try hard to do their very best work.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. The level of attendance for last year was below the national average and was largely due to genuine illness. This term, attendance is about average. Pupils are well motivated by the new reward system.
Ethos*	Good. Staff come together as a strong team with a united commitment to raise standards and seek continuous improvement. Very good attention is paid to ensuring refugee families are welcomed into the school community.
Leadership and management	Good. There is a good sense of purpose about the management of the school and it achieves most of its goals. The systems to find the strengths and weaknesses of the school are not yet rigorous enough.
Curriculum	Good overall. The curriculum is broad, relevant and appropriately balanced, with especially good extra-curricular opportunities which give enrichment to learning. The quality of lesson planning is inconsistent and insufficient use made of the best practice in school. Whilst there are appropriate procedures for assessment in place, their use by teachers in guiding pupils' future work is unsatisfactory.
Pupils with special educational needs	Good. Individual education plans are well conceived and successful in supporting these pupils' good progress.
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Pupils benefit considerably from a range of good quality experiences that are assisting their development as responsible future citizens.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Good. The school is appropriately staffed and resourced. Accommodation is attractive and supports positively both teaching and learning.
Value for money	Satisfactory. The good quality of education, including teaching, adds significant value to pupils' learning experiences.

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

## The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<p>IV. The encouragement they receive to get involved with the school.</p> <p>V. The good quality work pupils do.</p> <p>VI. The high quality of extra-curricular opportunities.</p> <p>VII. The positive attitudes and very good values being promoted.</p> <p>VIII. That pupils like school.</p>	No negative views.

The registered inspector held a meeting with twenty-seven parents who expressed very positive views about all aspects of the school's provision. Thirty one per cent of parents completed a questionnaire. Responses reveal that the majority of parents are in strong agreement with the way in which the school is educating their children. The team agrees with parents' views as expressed above.

## **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

**In order to continue to make sustained improvements and raise standards that compare more favourably with similar schools, the headteacher, staff and governors should:**

- ◆ **Set out a clear plan of action that ranks what the school needs to do to boost standards, especially in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2.**

**(Paragraphs 6, 13, 14, 63, 66, 99, 111)**

- ◆ **Involve key staff in establishing and implementing a systematic and rigorous monitoring system that will:**
  - a. identify and evaluate teaching strengths and weaknesses;
  - b. analyse findings in terms of the impact of teaching on progress in learning;
  - c. enable the best practice in the school to be shared and exchanged.

**(Paragraphs 6, 10, 13, 14, 21, 24, 27, 30, 36, 41, 58, 62, 63, 66, 67, 74, 97, 98, 99, 105, 108, 110, 111, 126, 127, 135, 146, 153, 158, 163, 168)**

- ◆ **Improve the use of planning and assessment practices to:**

- a. ensure that all lesson plans have clear and detailed learning objectives for the full range of pupils which can be assessed more precisely and then used to plan for the next steps in learning;
- b. develop teachers' expertise in setting measurable targets that help move learning forward and help realise the school targets set in literacy and numeracy;
- c. make sure that targets are used consistently and that planning is evaluated on a regular basis for its effectiveness;
- d. involve pupils more in self-assessment.

**(Paragraphs 18, 21, 22, 24, 26, 27, 30, 31, 36, 40, 41, 48, 58, 62, 66, 97, 98, 99, 103, 110, 111, 127, 147, 158, 167)**

Other matters for governors to take account of in their action plan:

Review the quality of provision for the mixed Year 5 and Year 6 class. (Paragraphs 6, 27, 34, 74, 97, 104)

Review of the quality and range of non-fiction materials and books located in the library. (Paragraph 70)

Review of the support staff available for Year 3 and Year 4 classes. (Paragraphs 27, 68, 104)

#### d. **INTRODUCTION**

##### d. **Characteristics of the school**

1. The school is situated to the east of Runcorn, on the Grange estate comprising mainly council housing. It is accommodated in two adjacent buildings with Key Stage 1 separate from Key Stage 2. There are shared facilities; for example; staff room, main hall, information and communications technology suite and a resource base for learning. The school is currently subject to a local education authority places review as it is less than sixty five per cent full.
2. There are 287 pupils currently on roll: 149 boys and 138 girls aged from four to eleven years. Admission arrangements follow the local education authority guidelines, and admit children in the year in which they become five years old. Most of the children who start in the reception class have some pre-school experience, but few have received a nursery education. Standards on entry are below average in all areas of learning. There were thirty-one children under five on roll at the time of the inspection.
3. Fifty-nine pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and this is broadly average. One pupil currently has a statement of special educational need in place. The percentage of pupils speaking English as an additional language is broadly in line with most schools. The school provides for three Kosovan refugee pupils. The percentage of pupils eligible for free-school meals is well above average. There is some mobility within the local population and typically about ten per cent of the number on roll can change over the course of a year.
4. The school aims that, within a happy, safe, inviting and stimulating learning environment, pupils will be encouraged and inspired to achieve high standards in both academic and social skills, and enabled to realise personal talents.

##### **Current targets:**

Continue with plans for developing literacy, numeracy and information and communications technology within the school;

Improve pupils' attitudes to learning;

Review of planning to ensure coverage of the National Curriculum and aid continuity in learning;

Extend monitoring of the curriculum, teaching and learning;

Extend target setting work as integral to raising standards;

Keep pupil-teacher ratios low to give more focused attention to pupils with special educational needs and those who need more help with basic skills development;

Continue with parents' courses, including 'help your child courses'.

##### **Future targets will be to:**

Consider how best to address the needs of the more able;

Recruit more classroom support;

Raise standards further in core subjects.

**Key indicators**  
**Attainment at Key Stage 1<sup>1</sup>**

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	25	21	46

National Curriculum	Test/Task Results	Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils At NC Level 2 or Above	Boys	19	21	21
	Girls	17	19	18
	Total	36	40	39
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	79 (73)	87 (81)	85 (83)
	National	79 (80)	83 (81)	86 (84)

Teacher	Assessments	English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils At NC Level 2 or Above	Boys	22	22	24
	Girls	18	18	19
	Total	40	40	43
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	87 (74)	87 (76)	93 (95)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	18	12	30

National Curriculum	Test Results	English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils At NC Level 4 or Above	Boys	5	7	6
	Girls	6	7	8
	Total	11	14	14
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	37 (38)	47 (43)	47 (53)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teacher	Assessments	English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils At NC Level 4 or Above	Boys	7	6	8
	Girls	7	7	8
	Total	14	13	16
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	47 (48)	43 (50)	54 (60)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

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

**Attendance**

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

		%
Authorised Absence	School	6.8
	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised Absence	School	0.6
	National comparative data	0.5

**Exclusions**

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

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

**Quality of teaching**

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	11
Satisfactory or better	92
Less than satisfactory	8

## **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

#### **Attainment and progress**

1. Over the intervening years since the previous inspection, the school has made steady progress in making improvements to the quality of education provided. Today, standards at Key Stage 1 are significantly better than they were, and are now average in English, mathematics, information and communications technology and religious education and above average in science. Standards show signs of lifting in Key Stage 2, although they are currently below average in English and mathematics. Standards are average in information and communications technology and science and above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in religious education. National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully implemented, and are having a positive impact on both teaching and learning.
2. Standards at Key Stage 2 show a rising trend and are much better than they were in science, information and communications technology and religious education, but are not yet at the level expected in English and mathematics. There has been insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning in English and mathematics to identify and share the best practice in the school and to use information gathered to set a clear plan of action for making sustained improvement. Staff illness is having a negative impact on the progress of pupils in the mixed Year 5 and Year 6 class. Although the Year 3 class has some additional support, the large classes in Year 3 and 4 are not supported with ancillary staff to the same level as other classes, and this is a contributing factor to the uneven progress made in these years. Standards at Key Stage 2 require boosting, especially in English and mathematics, and this is a key issue for the school to address.
3. On entry, the profile of children under five years old is below average. By the time they reach their fifth birthday, most have made good progress, and in some cases very good progress in learning, and standards are satisfactory in all six areas of learning for children of this age.
4. In the 1998 Key Stage 1 National Curriculum tests, attainment at Level 2 and above was not significantly different from the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the percentage of pupils achieving at the higher levels in these areas was well below average. Attainment in science as shown by teachers' assessments was above the national average. When compared to similar schools, standards were average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing and science. Trends over the last three years show below average performance in reading and mathematics and well below average results in writing. There is no significant variation in the achievement of boys and girls. Preliminary analyses of the 1999 National Curriculum test results show standards slightly better than in 1998 in all areas.
5. In the 1998 National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 2, standards were well below average in English, mathematics and science. This has been the trend for the last three years. Standards were average in mathematics and science and below average in English when the 1998 results are set against those of similar schools. Preliminary analyses of the 1999 National Curriculum tests show a decline in standards. The school's assessment of the cohort reveals that a significant number had special educational needs and that pupils new to the school did not do well in the tests. Four pupils left the school just before taking the tests and they had been expected to achieve a Level 4. Nevertheless, the school recognises that standards at Key Stage 2 are not high enough.
6. Girls tend to do better than the boys in English at Key Stage 2. The school has examined

the reasons for the difference in the scores, but has not been able to explain the discrepancy. During the inspection, inspectors noticed no significant difference in the attitudes and motivation of boys and girls, although occasionally, where teaching failed to appropriately challenge all pupils, the boys tended to become distracted and displayed disinterest in their studies. This was noticed in group work tasks in Literacy and Numeracy Hours in lower Key Stage 2 in particular.

7. Inspectors judge levels of attainment to be average at the end of Key Stage 1 in English, mathematics and information and communications technology. It is above average in science. Levels of attainment are below average at the end of Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics, average in science and information and communications technology. Attainment is at the level expected as set out in the locally agreed syllabus in religious education at Key Stage 1 and above that expected at Key Stage 2. Standards are above those expected at the end of both key stages in art and design and technology and are sound throughout the school in geography, history, music and physical education.
8. At Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and science. At Key Stage 2, progress in these subjects is satisfactory. Progress in history is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. Progress in information and communications technology, geography and physical education is satisfactory at both key stages. Pupils make good rates of progress throughout the school in art, design and technology, music and religious education. Attainment is below average overall when pupils under five start school, but, due to high quality provision, most make good progress and reach the levels expected of five-year-olds in most areas of learning. Pupils progress at mostly good rates until they are seven, but progress slows in Key Stage 2, especially in Years 3 and 4, and, although there is acceleration in the single age Year 5 and Year 6 classes, progress is only satisfactory overall. Pupils with special educational needs make better progress than other pupils because of specified individual learning targets and the effective support provided by the learning support assistants and voluntary workers in helping pupils meet these. Pupils with special educational needs generally make good progress. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language are making good progress in basic literacy skills. The school's commitment to these pupils is considerable and has a beneficial impact on pupils' progress and attainment across the curriculum.
9. In English, pupils develop appropriate skills in reading, and the overall level of attainment in reading is average at the end of both key stages. Pupils are able to make out unfamiliar words by using clues from the context and they use phonic skills soundly. They read fluently and with expression but few are able to get below the surface of the text to gain greater understanding beyond the literal. Writing skills are sound in Key Stage 1 but are not yet developed satisfactorily in Key Stage 2. Pupils do not all have the key skills of planning and structuring their work accurately. The development of extended writing is unsatisfactory. For these reasons, attainment in writing is below average by the time pupils leave at eleven. The improvement of writing has been a key focus of management, and various initiatives have been introduced successfully. Approaches are clearly not yet working well enough in Key Stage 2 but there are encouraging signs of good quality writing in history, for example. Pupils have satisfactory speaking and listening skills and are confident in discussion as when contributing to the local Children's Parliament, for example. The use of standard English is a weakness however, and often pupils use only limited vocabulary when putting forward their ideas. The Literacy Hour has been introduced successfully and benefit is beginning to be seen in standards of reading and writing, especially in Key Stage 1. The drive to raise standards in English has not been forceful enough so far. The headteacher has taken the lead role in monitoring classroom practice, but the findings have not been used systematically to promote the best practice observed within Literacy Hour lessons in an endeavour to lift standards.
10. Pupils achieve below average standards in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2, largely because the progress they have made from a good start up to the age of seven has not been

consistently maintained in Key Stage 2. There is evidence that the Numeracy Strategy is improving the way in which this key element of mathematics is taught and learnt throughout the school. Standards in numeracy are average at the end of both key stages. Good attention is paid to developing pupils' counting, number and arithmetical competence, but older pupils are often still too slow to work out the answer. In the best lessons, the teacher sets a brisk pace to learning, as in a Year 5 lesson when the game of 'Fizz' was used to support the learning of multiplication tables. There is good use of numeracy to support work in other subjects such as information and communications technology, for example. The coordinator has good insights into what improvements are needed. To-date there has been limited time and opportunity available to monitor the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. Although there are signs that the school is moving in the direction of good educational provision in mathematics, the pace of change needs to be quickened if standards are to get the required boost.

