

INSPECTION REPORT

CHEADLE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Cheadle

LEA area : Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124076

Headteacher: Mr M.D. Prescott

Reporting inspector: Mrs J. Tracey
20270

Dates of inspection: 26th –30th June 2000

Inspection number: 187795

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	The Avenue Cheadle Stoke On Trent Staffordshire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P. Dolphin
Date of previous inspection:	February 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Mrs J. Tracey	Registered inspector	Mathematics	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Mr N. Shelley	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mrs M. Leah	Team inspector	English Physical education	
Mrs B. Rogers	Team inspector	Under fives Music	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
Mrs J. Radford	Team inspector	Religious education Special educational needs Equal opportunities	
Mrs K. McArthur	Team inspector	Science Art Design and technology	
Mrs C. Waine	Team inspector	Information technology History Geography	How good are the curricular opportunities offered to pupils?

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The Registrar
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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	12
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	13
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	15
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	16
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	17
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	18
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	22

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Cheadle Primary School is a larger than average school providing education for 452 boys and girls in the age range 3 to 11 years. Pupils come from Cheadle and surrounding areas. A building programme is currently being implemented to cater for a projected increase in numbers. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals last year (20%) was broadly average but has fallen in the current year. The proportion of pupils on the register of special educational need is below average; six pupils have formal statements of need, which is about average. There are few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds; two come from homes where English is not the first language. Attainment on entry to the nursery is slightly below average, particularly in respect to social and listening skills.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school with high expectations of work and behaviour. Overall, the quality of teaching is good and pupils achieve well. The headteacher and senior management provide excellent leadership; staff and governors work closely together to create a secure learning environment in which pupils gain in confidence and value their own, and others', achievements. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards of work in English, mathematics and science are above average by the time pupils leave the school
- The quality of teaching is good and contributes significantly to pupils' academic and personal development
- The headteacher's leadership is outstanding. He has developed a corporate team spirit which encourages pupils to aspire to optimum achievement.
- The rich curriculum is complemented by a very good range of extra-curricular activities, particularly in music and sport.
- Pupils flourish in a highly supportive environment. Parents' involvement and community links are valued and make a good contribution to pupils' learning.

What could be improved

- Library facilities are inadequate in both key stages. There is a shortage of good quality fiction and non-fiction books.
- There are not enough up-to-date computers
- The homework policy is not applied consistently throughout the school. Pupils are not always sure what is expected of them.
- Some administrative procedures, such as the recording of attendance, are not implemented consistently.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February 1996 and has made very good progress in response to the key issues of that inspection.

Standards of work have risen significantly in both key stages because:

- The quality of teaching has improved - teachers have high expectations of pupils. The unsatisfactory teaching has been eliminated and the proportions of good/very good teaching have risen.
- A new management structure has been introduced and there is fairer and more effective delegation of responsibilities. Subject co-ordinators are more closely involved in planning and evaluating the work in their subjects.
- Systematic analysis of results and regular assessment of pupils' progress are well used to inform planning and accelerate progress through the setting of specific targets.

In addition:

- Accommodation has improved –new building and refurbishment of some classrooms is nearly complete and will substantially improve present facilities

- Governors are more actively involved in the work of the school and so have better information on which to base decisions
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is now very good – work is closely tailored to individual needs.

The rationalisation of staffing and the introduction of new systems to underpin all aspects of the school's work contribute to the good ethos which permeates the school. The school is very successful in evaluating its own performance. It is constantly striving to improve further and is in a good position to do so.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			Similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	B	B	C	B
Mathematics	A	A	B	A
Science	A	A	D	C

Key	
Well above average	A
Above average	B
Average	C
Below average	D
Well below average	E

Attainment has improved significantly over the last four years in both key stages. The quality of work seen during the inspection shows standards to be above average in English, mathematics and science by the time pupils leave the school. The pupils' results in national tests in 1999 at Key Stage 2 were slightly lower than in the previous two years. This reflected the wider spread of ability in the year group and the higher than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The results of national tests in the current year, 2000, indicate restoration, and beyond, to the 1998 standards in all subjects. The school sets itself realistic but challenging targets which are being met, and sometimes exceeded. Pupils achieve equally well in the early years and Key Stage 1. Attainment in the national tests for seven-year-olds in 1999 was above average in reading, writing, and mathematics. The effective implementation of new strategies, including literacy and numeracy, is having a major impact on attainment in both key stages, but particularly so in Key Stage 1 where pupils have been introduced to them from the start of their schooling. Currently, standards of work in Key Stage 1 are above average in science and well above average in English and mathematics. In all other subjects, in both key stages, standards are similar to those found in most schools, except in music and religious education where standards are considerably higher at Cheadle. This is due to highly focused teaching which inspires pupils.

Overall, the vast majority of pupils achieve as well as they can.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are very good. They are keen to learn and effectively transfer their enthusiasm to the whole range of school activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good. It successfully reflects the school's aims.
Personal development and relationships	The school is successful in encouraging pupils to develop their talents to the full. Relationships are very good and demonstrate the pupils' appreciation of each person's value in the school community.
Attendance	Attendance is similar to the national average.

The school endeavours to set high expectations of behaviour and personal development. Relationships between staff and pupils are based on mutual respect and make a significant contribution to pupils' well being and achievement.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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

Overall, the quality of teaching is good and significantly better than at the time of the previous inspection. All the teaching observed was satisfactory or better. 70% of the lessons were good or better; 30% were very good. Similar proportions of good teaching were seen in each of the key stages. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught rigorously and effectively. Particular strengths in the teaching are the good planning, reflecting the needs of pupils of all abilities, and the high standard of assessment contributing to it. These factors enable pupils to achieve well and progressively build on their previous learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum is rich and well balanced. Appropriate emphasis is placed on literacy and numeracy skills. There is a wealth of extra-curricular activities, particularly sport and music, in which large numbers of pupils participate. Standards in these activities are high.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils benefit from working in mainstream classes with work specifically tailored to meet their needs
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Only two pupils do not have English as their first language. They make good progress and are fully integrated into the life of the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for all these aspects is well represented both in the curriculum as a whole and school life generally. Opportunities provided for spiritual development are very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a high standard of care for its pupils. A secure environment promotes high levels of confidence and self-esteem. Assessment procedures for tracking pupils' progress are used effectively to inform planning and set future targets.

Overall, the school makes good provision for pupils' academic and personal development. A good community spirit is fostered and parents are encouraged to, and do, become involved in all aspects of the school's work.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Outstanding leadership by the headteacher has led to the creation of a good team spirit amongst staff. All show a high level of commitment and are enthusiastic in striving for rising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. The governors are fully committed to the school and are instrumental in promoting its success.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school evaluates its performance against national standards very effectively. The information is well used in planning future developments and contributes to the rising standards.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The headteacher and governors have worked efficiently to manage the budget in the interest of the current pupils. The first part of a building and renovation programme has just been completed. Strategic forward planning appropriately reflects local and national initiatives. The shortage of up-to-date computers is about to be rectified. Plans are also in hand to improve library facilities, particularly the stock of fiction and non-fiction books, which are inadequate at present.

The quality of leadership and management is a major strength of the school. The headteacher and staff are committed to maintaining a learning environment in which all pupils are valued and recognise the importance of their contribution to the whole community. New initiatives in organisation and teaching practices since the previous inspection have been particularly effective in raising overall attainment. Staffing, buildings, and learning resources are adequate, except for the insufficient number of computers and poor library facilities. The school and governors take all reasonable steps to ensure that the best value is obtained from spending decisions.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils enjoy school and behave well. They make good progress Teaching is good and there are high expectations of pupils The improved management and the approachability of the school Good choice of extra-curricular activities and high levels of participation Good opportunities for parental involvement and communication Good support for pupils with special educational needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More consistent implementation of the homework policy The range of extra-curricular activities for younger pupils A few parents feel they are not sufficiently well informed about pupils' progress More satisfactory response to the concerns which some parents express The number of computers

Inspectors agree with all the positive views expressed by parents. They also agree that there are not enough computers. With regard to homework, there is a lack of clarity about what is expected in some classes. Better communication between pupils, parents and teachers is needed.