11. Attainment in science is above average at the end of Key Stage 1, and average at the end of Key Stage 2. Teachers provide a good range of opportunities for pupils to choose their own resources, organise their work and to discuss what they observe. This gives pupils good opportunities to 'learn by doing'. In Years 5 and 6, pupils confidently hypothesise about the outcome of investigations and compare these with the actual results, writing up appropriately their scientific discovery. Progress in science improves in Years 5 to 6 and standards show signs of acceleration in these years. The level of pupils' basic scientific general knowledge is above average and pupils have good command of scientific vocabulary in oral and written pieces. Progress is good overall and represents significant improvement since the time of the previous inspection.
12. Pupils achieve average standards in information and communications technology at both key stages. Pupils use computers with confidence to process simple text and to produce pictures in information technology. Younger pupils handle the Roamer with good control and application. In history, older pupils were observed to access the internet to find out in depth about life in Egyptian times. The school has added to its computer hardware stock, and opened a new information and communications technology suite since the time of the previous inspection. Key Stage 2 pupils have benefited well from regular timetabled sessions to build on skills, knowledge and application of information and communications technology. The enthusiasm of the coordinator has introduced new and very good software to support basic skills development and to extend the use of information and communications technology across the curriculum. The school has a sound platform on which to build future improvement at a good rate.
13. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment in religious education exceeds that expected by the locally agreed syllabus for eleven-year-olds. Pupils have good knowledge and understanding about aspects of religion and apply learning well to their own lives. Pupils learn about Christianity, together with other major world faiths such as Hinduism and Judaism. They can discuss, with thoughtfulness, some of the views people from different religions hold, and consider similarities between them. Good use is made of pupils' own experiences to support learning in religious education. Younger pupils have good knowledge about stories from the Bible. Older pupils explore the meaning of the Apostle's Creed and then create their own code to live by. Pupils show respect and tolerance for the beliefs of others.
14. The school has published targets for the end of Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics. Approaches to analysing data and using information to project likely achievements have been fairly ad hoc to-date. The target for English for next year is now projected to be 65 per cent of pupils expected to achieve average or above average standards. A target of 67 per cent has been set for mathematics. Both targets are challenging but within reach if the quality of teaching and learning is at least sustained at the level observed during the week of inspection. The school is aware that monitoring and evaluation has not been given the concerted attention required, and that development planning, whilst successful on a broad

front, has lacked clarity in identifying what action is needed specifically to raise standards. Management has been successful in making improvements to a number of aspects of school life and is well placed to carry on with the necessary action to enable standards at Key Stage 2 to improve to compare more favourably with benchmark schools.

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

15. Halton Lodge is a very happy school in which relationships are mutually respectful and behaviour is good. Parents show very strong agreement for the way in which positive attitudes and values are promoted by the school. Pupils show care for the views of one another and tolerant attitudes to those who have had different experiences. The school is harmonious and free from any racial tension. Children under five soon settle into school routines and respond positively to the expectations for behaviour. They quickly gain in confidence as a result of the good provision made, and are instilled with good attitudes to learning. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, behave as well out of the classrooms during break and lunchtimes as they do in lessons. No exclusions have been made within the last twelve months. Since the time of the last inspection, the school has made more consistent approaches to behaviour management and this has had a positive impact on the quality of learning and standards of behaviour achieved. Pupils are well on their way to becoming responsible future citizens.
16. Pupils are polite and friendly, have a clear moral code and show care for one another, their belongings and school property. They are willing to help and do jobs such as assisting at lunchtime, organising resources for learning, arranging charity fund-raising and collecting tokens to be exchanged for books for school. Pupils develop personal and social skills well and are clearly motivated by the certificates awarded for hard work, good behaviour, effort and for citizenship. The school council comprising democratically elected representatives is a good sounding board for other's views, and council members are confident to voice their opinions of what improvements should be made to the school. They and many others are good ambassadors for Halton Lodge.
17. The youngest pupils have already settled well into school routines and are responding with confidence to the experiences being offered. They listen very attentively and enjoy role-play situations such as when re-enacting a visit to the doctor's surgery. Their behaviour is orderly and self-disciplined. The majority of pupils throughout the school have positive attitudes to learning, and work with sustained interest and good levels of application, even when the work is not sufficiently challenging. In the least satisfactory lessons, however, pupils are expected to sit for too long listening to the teacher and are given too little opportunity for active involvement. This was evident in opening sessions to both literacy and numeracy sessions in some Key Stage 2 classes, and was compounded in one or two lessons by work not sufficiently well matched to individuals in group work tasks. In the unsatisfactory lessons, because teachers were not clear about what they wanted pupils to know, understand and be able to do by the end of the lesson, pupils' interest waned and inattentive behaviour resulted, both of which impeded progress in learning.
18. Pupils show good levels of independence when given the opportunity. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 3/4, pupils enjoyed the challenge set by the teacher in learning about fractions. Through practical tasks such as cutting up an orange, throwing dice and then totalling and dividing up the numbers, pupils enjoyed finding out how to work out fractions down to one sixth. They took pleasure in personal success, and good progress was achieved in knowledge and understanding about use and application of number. Pupils work well together. For example, in a gymnastics lesson in Year 6, they worked cooperatively and, in so doing, both monitored and evaluated one another's skills in sequencing movements at different levels and attempting to improve on personal best. When given the opportunity, pupils are well able to reflect on their own performance and know what they need to do next to improve.

## 22. Attendance

19. Although attendance is still below the national average for primary schools and is therefore unsatisfactory, there has been a small improvement in the level of attendance since the previous inspection. This term attendance is about average. Most absence is due to genuine illness and levels of unauthorised absence are within reasonable limits. Registers are marked accurately at the beginning of each session in accordance with legal requirements. Most pupils are punctual in arriving for school, allowing sessions to start on time and continue without interruption. The introduction of an award system to encourage improved attendance is a positive feature.

## 23. QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

### Teaching

20. During the week of inspection, teaching was of satisfactory or better quality in 92 per cent of lessons and unsatisfactory in eight per cent. Teaching quality was good or better in 62 per cent of all lessons and in 11 per cent very good. The quality of teaching is judged to be good overall. This is a significant improvement since the time of the previous inspection when some eighty per cent of lessons were judged to be of satisfactory or better quality. Teaching is now consistently good at Key Stage 1, although more variable at Key Stage 2. The investment in staff development has been well made and this is reflected in the good levels of subject knowledge and confidence to teach the National Curriculum and religious education that teachers now have. The monitoring of practice to identify strengths and weaknesses has been ad hoc however, and the features which make the best quality teaching in the school are currently insufficiently shared.
21. The teaching of children under five is good. Planning is based mainly on the Desirable Learning Outcomes. Teaching is confident and lessons are well structured to engage the children's interest, and make learning enjoyable. Very good attention is paid to promoting the children's self-esteem and self-worth whilst they are effectively guided onto the National Curriculum programmes of study when ready. The team of adults in the two reception classes is highly influential in enabling children to become effective learners.
22. The most effective teaching enabling pupils to make good progress was most apparent in reception, Year 2 and in the single age Year 6 class. This is because teachers have more realistic expectations of what the range of pupils are capable of achieving by the end of the lesson, and so better rates in learning are achieved. Teaching is good throughout the school in religious education, art, design and technology and music and pupils make good progress in these subjects as a result. Teaching of the pupils in the special educational needs class in lower Key Stage 2 is good and is having a beneficial impact on the progress these pupils make in meeting their individual targets. Teaching and support staff have a very good understanding of the needs of pupils with limited English language. Work is well planned, and through effective support these pupils make good progress. The 'army' of volunteers helping in many classes is a real strength, and makes a significant contribution to the quality of teaching and learning.
23. The eight per cent of unsatisfactory teaching was observed in Key Stage 2. This was largely due to ineffective teaching methods and organisation, a lack of clarity of purpose, unsatisfactory match of tasks to ability, and too few opportunities made available for pupils to learn practically, which impeded progress. The level of additional learning support is lower in these classes than elsewhere in the school. The quality of provision being made for pupils in the mixed-age Year 5/6 class is currently being adversely affected by staff absence and supply cover. The teaching by the headteacher seen in this class was never less than satisfactory, but, over the week of inspection, pupils' rates of progress were very variable, due to the temporary nature of provision. The issues for the school to address to

ensure that these pupils are enabled to learn effectively are as follows: the quality of short-term planning throughout the school, although satisfactory overall is variable; in the classes where teaching has shortcomings this weakness is exacerbated and results in unsatisfactory conditions for learning; assessment of learning outcomes is too informal and is not used sufficiently well to assist the planning of future lessons. All of these slow down rates of learning especially in English and mathematics and are therefore key issues for the school to address.

24. Satisfactory or better features of teaching demonstrated throughout the school, by most teachers, include their good subject knowledge, effective management of pupils, efficient use of resources, good setting of homework and helpful marking of work. Most teachers use appropriate methods and organisation to provide interesting lessons that elicit positive responses from pupils, and enable them to make appropriate gains in learning. Most teachers use time purposefully but this was not always the case in group work in the Literacy and Numeracy Hours when some pupils were set tasks which lacked challenge, and resulted in insufficient application on the part of these pupils.
25. In the most successful lessons, typically in the early years, Year 2 and Year 6, pupils are given challenging work, encouraged to tackle some things for themselves and are clear about what they need to do next to improve. This was well demonstrated in a Literacy Hour when pupils in Year 2 firstly looked at the Big Book 'Owl Babies' with the teacher, and then discussed the text. The teacher had planned her use of resources to both inspire and engage pupils' sustained concentration for the whole hour. Pupils showed a very good understanding of character and story-line. The teacher used questions very skilfully to draw out personal responses which high attaining pupils then used to write interesting and imaginative stories in their own words. In well-organised group tasks, other pupils sequenced the story using ready prepared sentences and pictures, whilst others wrote about weekend experiences in their diaries. Throughout the lesson, a very good pace was maintained with the teacher making regular checks to encourage and stimulate good progress for all pupils.
26. Some aspects of teaching, although sound, could be refined to improve overall quality. In some lessons, teachers set class objectives for learning but do not give sufficient attention to the individual needs and capabilities within the class or group, nor do they set down specific targets in their short-term planning. This was the case in some Literacy Hours and resulted in some pupils not making the gains in language and literacy of which they were capable. In most lessons, pupils with special educational needs receive effective support and generally well-matched work, and make steady progress. Some high attaining pupils, however, are capable of learning at a faster rate and attaining higher standards. More specific objectives would enable teachers to make more detailed assessment and to set precise targets for the next steps in pupils' learning.

### **30. The curriculum and assessment**

27. The school's curriculum is broad, balanced and of good quality overall, ensuring that statutory requirements to teach all National Curriculum subjects and religious education are met at both key stages. The curriculum for the under fives gives pupils a very good start to school, enabling them to make good and often very good progress, which continues to be good throughout Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2, breadth and balance are satisfactory but the school's use of the afternoon teaching session is not as sharply focused as is the morning period, where the impact of the National Numeracy Strategy and the National Literacy Strategy are having a positive effect on pupil progress. Weaknesses in curriculum identified at the time of the previous inspection have been improved. Assessment procedures have been given sound attention but the use of assessment to assist planning is still a key issue for the school to address.
28. The school's provision to implement the locally agreed Cheshire syllabus for religious

education, 'Encounter and Response', is good. There is a coherent and useful policy for health education, which details a specific programme for sex education in Years 5 and 6. The same years also take part in the local authority initiated 'Citizenship' programme, which successfully complements the work done by children and staff on the school's council. The school's homework policy is clear and realistic, and the imaginative format and use of the 'Writing Sacks' to encourage children to enjoy writing at home are very positive features.

29. The emphasis that the school places on personal and social education, and good relationships in particular, contributes to equality of access and opportunity for pupils, which is good over all key stages. Both boys and girls take a turn at being made "special" for the day and are extremely proud when they are. Pupils respond well to each other's successes in gaining both curricular and 'Citizenship' awards, which are recognised at family assemblies.
30. Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for throughout the school. The coordinator has worked successfully with colleagues to develop clearly defined and focused individual education plans for those assessed with specific needs. Classroom assistance offered by support assistants and parents, in partnership with teaching staff, is outstanding. Taken together, these two elements ensure that children with special educational needs have access to a curriculum which is both enriching and rewarding, except in one class which has been affected by the long-term absence of the class teacher.
31. The school's planning for progression and continuity of learning is satisfactory through all stages. Policy documents are appropriate and schemes of work for all subjects are now usefully in place, and address fully a key issue from the school's last inspection. These schemes have been used to provide greater detail to the long-term 'rolling programme' of work, and they now offer clear guidance for teachers' planning.
32. Medium-term plans are satisfactory, giving detail to the work being planned over half-termly periods, based on the schemes of work. The national frameworks for literacy and numeracy, together with guidance from the national quality council (QCA), have been used successfully to inform curriculum content and methodology. However, neither medium-term nor short-term planning provide sufficiently well for potentially higher attaining pupils. This results in a tailing off in standards of attainment for some classes, particularly at lower Key Stage 2. More specifically, daily planning does not identify accurately enough what gains in learning are expected for the full range of pupils, and subsequent potential progress in learning is not matched to the overall targets set following assessment.
33. The curriculum is enhanced by a number of visits and visitors to the school. During the inspection, local clergy and an archaeologist visited the school to talk to the Year 3/4 pupils, and a Year 5/6 class visited Liverpool Museum as part of their work on 'the Victorians'. High quality displays include work derived from Year 1 and 2 visits to Llandudno and Delamere Forest to develop an understanding of areas contrasting with Runcorn, and a 'hands on' history day at Styal Mill for Year 5 and 6 pupils. Residential visits to Beeston and Menai outdoor education centres are also available for Year 3 and Year 6 pupils and, taken all round, these experiences provide considerable opportunities for enrichment for pupils who might not normally experience the wider world outside their home area.
34. Good extra-curricular provision has been maintained since the school's last inspection. Teaching staff give freely of their time in providing opportunities this term for French, information and communications technology, gymnastics, football, netball and art. At other times of the year, pupils may be offered further opportunities, such as athletics, rounders, guitar and "Pop'n'Bop". The hard-working staff ensure that this provision, which all children have access to, makes a good contribution to pupils' personal and social

development.

35. The school has satisfactory procedures in place for assessing pupils' attainment, and all statutory requirements are met. Parents receive annual reports which identify what work has been covered over the course of a year, and the arrangements for the transfer of information to secondary schools when pupils aged eleven move to their new school, are satisfactory.
36. The school's assessment, recording and reporting policy, and its marking policy, both of which have been recently introduced, usefully identify good practice in terms of supporting and developing pupils' progress in their studies. Day-to-day marking of pupils' work is consistent and supportive and shows clear recognition of positive achievements on the part of pupils. The best examples suggest what the pupil need to do next to develop as a learner. Each teacher usefully keeps class records of attainment, matched against the National Curriculum programmes of study. Pupils are appropriately assessed in some subjects, as they progress through the school, starting with a baseline assessment when they first enter, and further testing takes place each year, either by the use of non statutory tests or by using commercial products. End of key stage tests are analysed with a view to providing data which can inform future planning and target setting, but work on this so far as been minimal.
37. The uses to which assessment is put by teachers to assist future lesson planning and by senior managers to assist whole school development are not consistently effective. There is not enough good practice in Key Stage 2 which identifies what needs to be done to raise standards in English and mathematics by the end of the key stage. This is a weakness. The coordinator for assessment has analysed the results from the 1999 National Tests in mathematics, for example, to show patterns where answers are consistently correct or incorrect, but this analysis does not appear to have impacted upon planning for the subject in Year 6. Monitoring of strengths and weaknesses in educational provision is a key issue for improvement.

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

38. When the school was inspected previously, it was judged to pay sound attention overall to this aspect of education, with very good provision made for pupils' social development. Relationships were found to be caring and supportive and pupils helped towards good behaviour. Attention to cultural diversity was found to be underdeveloped, and too little opportunity made for personal reflection. Since that time, strengths in provision have been maintained and good attention given to raising pupils' awareness about the richness of multi-cultural British society. Through well-planned opportunities the community spirit of the school is well fostered, human values are affirmed and pupils' own sensitivity to the meaning and purposes of life are heightened. The school now makes good overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development and this is a significant improvement. Parents support positively the school's work in this area and show strong agreement that the school is preparing pupils well for the next stage of education and to become responsible future citizens.
39. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. The school has a clear set of values which it works hard to promote in all aspects of education. Individual talents are identified and good opportunities made available for all pupils to succeed. Pupils are encouraged to have open and honest responses and to air their views without fear of ridicule from others. In a Year 1/2 class, there is a tree of leaves made by pupils and staff on which personal comments are written as testament to the friendship of one of the children recently killed in a road traffic accident. Within the curriculum there are plenty of planned opportunities for pupils to celebrate the work of others: in English when studying poetry, for example, and through drama when performing the poem to show mood and genre. In a Year 2 Literacy Hour, pupils showed empathy with the main characters in the 'Owl Babies' story, as they

wrote personal accounts of what it might feel like to be lost. Through the study of the Nicene Creed, pupils in Year 6 reflected on the importance of setting down a set of values and principles to live by and then devised their own. The daily acts of collective worship are appropriately planned, of sound quality, and they make a beneficial contribution to spiritual development. There is time for pupils to express their views and to reflect, often through prayer, about their own and others lives. Once a week, the whole school community comes together to celebrate one another's successes and achievements and in this way recognise the value of individuals. Visitors from local churches, who sometimes lead worship, make a good contribution to pupils' experiences and to their spiritual development.

40. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. Moral issues are well promoted from the start in reception classes. Class discussions, personal and social education and the Citizenship project are used very effectively to teach pupils the difference between right and wrong. Pupils have clear understanding of the need for honesty, truthfulness and high standards of behaviour. In many lessons, teachers took care to highlight and praise pupils who showed responsible attitudes and behaviour. Adults in the school provide good role models. Comments from parents show a positive appreciation of the moral values taught by the school.
41. Pupils' social development is very well provided for. The very good quality of relationships among all members of the school community has a very profound impact on pupils' social development. The school places great emphasis on care and support for others and the pupils respond very positively to the adults' expectations. Pupils new to the school are warmly welcomed and friendships are built quickly. The refugee children are already well integrated and the families of these children are extremely pleased with how well they are doing socially, emotionally and academically. The curriculum and the extra-curricular activities provide a range of occasions for the pupils to work collaboratively with partners or in groups. Pupils have valuable opportunities to take responsibility for organising class resources, arranging charitable events and through the school council. Residential visits provide useful opportunities for pupils to develop team building and leadership skills. Citizenship certificates are awarded to pupils who help others in some way and are a positive feature.
42. The school is making good provision for pupils' cultural development. There are well-planned opportunities for pupils to appreciate the richness of multi-cultural twentieth century society. For example, during the recent Multicultural day pupils learned about and experienced first hand: Hungarian dancing, Japanese rice-paper writing, African story telling by Misoshi, a friend of the school born in Ghana, mask-making and Hindu dance. Cultural experiences are appropriately provided across the curriculum. In music, for example, pupils listen to the work of great composers. In art, they study the work of Monet, Van Gogh and William Morris. Visiting artists come into school to share their talents in dance, music and art. Pupils have benefited well from working with a local artist on paintings of Runcorn life. Visits to local places of interest, such as a temple, synagogue, museums and art galleries, support well pupils' cultural understanding. Visits to places further afield, such as Menai and Delamere Forest, gives pupils experiences of the world beyond their immediate locality and are successful in broadening pupils' horizons.

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

43. Since the time of the previous inspection, the school has successfully maintained its very caring ethos and has improved the provision for first aid. The staff has addressed the need for a whole school policy on bullying and, together with consistent approaches to the management of behaviour, helps create a safe and secure environment in which pupils can learn effectively.
44. Most parents are happy with the support and guidance offered to their children. Induction

arrangements in reception are very effective and enable children to settle well and make a good start. Parents feel that their children are happy in school and able to concentrate on their work. Teachers know their pupils well and give good support to their personal development through target setting and through recognising and praising their personal successes at the weekly celebration assembly. The monitoring of pupils' academic success currently relies too heavily on informal systems and, although the school is providing a good all round education for pupils, more rigour in assessment practices would help focus attention on whether rates of progress are the best they can be for all. The absence of assessment in most foundation subjects means that there is no clear view about rates of learning in afternoon sessions. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support. Individual education plans are well targeted and well used by staff. There is good involvement of outside support agencies where appropriate. The school is giving a high level of commitment to ensuring that refugee children settle well into the school. The arrangements in place to support those for whom English is an additional language are very effective. Support systems are effective and are ensuring that these children progress well in all aspects of learning.

45. Attendance is carefully monitored by the school and has improved since the introduction of termly certificates for pupils gaining at least ninety five per cent attendance. The education welfare officer visits the school regularly and works closely with staff where there is perceived to be a problem with attendance.
46. Parents are happy with the attention given by the school to promoting good behaviour and they feel that rewards and sanctions are applied fairly by all the staff. Monitoring procedures work well. Bullying is not an issue in the school. Any reported incidents are dealt with swiftly and effectively. The assertive discipline policy is used consistently by staff and promotes good behaviour both in class and around the school. The arrangements at lunchtime are satisfactory but noise levels tend to rise to unacceptable limits in the dining hall. Senior managers are currently investigating ways to make this key time of the day more sociable and enjoyable.
47. The school has an effective child protection policy. Recent training on child protection has been undertaken, the headteacher appropriately takes on the role of designated teacher, and all staff are aware of the procedures. Lessons on sex education and drug awareness, together with the visits from the health education caravan, form part of the school's good quality health education programme. The school nurse assists with these lessons as appropriate. Several members of staff have received first aid training. There is a school accident book for recording incidents. First aid boxes are appropriately sited and stocked. Parents are usefully informed of any accidents to their children, and any treatment given. The governors have approved a comprehensive health and safety policy and regular risk assessment is usefully undertaken.

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

48. Since the last inspection, parental involvement in the work of the school and in their children's learning, together with the school's links with the community, have improved considerably. Regular, very good quality information continues to be provided for parents. The school promotes and secures excellent partnership with parents and this is a strength. The 'army of volunteers' who help in school are making a very worthwhile contribution to the quality of education provided and standards being achieved.
49. The school is held in high regard by parents and the community it serves. An open-door policy prevails and very good efforts are made to secure the involvement of parents in supporting the school's educational developments. Parents are happy with the information they receive in monthly newsletters and at termly open evenings. Pupils' annual progress reports contain areas for development and targets are discussed with parents. Parents of children with special educational needs are fully involved in agreeing and reviewing individual education plans. Parents of all pupils have regular communication with the school regarding their children's progress both academically and socially. Every week, around fifty parents attend the Friday sharing assembly to join in the celebrations or recognise good effort, good work and helpfulness.
50. The school has a homework policy and most parents are involved in pupils' learning through the help they give with reading, spelling and mathematics. Good use is made of well-maintained home-school link books. Parents feel welcome in the school and readily volunteer to assist in classes with reading, preparing literacy sacks, science experiments, baking, sewing and accompanying educational visits. This help is much appreciated by teachers. The school provides regular well-supported opportunities for parents to attend courses on information and communications technology and on how to help their children learn.
51. The parents' association is open to all and is very active in organising fund-raising and social events. Good support for events is received from parents, friends and the local community, enabling considerable amounts of money to be raised to assist with school resources.
52. The school has very good links with the wider community. Pupils take part in the annual carol concert at the town hall and visit the local residential home for the elderly. Harvest contributions are distributed through Christian Aid. Pupils attend church for services at the end of each term. The school raises money for a number of charities, such as Guide Dogs for the Blind, the Poppy Appeal and the NSPCC. Money has also been raised for the Kosovan Appeal and Kosovan refugee children have been made welcome in the school. These links help to develop a sense of citizenship and pride in the pupils' own community and that of the wider world.
53. The school offers placements to students and welcomes volunteers on work experience. It has constructive links with the local high school and currently a member of the art department is working with pupils in the school. Two classroom support staff are being funded to work in the school through links with the 'Business in the Community' organisation. These links, together with visits to places of educational interest and the expertise of visitors to the school, contribute significantly to pupils' learning.