The inspection team did not find evidence to substantiate the other concerns and note the following in response:

*the range of extra-curricular activities was found to be very good; the fact that there is less choice for younger pupils is not unusual in most primary schools;

*the quality of annual reports is very good and this, added to the school's system of targeting for improvement and opportunities for parents to consult teachers, amounts to very good provision of information about pupils' progress;

*the school generally seeks to work as closely as possible with parents but may not always be able to take the line that a parent prefers. Consequently it may occasionally fail to satisfy a parent's concern.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Attainment on entry to the nursery is below that found in many schools, particularly in relation to social and listening skills. Children make good progress in the nursery and reception classes and by the time they are five, attainment is average for their age in language and mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development. Steady progress is made with personal and social skills but these are still below average at this stage.

2. In 1999, the pupils' results in national tests for seven-year-olds were above average in reading, writing and mathematics. In comparison to schools of similar background these results were well above average. The proportion of pupils reaching higher levels than expected for their age was above that found nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. Results have risen since the previous inspection; they have improved at a rate significantly greater than the national trend. The pupils' results in national tests for eleven-year-olds in 1999 were above average in mathematics, average in English and below average in science. Compared to similar schools the results were well above average in mathematics, above average in English and average in science. Attainment has improved significantly since 1996 when it was below average in all subjects. Results were above average in all subjects in 1997 and 1998. The slightly lower results in 1999 accurately reflect the ability of the cohort and the higher proportion than usual of pupils with special educational needs. In summary, the overall trend in the school's results at Key Stage 2 over the past four years is above that found nationally. Results of the national tests in 2000 were received during the inspection. At Key Stage 2, higher proportions of pupils reached the level expected for their age than in 1999 in all subjects. At Key Stage 1, good results are being sustained and improved upon. Following the previous inspection the then recently appointed headteacher identified a number of issues affecting pupils' performance. New structures and procedures were gradually put in place and the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies implemented. Added to these were more highly focused teaching practices and assessment procedures which highlighted targets for individuals and groups of pupils. The improved quality of provision is reflected in higher levels of achievement throughout the school, matched by good learning which builds year-on-year on pupils' success. The governors set realistic and challenging targets for English and mathematics. These have been met, and sometimes exceeded, at the end of both key stages.

3. Evidence from the inspection, including scrutiny of work, discussion with pupils and lesson observations, indicates that standards of work and achievement are well above average in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 and above average at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards in science are above average at the end of both key stages. The very good progress in English and mathematics in Key Stage 1 is a direct consequence of the highly focused teaching, with a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy skills, which these pupils have experienced from the start of their schooling. Pupils in Key Stage 2 did not benefit from such a structured approach in their earlier years but the school has made a concerted effort to make up for this, especially through the focus on writing. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are making good progress in relation to their starting point at the beginning of the key stage. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set for them. The arrangements for teaching pupils in ability groups in English and mathematics from Year 2 upwards is advantageous. It enables all pupils to be challenged at an appropriate level, and lower ability pupils to receive more individual support to boost their confidence.

4. In all years standards of work in other subjects are at least similar to those found in other schools, and sometimes better. In music and religious education standards are above those seen in most schools. This is a consequence of highly specialised teaching which builds on pupils' learning and previous experience. Standards of work in information technology are particularly creditable bearing in mind there are insufficient computers for a school of this size.

5. The school has been effective in raising standards, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Higher attaining pupils are now achieving at a more appropriate level. In addition, achievement is consistent within and across year groups. This was an issue at the time of the previous inspection. Overall, the school has made very good improvement over the past four years. It is not complacent and has capacity for even further development.