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

### **Leadership and management**

54. Three key issues arising from the previous inspection applied to management. The school

has given sound attention to two out of three of them. There has been improvement overall in completing schemes of work for all subjects and in producing a school development plan to guide its actions. School management has not yet completed the task of establishing a system to monitor rigorously the impact of its work on the quality of education, rates of progress or the academic standards achieved.

55. The telling phrase “*¼ the new head teacher has to ¼ deal with a wide range of management issues ¼*” in the previous inspection report indicated that much had to be done. Since that time, the headteacher has maintained a cheerful approach to her work, has welded the staff into a committed team determined to raise standards, and has made Halton Lodge Primary School a welcoming, settled and improving place for pupils and staff to be. There is a good partnership between staff, morale is high and there is a good sense of purpose in school. Parents hold extremely positive views about the work of the headteacher, all aspects of educational provision, and the clear educational direction she is promoting.
56. The deputy headteacher takes a central role in the management of the school and is a good partner for the headteacher in the work to make the school even better. Together, they have a good sense of the central priorities of the school and are becoming more focused on the things that rank high for improvement. The senior management team is growing well into its role and shares this resolution to tackle sometimes difficult problems in order to ensure pupils get as good a quality of education as possible. Coordinators manage their subjects and other elements of the school’s work effectively, on the whole. In its infancy, this shared approach brought improvement at a steady rate in the past. Now that it has settled into a focused pattern, the likelihood of good improvement in the future is more assured.
57. The governors act as forceful critical friends of the school. They are very aware of what needs doing next to improve and give firm support in this process. Governors ensure that the school meets all statutory requirements and they publish all the information required of them.
58. Trends in raising the effectiveness of school management are good, but there are two aspects that require more impetus. The first is the monitoring of the work of the school. The headteacher and deputy headteacher undertake most of the monitoring and evaluation of teaching, the curriculum and standards. Subject coordinators, the special educational needs coordinator and assessment coordinator have had little opportunity to share in this process. All have full-time teaching responsibilities and do not have the necessary opportunity to find out from direct observations, about the strengths and weaknesses of the school as a whole. This means that the full range of information needed to evaluate management’s next tasks is available to individuals rather than to the team and so efforts to make improvement are often dispersed.
59. The second aspect is school development planning. The plan itself lists all the things that need to be done and links these to those responsible, the time available and the cost to the school. It does not, however, show what are the one or two main priorities that will have the most telling impact on raising standards. This results in lack of cohesion in procedures and strategies to bring improvement. The process of producing the plan is good on the whole, for governors, staff and senior managers all have a role in determining its contents. Better monitoring procedures are needed to ensure that the ordering of the priorities determined drive the school forward, and bring the needed boost to standards in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2.
60. The management of pupils with special educational needs is a strength of the school and results in good quality provision for these pupils. The coordinator is committed, hard working and effective. She has ensure that colleagues are well informed about the work and has provided good quality training to ensure effective teaching and support is given to

the pupils. The result of this good management and leadership is the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs.

61. The management of the provision made for pupils who speak English as an additional language is highly successful in enabling these pupils to feel safe, secure and make good progress in personal and academic development. The welcoming of all pupils into the school community, and the way in which the talents of individuals are recognised, is a major contribution to the positive ethos in school.
62. The good sense of purpose about management, the meeting of school aims and the good school ethos are strengths. The fact that not everyone who should be is always well drawn into management, the sometimes vague targets pursued, and the imperfect systems to monitor rigorously the schools strengths and weaknesses are all areas requiring improvement. On balance, management is good. It is resolved to eliminate the imperfections, but also to build on strengths. The targets for action that the school has set itself for this year are both realistic and achievable alongside the drive to raise academic standards.

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

63. The staff at Halton Lodge are a united team and the school gels together well, despite being housed in two separate buildings. There is a sense of common purpose about everyone's work and of paramount importance is the well-being of pupils. There has been little monitoring of standards by subject coordinators beyond examination of planning to check for coverage of the subject programme of study. This is acknowledged by the school as in need of review, if strengths and weaknesses are to be identified and best practice shared. Strengths in the findings of the previous inspection have been broadly maintained. Additionally, there has been an improvement in resource provision generally, and in particular in the range and quality of those for science and information and communications technology, and in the range of large play equipment for children under five years of age.
64. The school has sufficient appropriately qualified and experienced teachers to ensure the effective delivery of the National Curriculum. Most subject coordinators have initial qualifications in their subject areas and others have gained experience in their areas through well-focused in-service training. All staff have detailed, up-to-date, agreed and signed job descriptions that are reviewed annually. A staff appraisal programme is usefully in place and the head teacher has undertaken some appraisal training which is on-going, awaiting the implementation of the government initiative on performance-related staff development. The staff are committed to improving their skills and professional development is reviewed annually. Training usefully encompasses the needs of individual staff and the school. There is an effective but informal system in place for the induction of new staff. There are detailed handbooks available to assist teachers and classroom assistants in their roles. The non-teaching staff make a valuable contribution to the school community. They carry out their duties with a sense of commitment and pride. Many volunteers are happy to devote considerable time to the school and are a major strength in supporting both teaching and learning. The level of ancillary support provided for Years 3 and 4, is not as generous as in other classes and this is one reason why pupils' progress, especially in group work, is not as good as elsewhere in the school.
65. The school is accommodated in two separate buildings which are attractive and well maintained, providing ample accommodation to meet the needs of the National Curriculum. Good use is made of the available space to arrange high quality displays of pupils' work to offer encouragement and stimulation to further effort. The environment is enhanced by the provision of indoor plants and flower arrangements and every effort has been made to give the pupils a quality learning environment. There are two hard surface playgrounds of good quality which enable pupils to enjoy safe playtime activities. There is

a large level playing field which is securely fenced. A garden is being developed which will include a pergola to afford some shade.

66. The school is well resourced with good quality, easily accessible resources for most areas of the curriculum. There are very good resources for information and communication technology with a computer suite and the provision of computers in classrooms. There are good sets of fiction and non-fiction books to support the teaching and learning of literacy in classes. Resources for English, mathematics, religious education, physical education, art and design technology are good. Resources for science, history, geography and music are satisfactory. The quality and quantity of non-fiction books in the library is unsatisfactory. Some books are thirty years old and no longer appropriate for use. The school makes good use of the local authority library service and the loan service for artefacts, for example to support the teaching of history and religious education. Pupils also visit places of educational interest such as Warrington Museum, Styal Mill and the Walker Art Gallery to further support their learning. These strong features both extend and enrich the good quality of education provided.

#### **70. The efficiency of the school**

67. The school development plan, the judgement of the cost effectiveness of the school and the fact that there were still two separate schools on the site were all identified as weaknesses in the efficient running of the school at the time of the previous inspection. At that time, the school also spent more than it earned and the cost of education was expensive compared to other primary schools. In the meantime, the school has addressed these things satisfactorily, and efficiency is now better.
68. Budget planning is satisfactory overall. The school stays within its budget and knows at any given time, what has been spent, what money remains and what bills have still to arrive. Governors are actively involved in budget planning and the school development plan is used soundly to target expenditure. Financial management and control are sound. There are satisfactory procedures for the handling of money, managing the bank account and adhering to the local education authority's financial procedures. The most recent audit identified a number of issues for the school to address. Some of these issues have still to be tackled, and whilst these are of a relatively minor nature, they indicate that accounting and financial procedures and school administration could be better than they are. There is a scattering of responsibility for finance and administration matters, rather than a concentration in one place. This means that key personnel are not always aware of required information, or know fully the procedures to be followed.
69. The additional funding made available for pupils with special educational needs and staff training is used well. The special educational needs coordinator has made sure that all staff are knowledgeable about the needs of individual pupils and has provided good quality training and resources to enable teachers and learning support staff to give good aid to special educational needs pupils. There is good value added by this efficient practice, as the pupils make good progress. Staff development is good and has had a beneficial effect on the improvement of standards. Additional funding for pupils learning English as an additional language is well targeted and used to support these pupils' good progress.
70. On the whole, teachers and support staff are matched well to classes and duties. Since the progress that pupils make fluctuates in Key Stage 2, there is a need to re-examine the value brought by the current staffing distribution. Staff absence has had a negative impact on the quality of education that the mixed age Year 5/6 class has received. There are also some ineffective elements of teaching practice that require identification and improvement. Despite these factors, teaching quality is good overall and there is a very good partnership between teachers, support staff and the many volunteers who so ably support the school. Management is effective in making best use of two separate buildings and there are no efficiency issues in this respect. High quality display celebrates individual efforts, and sets

good standards for other pupils to meet. Good quality learning resources are used well, though time could be better used, as some lessons lack the pace and sparkle of the best in school.

71. The good quality of teaching overall, the good start that pupils make to their school career, the purposeful air in classrooms, the good quality of work with pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, and the improvement to standards this year all add significantly to the value that the school gives. The value added is not the best possible because standards at the end of Key Stage 2, particularly in English and mathematics, and the inconsistent level of progress hold it back. In addition, the cost of educating each pupil is higher than average. However, the school provides well for the pupils overall and equips them well as effective learners and useful members of society. The school is judged to provide satisfactory value for the money.

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

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

72. Children are admitted into two parallel reception classes in September as rising five-year-olds. At the time of the inspection, there were 31 children under five in these two classes, with 18 out of 21 children in one class and 13 out of 20 children in the second class. All of the children under five attend school on a full-time basis. Most have had some pre-school playgroup experience, including some pre-school experience in a group that meets daily in the school's Key Stage 1 building. The school has good liaison in place with the playgroups. There is also a good induction programme, which benefits the children and supports them in settling into school routines. Overall, attainment on entry to school is below the average expected for children's ages. This is confirmed by the baseline assessment, which is made after entry into school. Progress is generally good in all areas of learning and sometimes very good where teaching is very good. Children with special educational needs are informally identified at an early stage in school and make good progress as a result of being carefully and sensitively monitored in order to meet their needs appropriately. Children get a good start in school and standards are in line with what would be expected in all areas of learning. They are well prepared to commence the National Curriculum programmes of study and are well on target to meet the Desirable Learning Outcomes.

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

73. Children make good progress in personal and social development, and achievements are what would be expected for five-year-olds. They come into a warm and welcoming environment in the school where they settle very quickly into the routines. They act very sensibly and follow the rules of caring for one another as they come in from the playground in the morning and afternoons and break times and when they leave school at the end of the day. They are well supported by a significant number of well-trained and briefed support staff and voluntary helpers. In lessons, children develop their cooperative skills capably because their learning is so well controlled by teachers, support staff and voluntary helpers who have consistent commitment to the school. The children's skills are developed in their imaginative play when the home corner has been turned into a doctor's surgery. Through the appropriate carousel arrangement of activities all children have the opportunity to enhance their personal and social skills in this way. They behave well and show good self-control both in lessons and around school when, for example, they join in with older pupils at assembly times. Children have good attitudes to learning.
74. The quality of teaching personal and social development is good. Teachers, nursery nurses and voluntary helpers work with one accord and provide an attractive learning environment where children feel secure and happy. Adults have good relationships with children and one another. Their relationships with one another provide a good role model for the children. Support is given sensitively to children but they are expected to be as independent as possible. This is confirmed to the children strongly when they are expected to make their own choices when, for example, they paint imaginative pictures in shades of a colour. Appropriate attention is given to personal hygiene when children wear protective aprons and are reminded to wash their hands after painting.

#### **Language and literacy**

75. Children make good progress in language and literacy development. Children listen very carefully to instructions as they are given effective opportunities to add to stories with their own words and sentences. They do this after they have discussed a range of sensible possibilities with a nursery nurse. This develops their speaking skills as capably as their listening skills. By the time they are five, they are in line with what would be expected for

their age. They make imaginative but meaningful choices of settings for their contributions to a Big Book such as 'The Seaside' and 'The Fairground'. As their choices are accepted, they then develop their skills as writers in the same exercise. They talk about the structure of a sentence and are appropriately given a starting point of the beginning of a sentence by the nursery nurse before completing the sentence themselves. They either overwrite or write freely, but whichever way they write they do so with good, accurate hand control, because they are well supervised in so doing. They interact well with one another as they make decisions about what they are going to add to the story. This work also supports them effectively in developing their understanding of books needing to be read in order of words and having to match words accurately to print. This gives them pride and pleasure in their books. They show real enjoyment and care of books in consequence.

76. The teaching of language and literacy is good. The teacher and nursery nurse plan very thoroughly as a team. Learning is very well structured as children are given clear introductions to tasks but are also given appropriate opportunities to be creative in developing their work. This is work that is going to give good support to children in developing their skills in the Literacy Hour. All language and literacy experiences, including sharing stories together, are organised well and make certain that children gain a great deal of pleasure and enjoyment from their participation in them.

### **Mathematical development**

77. Children are very involved in developing their mathematical skills because they are made meaningful for them. Most develop their skills to the standard expected by five years of age, and a few to a standard above what would be expected for their age. All make at least good progress. They understand what it means to count up to five as they make biscuits for one another that have five sweets covering the tops of biscuits. They show understanding of numbers beyond five, as the number of biscuits increases so that they all have a biscuit to eat at break time. They are able to assimilate competently the idea of numbers up to 20. They use accurate mathematical language to describe numbers less than and more than five in consequence. They create patterns as they paint with one colour and apply mathematical knowledge to the patterns being created. Children make very good progress where activities are well structured and resourced. Their contributions are well monitored on an individual, or, more often, on a small group basis. The teaching of mathematical concepts is good. Lessons are very thoroughly planned and organised. The resources are often very relevant to children because they are real life resources. The children are supported in discovering for themselves problem-solving strategies, as teacher and nursery nurse ask open-ended questions that make them think before they do something practical and then give answers. The lessons are purposeful and are effective in stimulating pupils' positive attitudes to mathematics.

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

78. Children have good opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world because so many of the experiences created for them are based around real life. They develop their standards in line with what would be expected for children of five years of age and make good progress in learning. They talk about their immediate world as they share their news with one another at the beginning of the week. At the same time they are encouraged to expand into world news and are able to do so with good measures of knowledge. They confirm this knowledge of the wider world in an assembly time when they think about those less fortunate than themselves living in India. This supports them in beginning to understand about other countries as well as the immediate area around school when they talk about their personal journey to school at news time. Children handle tools and equipment with confidence as they use table top and larger construction toys. They assemble and take things apart with the confidence of knowing that they are going to be able to remake objects just as accurately. The teaching in this area of learning is good. Teachers prepare a wide range of opportunities in order to develop a considerable amount

of confidence in children. The teachers are well supported in this by the nursery nurse and voluntary helpers who work as a team in order to enrich children's experiences, whilst bringing things to them from real life wherever possible.

### **Creative development**

79. Children develop their creative skills in a range of ways and make good progress. They work at a level that would be expected for children of five years of age. They are effectively finding out about colours and the way that colours can be mixed together to create other colours as they make their own paintings. They enjoy taking part in role-play in the surgery that has replaced their home corner and use accurate language as they make visits, are received in the reception area and then eventually see the 'doctor'. They get opportunities to join in singing with other children, particularly at assembly time. They do this tunefully and with good measures of enjoyment. They particularly enjoy making movements to their singing and are able to do this capably. Teaching in this area of development is good. There is a wide range of activities planned for the children to become involved in that are well structured and supportive of developing their knowledge and skills in this respect. Teachers, nursery nurse and voluntary helpers work as a team to provide these experiences, as they all become involved in them. This is because of the carousel arrangement of the activities which means that all children get opportunity to take part in them at different times in small groups.

### **Physical development**

80. Children make good progress, and development in this area of learning is what would be expected for children of five years of age. Children show that they are able to use paintbrushes carefully and with skill to create lovely pictures. They effectively use constructional equipment to make models that are sometimes objects from real life but at other times purely from their imagination. Children are beginning to take control of their actions as they move around the classroom from one activity to another very sensibly. They come in from the playground and go back out again with care and sensitivity for one another's actions. Teaching in this area of learning is good. Lessons and activities are well planned and effectively organised. There is good deployment of staff so that pupils are being efficiently targeted in order that they gain maximum learning opportunities.
81. The good teaching in all areas of learning and the particularly very good teaching in the language and literacy and numeracy areas of learning enables children to make good progress. It helps them to become self confident, well informed and ready to take up further opportunities for learning later on in school.

## **85. ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

### **English**

82. At the time of the previous inspection, standards in English were below the national average at both key stages. Teaching was generally satisfactory overall but good progress in reception was not maintained in Key Stage 1 and was slow in Key Stage 2. Since that time, the school has taken on board the teaching of the Literacy Hour and is continuing to develop the English curriculum as a priority in its drive to raise standards. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 today have risen and are satisfactory. Good progress in reception is now maintained through good teaching across the key stage, particularly in Year 2 where consistently good teaching accelerates pupils' progress. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 continue to be below average overall with girls performing better than boys. Where teaching is good, pupils make good progress but this is not consistent across the key stage. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils learning English as a second language make good progress in the individual language and literacy targets set for them.

83. Results in the 1998 National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 1 showed average attainment in reading and writing but very low results at higher levels. Compared to similar schools, results were average. The preliminary analyses of the 1999 National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds in reading show attainment just below the national average overall. Results in writing were average when compared to all schools. However, when results are compared with those of similar schools, they are above average. This has been a rising trend over the last three years. The inspection findings reflect this picture at Key Stage 1 and confirm that standards in English at the end of this key stage are average.
84. Results in the 1998 National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 2 showed well below average results in English, with the percentage of pupils achieving at the higher than average levels also well below average. The preliminary analyses of the 1999 National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds in English show results well below the national average, well below the results of similar schools and that they are failing to sustain the slight upward trend of previous years. The school's analysis of the cohort reveals that a high percentage had special educational needs and that four pupils assessed as likely to achieve average standards left the school just before the national tests took place. The inspection findings reveal a better picture than the 1999 results show. Standards of reading are rising at Key Stage 2 and are broadly average, with writing improving, although below average currently and continuing to be the weakest component of the English programme of study. Skills in speaking and listening are average. Standards in English at the end of Key Stage 2 are judged to be below average overall.
85. At the end of Key Stage 1, standards of attainment in speaking and listening are average. Pupils listen very carefully in lessons and assemblies, speaking with confidence and clarity. In reception classes, children repeat rhymes which they have learnt by heart and discuss with pleasure books they are making. In Year 1, pupils are confident about talking with adults and described procedures well in a lesson where glove puppets were being designed. In Year 2, pupils use technical language well, explaining the meaning of 'resolution' and 'complication' in relation to their story writing. They speak confidently to each other and were able to take on the role of a character in the book 'The Owl Babies' and describe events from the character's point of view. Insufficient awareness of standard English is a weakness, for instance in the use of the verb 'to be' in the past tense.
86. Not all pupils enter school with knowledge of books but, by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in reading is average. The majority enjoy reading their books and do so with a good level of accuracy. Pupils read with intonation and pleasure, using 'voices' to great effect when reading aloud. They apply their knowledge of phonics to tackle new words, identifying alliteration and splitting compound words. They can describe story features of setting and character, discuss themes and relate them to their own experience, for instance when getting lost. They know the terms 'author', 'illustrator' and 'publisher' and can identify the difference between fiction and non-fiction texts. They recognise the library as a source of information and confidently use the index and contents pages of books to find information.
87. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in writing is average. Independence in writing begins in reception where pupils correctly shape letters, identify spaces between words and make their own books. By the end of the key stage, high attaining pupils understand the need to present their work well to give pleasure to the reader. They choose exciting words when setting the scene for narrative work, use full stops and capital letters correctly and spell key words independently. They tackle a wide range of types of writing and much good quality work is seen in other curriculum areas, for instance recounts of the local study visit to Delamere Forest and descriptions of Old Runcorn are of good quality.
88. Progress of pupils in Key Stage 1 is good from reception to Year 2; they acquire key skills at a greater rate that might be expected. The progress of pupils for whom English is a

second language and those in the Reading Recovery Programme is also particularly marked. The school's Literacy Strategy is making a good contribution to the progress being made in reading and writing. There is consistent progression and much emphasis on using reading strategies effectively to identify new words. Pupils are encouraged and powerfully motivated by projects like the Home Writing Bag and other opportunities to write for real purposes and audiences.

89. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards of attainment in speaking and listening skills are average. Most pupils speak with confidence, engaging in discussion and describing events. Year 6 pupils confidently describe opportunities they have to perform within the school and are able to offer their views on the language of Shakespeare and explain the difference between comedy and tragedy. They do not however, use adventurous or enriched vocabulary when qualifying, justifying or extending ideas.
90. Standards of attainment in reading at Key Stage 2 are broadly average, although evidence from the inspection indicates that there is a rising trend. Pupils now read fluently, using good quality modern and traditional materials, and apply a full range of strategies to tackle new texts. Able pupils refer to the text appropriately in discussing plot, characters and themes but few pupils can consider in detail the quality and depth of what they read. Most pupils are well motivated but do not read widely for pleasure outside of school where other activities compete for their attention. Pupils understand how to make effective use of information books using the contents page, index and glossary. However, most pupils are unfamiliar with the Dewey System of library classification and the use of index volumes to locate information in sets of encyclopaedia.
91. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards in writing are below average with girls performing better than boys in tests, but there is no apparent reason why from lesson observations or in discussions with pupils. A range of texts has been purchased with the key aim of better stimulating boys' reading and writing and this is clearly meeting with success. The range of writing opportunities provided is good, and includes reviews, diaries, reports, play-scripts and narrative writing. The best writing is often achieved in cross-curricular settings, for example in Year 6 with the sensitive writing of personal creeds in religious education, good quality recounts of a visit to Styal Mill and biographies of Queen Victoria in history. In narrative work, restricted vocabulary is a weakness and while characters are created significant interaction does not take place. Handwriting is joined and legible in practice in English activities but not always maintained in other written work. Accuracy in punctuation and spelling is variable in all year groups and for many pupils tense agreement in writing, is often, inconsistent. At the end of the key stage, many pupils are not yet secure in structuring their work through paragraphs.
92. Progress in English at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory overall, although there are inconsistencies across the key stage with some teachers ensuring greater rates of progress than others. Pupils progress in understanding setting, plot and characters in their reading material is good, but less than satisfactory in applying skills of inference and deduction to investigate below the surface of the text and reflect upon it. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in attaining decoding skills, as do the pupils for whom English is a second language. The writing of these pupils in their home language is being valued and shared effectively through display of their work.
93. There is a good work ethic in most literacy lessons and pupils' responses are almost always positive in both key stages. Behaviour and attitudes are good; most pupils work well individually and in groups, showing sustained concentration. At Key Stage 2, behaviour is good where work is challenging, stimulating and well matched to ability. It drops significantly in the few lessons where pace and direction are not maintained, particularly in group work where some work lacks challenge for high attainers. The low level of support in the large classes in lower Key Stage 2 is a causal factor in this. English work in both key stages offers good social development with a high level of cooperative work, for

example in play script writing by Year 4 pupils and poetry reading presentations by Year 5 pupils. Cross-curricular writing promotes empathy and covers sensitive issues like bereavement in Key Stage 1.

94. The quality of teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory overall in Key Stage 2. Very good teaching was seen in both key stages. In these very successful lessons, appropriate learning objectives are shared with pupils so that they clearly know what their teacher expects them to achieve. Pupils participate in evaluating and improving their work. Specific learning objectives are referred to consistently by teacher and pupils, and progress is reviewed at the end of lessons. The quality of questioning and discussion is a strength of the very good lessons where teachers use challenging vocabulary, and provide stimulating opportunities for discussion and reflection. A strong feature of the good teaching is positive marking where pupils are challenged to improve or indicate further investigative strategies. This is not maintained consistently across the school, however. The less successful lessons are characterised by low expectation and less than effective use of time. Some pupils have work set for them which lacks sufficient challenge, and this results in their doing too little in lessons and sometimes displaying inattentive behaviour.
95. The coordination of English is weak, and lacks clarity in identifying how standards are to be raised, especially at Key Stage 2. There has been some monitoring of the Literacy Hour by the headteacher and external consultants but not by the English coordinator. There is no clear plan established which ranks what the school needs to do to boost standards in English. There is very good practice in some Literacy Hours which enables good rates of progress for the range of pupils, but the features which enable such effective learning have not been identified or shared throughout the school. More focused monitoring and data analysis would identify the curricular targets, that need to be achieved in order to meet the school's challenging numerical targets which have been set with the local education authority in response to Government aims for pupils' performance in national tests. At present, the information provided by assessment is not well used to plan specific targets for the next stage of learning, and some work is not well focused on the needs of all pupils because they all work from the same task. Additionally, the pace of work is too slow in some lessons. The production of a policy and scheme of work for English, identified as a priority in the last inspection has only recently been produced. The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy is ensuring continuity in planning across both key stages. There are now good quality, carefully graded reading resources that appeal to both boys and girls. The newly developed Key Stage 2 library is potentially a good resource but new non-fiction books are required urgently if pupils are to further develop their research skills. Excellent support for literacy activities is provided through a large number of paid and volunteer helpers who support most classes in both key stages.

99. **Mathematics**

96. In the previous inspection report, standards were judged to be satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 1 but below average at the end of Key Stage 2. On the surface, this position is little altered today, but mathematics is an improving subject and good teaching is having a firm impact on standards.
97. In the 1998 National Curriculum tests pupils achieved broadly average results at Key Stage 1 in mathematics. Results at the end of Key Stage 2 were well below the national average. In the 1999 National Curriculum test results at the end of Key Stage 1, standards remained at average levels, whilst at Key Stage 2 standards showed a very slight increase but remained well below the national average. When these results are placed against those in similar schools, pupils at Halton Lodge School achieved at above average levels in Key Stage 1 but below average standards at the end of Key Stage 2. For the past four years standards in school have looked the same, though they were not quite as low at the end of Key Stage 2 as they were in 1999. In general, very few pupils achieved the above average higher levels in these tests in any of the last four years. Girls have generally not done as

well in mathematics as the boys, but this to some extent mirrors the national picture and is only shown up because of the deficit in progress which has been apparent at Key Stage 2.

98. In real terms, this pattern of achievement in the tests shows that pupils are about six months behind pupils in other schools at the age of seven and nine months behind by the time they leave school at eleven. Work completed in books during 1998-99 generally shows the same gap in standards, but this year there is less difference.
99. The school has known for a long time that standards in mathematics were not good enough. In 1997, the Cheshire scheme was introduced and, setting was trialled in 1998 with some positive findings resulting. From this term, the National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented well throughout the school. Most pupils are now taught in single age group classes, staff training has been improved and there is better tracking of pupils' progress. All these contribute to the more positive picture found in this year's work. The fact that teaching has improved since the last inspection is also responsible for the evident shift in standards. At present, standards are average by the end of Key Stage 1 but, although improved, are still not at the expected level by the age of eleven. Fulfilment of the school's target for achievement in the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests in the Year 2000 remains open to doubt, though it is clear that a greater proportion of Year 6 than before are working at the average level. For the next two years, the signs are that the targets will be achieved and the school will move much closer to the national average standard at the end of Key Stage 2.
100. Over the last four years, the girls have generally not done as well in mathematics as the boys. The school has identified this trend, and, in part, the changes made to teaching and the grouping of pupils have been targeted at reducing the contrast in girls' and boys' achievement. During the inspection, there was evidence to show that, in a small minority of classes in Key Stage 2, there was a different attitude to the work amongst groups of boys and girls. It was generally the boys who were the ones to become distracted.
101. The differences in attainment between key stages are directly related to the rate of progress that pupils make. When pupils start in school, they make good progress from a low starting level of knowledge and skill and this continues through Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, progress falters. Progress through the four year groups goes in waves as there are decided peaks and troughs. Where teaching is good, as in the mixed Year 3 and 4 class and, in the single age Year 5 and 6 classes, good progress follows. The least progress is made in the mixed age Year 5/6 class where learning is broken by constant changing of staff and so far this year, progress is unsatisfactory for this mixed age class. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is in line with that of their peers in mathematics.
102. Knowledge and skill in mathematics are built well in Key Stage 1. This is especially the case in the introductory numeracy sessions to lessons. There is good attention paid to developing pupils' counting, number and arithmetic competence. By the age of seven, pupils add and subtract numbers up to 100, and they identify patterns in sequences, on number squares and in studying the story of numbers to 20. In addition, pupils recognise, name and identify simple properties of shapes and are able to handle data in the ways expected. Standards in numeracy are average at the end of both key stages.
103. The development of problem-solving and investigation skills is better than at the previous inspection. Key Stage 1 pupils of all abilities are becoming confident with the use of mathematics in other subjects and its application to practical use in a range of situations.
104. Whilst such achievements are built on at Key Stage 2, this has not been at the anticipated rate until recent times. This year, progress is satisfactory overall and is accelerated in some classes. By the end of the key stage, most pupils develop the necessary knowledge in arithmetic, though, on many occasions, calculation is a laborious business and speed of

solution is not uppermost in pupils' minds. This prevents their working efficiently against the clock and their ability to answer enough questions in tests is hampered. Where progress is best, as in Year 6, pupils give as much thought to the process of getting the answer, as they do to making sure it is correct. This is the result of good teaching that focuses well on pattern and relationships. Speed and accuracy is gained in such lessons. On the other hand, skills and knowledge slip where the pace of teaching is slack, the work lacks purpose because it is monotonous and unnecessarily repetitive and pupils lose concentration. It is evident, however, that this sort of experience is much less frequent now than in the past. This is because the expectation of senior managers is high and other staff are much influenced by this commitment to better standards.

105. The response of pupils is a strength. Only where teaching is ineffective do most pupils turn their attentions to matters other than mathematics. In general, they are well motivated, interested and keen to take part. This was seen time and time again in school, and pupils demanded that inspectors looked closely at their work as they showed it off proudly. Standards of behaviour are good and pupils enjoy very good relationships. This means they can collaborate when necessary, take responsibility for their own work and work independently of the teacher for good spans of time. In this way, their personal development is well catered for.
106. Mathematics teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. The reason for the difference lies in the uneven quality of teaching in Key Stage 2. Thus, where there are strengths, these are usually found in the first key stage, though individual teachers in Key Stage 2 show many strengths in their work. Fundamentally, the level of expectation, the explicit identification of things to be learned in planning, and the consistent setting of targets for individual pupils and groups and checking with them that they have been achieved are weaknesses. Set against these, strengths of teaching include the use of a good range of teaching methods, the control of pupils, the use of resources and the accommodation and, particularly, teachers' subject knowledge and the good focus given to the teaching of numeracy skills and knowledge.
107. Management of the subject is in capable hands and is of good quality. The coordinator has a good sense of what requires improvement, though she has no chance of leaving her classroom during lesson time in a planned bid to monitor what is happening in all parts of the school. This is a must if she is to build good practice throughout all classes, and use the information gathered to establish a clear plan of action for improving standards, especially at Key Stage 2. At present, the information provided by assessment is not well used to plan specific targets for the next stage of learning, and some work is not well matched to the needs of all pupils because they all work from the same task. Additionally, the pace of work is too slow in some lessons. These are weaknesses that timely and rigorous monitoring could have identified.
108. There are many signs that the school is moving in the direction of good educational provision in mathematics. It has isolated the weaknesses, and is well on target to eliminate them.

## **Science**

109. At the time of the last inspection, standards were in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 but below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. Results in National Curriculum tests have shown science to be an improving subject. Inspection findings show that standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are above average, and standards average at the end of Key Stage 2. This shows the school's good capacity to make improvement. Reasons for rising standards in science include teachers' good subject knowledge, clear subject guidance, well-matched tasks and good quality opportunities made available for pupils to learn from practical and investigative tasks. The quality of Year 6 pupils' work this term shows much better standards than test results have

demonstrated.

110. At the end of Key Stage 1, teacher assessments in 1998 showed that standards were above the national average in all strands of science. These assessments also showed that pupils achieved broadly in line at the higher Level 3 overall. Compared to similar schools, standards were above average.
111. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards in National Curriculum tests were well below average at both the expected Level 4 and above average Level 5. When compared to similar schools, standards in tests were broadly in line at Level 4 but below the average at the higher Level 5. Trends from 1996 to 1998 show that standards were well below the national average and levels of performance were at this level for both boys and girls. Preliminary analyses of the 1999 National Curriculum tests show standards at more-or-less the same levels as in 1998.
112. Inspection findings confirm that standards are above average at the end of Key Stage 1 but that standards are average at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards in this key stage have been enhanced as a result of the good start that pupils have been consistently given during the earlier key stage. Through well-focused staff development, teachers are now confident to teach, and knowledgeable about science. Use of the National Curriculum guidance (QCA) documents as a scheme of work, a much more rigorous approach to an analysis of test results in order to identify weaknesses, and the good behaviour of pupils that underpins more effective learning, are key reasons why standards have lifted. Samples of the oldest pupils' science work, and discussions with a range of Year 6 pupils, reveal that standards in science currently are higher than national test results have shown.
113. At Key Stage 1, pupils find out about materials and their properties and are confident in using scientific vocabulary to name and describe the processes that materials go through in order to change them. They do so successfully because they are given appropriate opportunities to test these factors for themselves with a good range of different materials. They establish similarities and differences and are able to draw accurate conclusions to their findings. They then record capably mainly in pictorial format but with some pupils recording in writing. They use focused investigations that rely upon the production of scientific evidence in order to make accurate recordings.
114. At Key Stage 2, pupils continue to be given good opportunities to explore and investigate, but sometimes the focus of their investigations is not as precise as it could be, and, in consequence their conclusions cannot be as clearly drawn. However, at the end of this key stage there is evidence of accelerated learning in the Year 6 class. Here pupils consider condensation and evaporation and confirm their understanding of the processes through being given opportunities to investigate, draw conclusions with teacher support and then record appropriately in their own formats. They 'fair test' skilfully and are able to make precise observations. They build up their knowledge in whole class and smaller groups, knowing that their findings are going to be useful to them at later stages in their learning as well because their learning objectives have been so clearly defined for them.
115. In Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress whilst in Key Stage 2 it is satisfactory. Nevertheless, this is an improvement in both key stages since the last inspection. There are also good features in the progress being made in the latter stages of Key Stage 2. Where progress is best in Key Stage 1, pupils have a good variety of materials to use. They are also given opportunities to respond to carefully posed interventions in their learning in the form of open-ended questioning. Their progress is enhanced because they can use accurate scientific vocabulary to respond to these questions. Where progress is best in Key Stage 2, at the end of the key stage they are involved in meaningful experiments using effective resources. This is confirmed by their ability to act out what happens, for example when the reversible condensation and evaporation processes are being considered. Where progress is not as good at the lower end of the key stage, the linkage of the practical elements of

investigations to the purpose of the experiments being carried out is unclear to pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in both key stages because they are well supported in their learning with appropriately targeted work arising from their individual education plans.

116. Pupils have good attitudes to their work in science, particularly where teaching is best. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Even when excited by the activities, the pupils show good levels of concentration because they are interested in their tasks and want to find out for themselves. They cooperate with one another in smaller group activities and listen carefully so that all viewpoints are considered before they effectively draw conclusions.
117. The quality of teaching has also improved since the last inspection. In Key Stage 1 it is good. In Key Stage 2 it is satisfactory with particularly good features at the end of the key stage. Where teaching is best in both key stages, tasks are thoroughly well planned and resourced. Clear and precise learning objectives are shared with the pupils. In consequence, teachers are able to give equally clear instructions that focus pupils in their learning. Teachers are now more confident because they have a scheme of work that gives them supportive guidance. They organise tasks efficiently and ensure that tasks are meaningfully drawn from real life. Science is satisfactorily coordinated with the coordinator focused upon raising standards at the end of Key Stage 2. Strategies have been discussed in order to achieve this and she is working with Key Stage 2 teachers to bring improvements. The scheme of work now supports the policy appropriately. A more cohesive assessment policy that would inform future planning is needed to further support teachers' practice. Accommodation supports the experimental investigative work that is recognised as of great importance in science. Resources are satisfactory and support positively the school's aims for science.

## **Information and communications technology**

118. In 1996 it was reported that standards in information technology were far too low, teaching was imperfect and the number of computers small. The school has made good progress to eliminate these weaknesses and is well poised to take such improvement further.
119. Over the last four years, standards have risen steadily, the curriculum has been broadened and teaching quality has been improved. Today, pupils' achieve the expected standard in information and communications technology at the end of both key stages. From a low starting level of competency in information and communications technology when children first start school as under fives, pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress throughout the school. At the start of school, pupils have very little experience of using computers. In the reception class, they learn to complete pictures, type letters of the alphabet and move things around the screen. In Key Stage 1, pupils learn to type text using the word processor, make choices using the mouse to select icons, save and open their work and print it out. They also learn to control the programmable robot-like toy, Roamer, and make it move around obstacles as it crosses the floor.
120. The school has added to its stock of computers and has provided an information and communications technology suite. Key Stage 2 pupils have benefited much from this. All classes in the key stage have regular timetabled lessons in the suite and this has a good impact on standards and progress. Key Stage 2 pupils build their word processing and data-handling skills soundly and show satisfactory progress in the use of the Internet and CD-ROM for research purposes. Year 6 pupils 'surf the web' in religious education lessons to find information about the Nicene Creed. They use this data to write their own personal creeds.
121. Pupils react well to the opportunities provided for learning about information and communications technology. Behaviour is good and pupils are keen to share their work and to collaborate responsibly. Thus, their personal development is good.
122. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in both key stages. Teachers have improved their levels of subject knowledge and confidence and there is some effective teaching of skills and knowledge. Some teachers' low levels of expectation and the slow pace in some lessons remain issues for the school to tackle. Whilst the information and communications technology suite is used well, the computers located in some classrooms go underused and this slows the progress made by pupils.
123. The subject is managed successfully. The coordinator has energy and drive and has introduced the new and very good quality software and hardware effectively. The monitoring of standards, teaching and the curriculum is at relatively low levels and the development of assessment is the next major priority in the subject as, at present, it lacks consistency and impact.
124. Good improvement has been made to information and communications technology over the last few years. The school now has a sound platform of provision and standards in the subject to build future improvement at a good rate.

## **128. Religious education**

125. At the school's last inspection, standards were judged to be satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 2. Development has been sustained since then and this has resulted in improved standards.
126. Standards of attainment for religious education at the end of Key Stage 1 meet those set out in the Cheshire Agreed Syllabus, 'Encounter and Response'. Pupils make good progress, and by the time they are eleven they are achieving standards that are above those set in the

locally agreed syllabus. The build-up of knowledge about Christianity and the major world faiths of Islam and Judaism, and the reflective way in which pupils consider, and then respond to teachers' skilful questioning, are key reasons why standards lift by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils' sensitivity to spiritual, moral and social issues is teased out by a carefully planned scheme of work that supports all pupils well, including those with special educational needs.

127. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are familiar with stories from the Christian faith such as the Nativity, Easter and the Creation. They can discuss with some thoughtfulness the views that Christians and others may hold. They have visited their local church, St. Andrew's, to look at the symbols of Christianity. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have deepened their understanding of what it means to have 'faith', so that they can, for example, reflect quite intensely on the Apostles' and Nicene creeds, and then relate it to their own lives. By the skilful interweaving of the subject with the school's values and aims and the stress on personal and social education, the subject is made more meaningful for all pupils.
128. The effective scheme of work means that pupils make good progress in both key stages, including those with special educational needs. The thoughtful way in which the approaching millennium was discussed by a visiting vicar, the class teacher and the pupils in a class largely made up of pupils with special educational needs was good. By linking together Advent, Jesus' birthday and the 'specialness' of the Year 2000, children made very good gains in their knowledge and understanding of a major world faith.
129. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good across both key stages. At Key Stage 1, they take delight in sharing the well-chosen texts which illustrate the teaching points being made. They listen well to each other and are keen to bring their own experiences to the discussion. At Key Stage 2, older pupils can talk freely about what might be intensely personal feelings, confident that they are going to be accorded respect by their peers. Sensitivity towards others and positive relationships between pupils and staff ensure that the subject makes a good contribution to personal development.
130. The quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 1, characterised again by an empathy with the needs of the pupils. The use of the 'remembrance tree' in a Year1/2 class was an especially meaningful way for pupils and adults alike to come to terms with the very difficult concept of life and death. At Key Stage 2, teaching is sometimes very good and is good overall. Teachers skilfully draw out the best, most thoughtful responses from pupils to elicit their views on their own and other's lives, on symbolism in the Christian church and on the ways in which Christians should lead their lives.
131. The coordinator has produced a good scheme of work, which has clearly encouraged the development of the subject since the last inspection and is one of its successes. She has worked hard to support her colleagues and the subject throughout the school. Assessment of religious education is adequate but the coordinator is aware of the need to monitor and evaluate the success of the continuity and progression that is built into the scheme of work. Her own classroom practice of sharing learning objectives with pupils shows that she is well placed to collate material for sampling and discussion and to observe colleagues' practice with the intent of further developing the subject.

135. **OTHER SUBJECTS**

**Art**

132. Pupils attain standards above those expected to be attained for that age at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and progress is good. This is an improvement since the last report when standards were in line with national expectation at the end of Key Stage 1.

Art is taught effectively by teachers with support, staff following the straightforward guidance of a scheme that fosters a clear progression in knowledge, understanding and skills.

133. At Key Stage 1, pupils look closely at a variety of natural and man-made objects. Their representations become increasingly skilful across the key stage, as seen in the good quality of self-portraits produced by every child and which are displayed to welcome visitors to the school. Worthwhile opportunities to study the work of famous artists, to work with living local artists and to visit art galleries from Reception onwards ensure good progress. Reception pupils visit Liverpool Art Gallery to promote understanding of scale produced personal portraits in pastel and pencil of a high standard. Much quality work is stimulated through other curriculum areas, for example collage and batik work resulting from a visit to the Delamere Forest and L S Lowry representations in black and white following a study of Old Runcorn in history by Year 2 pupils. Pupils experiment with line and tone, refining their representational drawings by focusing in depth on significant features. This approach is continued throughout Key Stage 2, with some high quality, individual designs meticulously executed. For example, in preparation for making their own Victorian style wallpaper and fabric, Year 6 pupils developed designs based on those of William Morris, which they subsequently printed. Sketchbooks are used to good effect to refine and record. Pupils work effectively to produce two-dimensional and three-dimensional work of a variety of scales. The opportunity to work with visiting staff and pupils from the local High School allows younger Key Stage 2 pupils to plan cooperatively and then execute production of a painting about Egyptian life on a large scale.
134. At both key stages, pupils' attitude to art is good. Both boys and girls discuss their work with pride, describing techniques in detail. Detailed observational work is carried out with sustained periods of concentration. While working on large-scale collaborative projects, pupils share resources well.
135. Only two lessons were seen during the inspection. Based on these, a scrutiny of teachers' planning, discussions with pupils and a sampling of pupils work evidenced in displays and portfolios, the quality of teaching is judged to be good throughout the school. Well chosen resources, pertinent information, and a strong emphasis on the pupils' own experimentation are positive features in the teaching of art.
136. Art is well coordinated and effectively resourced, with good additional guidance provided through topic-led provision for learning, including Kenya and The Ancient Greeks. Samples of work from the whole school, observations of displays and sketchbooks show progression in representations.
137. Art, makes a very positive contribution to the schools' ethos and to the pupils' spiritual and cultural development, for example through visits by Mioshi sharing her expertise in Ghanaian art. High quality displays around the school are attractively presented and give permanence and considerable value to the pupils' creative and expressive artwork. The good provision for art and good progress in learning promoted, is a strength of the school.
141. **Design and technology**
138. The previous inspection judged that standards in design and technology were satisfactory by the age of eleven, though there were some weaknesses of provision. In the time since then, the school has improved the quality of work in the subject and the result is to be seen in the good progress that pupils, including those with special educational needs, make from the reception class to Year 6.
139. There is much evidence to show that standards are better than might be expected in both key stages and that the building of skills and knowledge is at a good rate. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are introduced well to the plan and design stages of design and technology. Unlike

many pupils of this age, they are keen to spend time discussing ideas for designs and setting them down on paper, as well as in the actual manufacture of the finished product. They also attempt simple explanation of the quality of the resulting item.

140. In Key Stage 2, pupils use a broader range of materials and tools in the work. Some of this work is of good quality as it imitates the practice of industry. For example, in making a picture frame, pupils plan the work in detail, giving specifications for materials, dimensions of the parts and means of joining and assembling the product. The different materials are handled well and the final result is of good quality. There are many other instances of such thoroughness. There is, however, less evidence of the evaluation of what is produced and identification of ways to improve the design and finish of the item.
141. Pupils like their work and behave very well in design and technology lessons. They concentrate well, work safely and share tools and materials sensibly. They are immensely proud of their achievements and overall their attitudes and responses are very good.
142. Teaching quality is good because teachers have good subject knowledge, they plan good learning experiences and motivate the pupils well. The pace of lessons is brisk and control of pupils, firm, fair and positive. Levels of expectation are good and the work is well matched to the needs of different attainment groups. These strengths of teaching can stand as a good model for the school to spread to subjects where there are weaknesses. Good quality teaching results in good progress in design and technology. This is a strength of the school.
143. The subject is well managed by an effective, hard working coordinator. She does not have the opportunity to monitor the subject directly but she has put the curriculum on a firm footing, gives good advice and support to her colleagues and knows what still needs doing to continue sustained improvement.

147. **Geography**

144. At the time of the last inspection, there was insufficient evidence available for firm judgements to be made as no lessons were timetabled in Key Stage 2. During this inspection, no geography lessons could be observed because of the way that the school's rolling programme of study is planned and therefore a judgement on the quality of teaching cannot be provided. However, from the evidence available from scrutinising pupils' work and from displays in classrooms and in corridors, as well as by talking to pupils, it is evident that worthwhile and appropriate geographical experiences are provided for pupils. Pupils have sound attitudes to the subject. The scheme of work for geography has been completed since the last inspection and has had a positive influence on quality and standards, which are now satisfactory at the end of both key stages.
145. The youngest pupils begin to get an understanding of the concept of 'settlement' by looking at their home town. They consider its attractive features and compare them with those that are unattractive. They visit Alvanley and Llandudno to compare localities and, by the end of Key Stage 1, they are beginning to understand the differences between localities, as well as between what is geography and what is history.
146. At lower Key Stage 2, pupils explore their more immediate environment and begin to consider mapping and symbols more conventionally. By the end of Key Stage 2, Year 5/6 pupils have studied contrasting localities through fieldwork, and by developing what might come from a look 'Through a Window', as well as more discrete work on Kenya. They can demonstrate a range of skills in using evidence to investigate themes and places.
147. Additional support for pupils with special educational needs mean that all pupils have appropriate access to the subject and make sound progress.
148. From the scrutiny of planning and work produced by pupils, teaching is judged to be satisfactory. The scheme of work identifies interesting opportunities for pupils to experience at first hand the places they are studying. Residential visits to Beeston and to Menai, as well as the use of holiday photographs to develop investigations into contrasting localities, all contribute to pupils' understanding of world and physical geography. Good quality display, for example the work produced by Year 1/2 pupils following their visit to Delamere Forest, effectively combines elements of art, geography and literacy to enhance pupils' awareness of their environment.
149. The school is almost at the end of its planned cycle of work in terms of the scheme of work. The coordinator is well placed to carry out a thorough review of what constitutes best practice and how the school should decide to develop skills and concepts in the curriculum provision. Assessment practice in identifying progress in pupils' skills acquisition and concepts, and how well learning in the subject is contributing to pupils' basic skills development is currently unsatisfactory. The coordinator has good subject knowledge and has clear ideas as to how monitoring pupils' work can raise standards.

153. **History**

150. The completion of the subject's scheme of work and the useful identification of exemplars to show the quality of learning possible in history have helped the school to make progress since the last inspection. All pupils have full access to the subject, make steady and sometimes good progress, and reach satisfactory standards at the end of both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for. This was typified by the visit of an archaeologist to the mixed Year 3/4 class to answer their searching questions about his job, and the discoveries of Howard Carter in Egypt. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in learning about history because of the stimulating way the subject is presented.

151. Pupils have a positive attitude towards, and a keen interest in, history. This was well demonstrated by a lively debate in Year 2 about the chronological order of the varying ways in which the Runcorn Gap had been bridged over the years. Younger pupils sort pictures of bridges into old and new, as they begin to develop their skills of classification. Letters are constructed in Year 3/4 informing Rome about the defeat of Queen Boudicca, combining historical fact with literacy skills. Years 5 and 6 study aspects of Victorian life by examining copies of extracts from primary source materials. Artefacts, either on loan or belonging to the school, are used well to support the resources available for historical research and enquiry. A well-conceived programme of visits, and visitors invited into school to share their experiences, support well the school's approach in giving pupils a real sense of being history detectives - a central theme to many lessons.
152. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are confidently using photographs of children in Victorian London to make deductions about life for the poor. They can understand that life was different, and worse, for many children, and that the gap between rich and poor was very pronounced. By using extracts from national enquiries into working conditions, they hypothesised about a child's working day in a mill. Those hypotheses are then put to the test by pupils spending a day at Styal Mill, and acting out the role of apprentice. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they have confidence in encouraging children to develop those evaluative and enquiry skills that make for effective historians. In almost all lessons, good organisation and planning are central to the lesson's success. The carefully planned programme of study units, particularly in Key Stage 2, stimulates pupils' interest effectively, and ensures good progress over time.
153. Teaching is effective throughout the school, and is good at Key Stage 2. The use of a Stanley Holloway monologue to describe 'the good folks of Runcorn's desire to save a penny or two, rather than paying the ferryman', brings the reasons for a bridge into close focus for the Year 2 pupils and is good teaching practice. A very good display in Year 4 shows how well pupils have been able to link together aspects of art, technology, literacy and history to demonstrate what they have learned about Egypt, following a visit to Warrington Museum.
154. The coordinator for the subject has good subject knowledge herself and has put together a sound scheme of work which draws in strands from other subject disciplines, especially information and communications technology. Assessment practices are however currently unsatisfactory. The coordinator has identified the need to look clearly at the best practice in school, by observing and by sampling children's work across the key stages and then feeding back to her colleagues on how her subject can continue to improve.

## **Music**

155. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in music at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. This represents an improvement since the last inspection in both key stages. Music is a strength of the school.
156. As pupils move through Key Stage 1 classes, they make good progress as they identify high and low sounds through developing their listening skills, and performing together on a range of musical instruments. Some pupils perform competently on violins, guitar, drums and whistles. They link this to a story told by the teacher, and so make their knowledge of sounds more meaningful as they match high and low sounds to characters and actions in the story. They demonstrate their clear understanding of high and low sounds as they accurately stretch upwards when making high sounds and touch their shoes when making low sounds. They also join in singing joyfully and tunefully with older pupils in assemblies, having first listened appreciatively to music as they entered the hall.
157. As pupils move through Key Stage 2 classes, they build upon this previous experience as

they develop their knowledge and understanding of timbre and composition in Year 3. These skills are further developed in Years 5 and 6 as they focus on understanding dynamics of crescendo and decrescendo. They listen and perform together capably as they confirm their competency. Where progress is best, they improve upon their performance as they listen to one another's performance and make perceptive but constructive comments about their compositions. Their skills of performing and listening are also being well developed when they control their voices appropriately to demonstrate their understanding of crescendo and decrescendo.

158. Pupils concentrate well in both key stages and persevere in order to improve their performances, whether it is in using their voices or in playing instruments. They work effectively in small groups and are generous in their praise of one another's efforts when they bring their performances together to share their learning. They use instruments carefully as they show enjoyment in music-making together. Both boys and girls work enthusiastically.

159. Teaching is good across both key stages, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Best lessons are characterised by thorough planning which structures lessons well. This planning is well supported by good use of a variety of available resources. This has a particularly good impact upon the quality of learning taking place. This is further supported by a well-led teacher analysis by using open-ended questioning that makes pupils think about how to improve their performance. In consequence, they make considerable gains in knowledge and understanding of the structure of music. Satisfactory leadership and management of music ensures a good range of musical experiences for pupils. However there is not enough planned assessment throughout the key stages to ensure that there is an accurate record of individual pupil's musical achievements.

163. **Physical education**

160. Physical education has received sound attention since the time of the previous inspection. A scheme of work for this subject has been completed, and now provides pupils with the opportunity to take part in a well-structured programme of activities over their time at the school. Each year sees pupils being taught a balance of gymnastics, dance and games; the latter being based on the Top Play and Top Sport programmes. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 start to take part in swimming lessons during each Spring term, and Years 5 and 6 are allocated ten sessions in the Summer term. The quantity and breadth of extra curricular provision was a strong and good feature of the subject at the last inspection, and this is still the case.

161. By the end of Key Stage 1, progression is already evident as pupils demonstrate their ability to hop, jump, and twist and jump, as well as landing on both feet or one for example, whilst exploring the theme of 'Flight'. At Key Stage 2, pupils show originality and creativity in pairs as they explore symmetrical movement whilst incorporating a roll and balance. Boys and girls show equal enthusiasm for the subject and children with special educational needs make progress commensurate with their peers. Progress is satisfactory over time.

162. The majority of pupils are enthusiastic and have positive attitudes towards the subject. They are cooperative whilst setting out equipment and they give sensible regard to the care of equipment and safety. Pupils know that warming up and cooling down are an important element of exercise and they know that exercise affects their bodies. They listen carefully to their teachers and they understand that performance improvement depends on listening and thinking as well as being agile. Pupils collaborate well with each other and establish a good working environment. When given the opportunity they are confident to assess their own and others' performance, and then try to refine their skills in the light of critical comment.

163. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Effective pupil management and good

relationships between pupils and teachers ensure that lessons are almost always successful.

The best teaching is characterised by good planning and organisation, clear reference to the learning objectives and a brisk pace. Teachers have a confident delivery which stems from sound subject knowledge. Assessment of performance and review takes place over the course of most lessons but there is more scope for pupils' involvement in this process.

164. The coordinator is well placed to lead staff review as to how best practice can be developed throughout all years. The school recognises that assessment in physical education is currently unsatisfactory. The coordinator has good subject knowledge and gives freely of her own time to lead extra curricular activities. She is well supported by colleagues who, between them, offer football, netball, gymnastics, dance, rounders, athletics and "Pop'n'Bop" activities over the course of the school year. The range and quality of the extracurricular programme is a strength of the school.

168. **Swimming**

165. The inspection of the school included a focused view on swimming which is reported on below:

166. Swimming lessons are not scheduled for this term and, therefore, it was not possible to observe any lessons. Evidence for judgements was based on scrutinising the school records, discussions with the headteacher and pupils. From this discussion, it can be reported that 93 per cent of the 1998 leavers could swim 25 metres and 80 per cent of those who left in 1999. Those who left in Summer 1998 had had two more terms of swimming than those in previous years. The headteacher expects that the majority of the pupils who will leave in Summer 2000 will be able to swim 25 metres, based on the assessment that approximately 50 per cent currently can already swim this length. It is the intention of the headteacher to pass on appropriate records to receiving secondary schools of the pupils' achievements. From the evidence evaluated it would appear that standards are broadly in line with expectations.

167. The programme for swimming is appropriately planned. Each year group will receive ten sessions, each of 30 minutes water time. Years 3 and 4 will visit the pool, which is indoor, heated and run by the local authority, during the Spring term, and Years 5 and 6 will use the same facility in the Summer. The pool itself is 25 metres long and shelves from 1m to a maximum of 2 metres. Pupils travel the three miles to the pool by coach and are appropriately supervised whilst travelling by a teacher and by parent helpers - usually the parents of children in the class who are about to swim. Children change in cubicles, although there is some communal changing. Appropriate police checks are carried out on all helpers and the school has appropriate procedures in place for child protection. The provision is evaluated as satisfactory. The school is satisfied with both the provision and the facilities.

168. Assessment of swimming competence and style takes place and all children have the opportunity to take the full range of awards, as and when it is appropriate. Achievement is assessed during lessons and children can purchase badges and certificates for swimming five metres unaided (red badge) upwards to the gold standard, which is for one mile. Specialist assessment of particular skills such as personal survival or long distance awards are also possible. The school takes part in competitive galas and does not discriminate in any way between sexes.

169. Lessons are conducted by two accredited (ASA) instructors and a member of staff, depending on the class taking the lesson. One member of staff has a swimming instructor qualification and all staff use the Top Sport swimming cards to support stroke development and water confidence. Costs include pool hire, entrance fee, instructor fee and transport; all funded from the school's delegated budget. Total costs amount to £1,050 per term. The provision is judged to be satisfactory.

170. Three years ago, swimming was restricted to Year 6 only, but now is available for the whole of Key Stage 2. A further modification has taken place in that total swimming time has been reduced to two terms per year, rather than three.
171. Provision appears to be effective. Quality cannot be judged in view of the fact that neither facilities nor swimming were observed.

## **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

### **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

1. The inspection was carried out by a team of six inspectors, including a lay inspector, who, over a period of three and a half days, completed a total of nineteen inspection days in school.
  - ◆ A total of ninety-two lessons were observed involving 52.7 hours.
  - ◆ A range of work representing all ages and a range of abilities was examined carefully to check on the attainments and progress being made in all subjects, but especially English, mathematics and science. Some ten hours was spent in looking at this work, most of which had been kept from the previous two terms and was very useful for evaluating pupils' progress over time.
  - ◆ A sample of pupils representing all ages and a range of abilities was heard to read and this involved six hours of inspectors' time.
  - ◆ Discussions took place with all staff, the chair of governors, five governors, parents and specialist support service visitors to school to seek their views about the quality of education being provided and the standards being achieved.
  - ◆ Many pupils were spoken to during the week to ascertain the depth of their understanding and knowledge about subjects and to see how they view the school.
  - ◆ Display of work was evaluated for its contribution to pupils' learning and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
  - ◆ All documentation provided by the school was carefully examined, including teachers' planning, assessment data and all records concerning the provision being made for those pupils with special educational needs.
  - ◆ Registration was observed, as were the routines at the start and close of sessions, at breaktime and lunchtime. A number of parents took the opportunity to speak to inspectors at the times when pupils were dropped off or picked up from school.
  - ◆ Assemblies were visited and the act of collective worship observed.
  - ◆ The action plan from the previous report was used as a starting point and, together with the school's analysis of its performance, was used to check on how well the school has progressed against the targets set. The Registered Inspector held a meeting with 27 parents before the week of inspection and took into account the views expressed and the comments made by the 31 per cent of parents who responded to the questionnaire.
  - ◆ Meetings were held with staff, plus time spent giving subject and teaching debrief.
  - ◆ The registered inspector met with the headteacher twice daily to share exchange information about the inspection process and issues arising.

## 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	287	1	59	127

### TEACHERS AND CLASSES

#### Qualified teachers (YR - Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	12.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.6:1

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

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked each week	117.5

Average class size:	26.1
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#### Financial data

Financial year:	1998/99
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	£
Total income	472654
Total expenditure	463130
Expenditure per pupils	1702.68
Balance brought forward from previous year	13728
Balance carried forward to next year	23252

**PARENTAL SURVEY**

Number of questionnaires sent out:	287
Number of questionnaires returned:	89

Responses 31 per cent:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	48	48	2	1	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	61	35	1	1	2
The school handles complaints from parents well	35	46	10	4	2
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	46	43	6	4	1
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	49	39	6	4	1
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	55	36	6	2	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	49	42	7	1	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	45	42	6	7	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	53	37	7	2	1
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	36	47	9	6	1
My child(ren) like(s) school	60	31	2	6	1

**Other issues raised by parents**

None specific