6. The introduction of the Literacy Hour is having a good impact on pupils' standards of work. Attainment in reading is well above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and average at the end of Key Stage 2. By this stage the vast majority of pupils are independent readers. Whilst the overall level of reading skills is high the pupils' knowledge of a range of authors is not so well developed, neither are skills of finding books and information from a library. This reflects the paucity of good quality fiction and non-fiction books for independent reading and the lack of stimulating library areas in both key stages. The school is aware of this and has plans to incorporate library facilities in re-arrangements resulting from the current building programme. Standards of writing are similar to those in reading at the end of both key stages. Most pupils can adapt their writing to the criteria of the moment, ranging from accurate description to imaginative prose. The most able pupils can write to sustain a convincing argument. Standards of speaking and listening are good. Pupils progressively gain in confidence as they move up the school. Most Year 6 pupils join in purposeful discussion and use a good range of vocabulary to present their ideas to small and larger audiences. Dramatic work both in class and in extra-curricular activities enriches pupils' speech.

7. Incorporation of the National Numeracy Strategy into the curriculum with its high focus on mental agility is successfully reinforcing pupils' basic number concepts. Numerical skills are above average in both key stages. Computational skills are satisfactorily transferred to other subjects, as are measuring and graphical skills. Good examples of this were observed in subjects such as design and technology, geography and science.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. The pupils' attitudes to school are very good. They enjoy coming to school and a large number of pupils join in the range of interesting and varied activities with enthusiasm. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers and to other adults and are eager to respond to questions. They settle quickly to their work and display a good level of perseverance in their tasks. They work well together. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to express their innermost feeling through free expression and practical activities. Typical examples are a pupil's writing which explained the reason for prayer as 'being able to reflect on their own need for forgiveness', and the enthusiasm displayed by two young boys who were practising their recorders in the playground so that 'they could move on quickly and learn to play other instruments too'. Commendable attitudes in both cases. Pupils of all ages take pride in their achievements and are keen to share their successes with others. These very good attitudes contribute to the good progress most pupils are making in all aspects of their learning. Pupils with special educational needs have equally positive attitudes to their work and generally behave well. They make substantial gains in self-confidence and social development as they move through the school.

9. All staff have high expectations of behaviour and the majority of all pupils behave well in class. They understand what is expected of them, are polite to their teachers and respect each other. If behaviour deteriorates the situation is dealt with quickly and effectively by the class teacher, support staff and other adults in school. Poor behaviour is usually confined to a small number of identified pupils. The school has established several strategies to promote good behaviour in school, on the playground and on visits into the community. These have proved very effective. Reward systems for good work and behaviour are clear and consistently applied. The majority of parents believe that behaviour is good and that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible citizens of the school community. There have been no exclusions in the recent past.

10. The school provides good opportunities in assemblies, personal and social education lessons and class discussion time for pupils to share thoughts about issues such as caring and friendship. These are effective in raising pupils' self-esteem and teaching them the value of good relationships and courtesy towards others. Pupils respect property and show concern and respect for the feelings and values of others. Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good. This makes a considerable impact on the quality of pupils' learning and their attainment.

11. Attendance is satisfactory. It is similar to that in most primary schools. A significant amount of the absence is due to parents continuing to take pupils out of school during term time for family holidays, as was the case at the time of the previous inspection. This adversely affects the continuity of education for these pupils. Unauthorised absence is believed to be low but exact details are uncertain because reasons for absence have not been consistently entered in attendance registers. Almost all pupils arrive punctually for the start of the school day; only a very few are sometimes late.

12. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to show initiative and accept responsibility. Some pupils undertake a variety of school duties such as class monitor tasks which make a good contribution to pupils' personal development and feelings of self-worth. The large number of pupils

who join in the many musical and sporting activities on offer in their free time demonstrates a remarkable level of commitment and responsibility for their own learning. The school is involved in the local community at various levels and enjoys a well earned and commendable reputation in the area.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. Overall, teaching is good and there is a significant amount of very good teaching. Of the lessons observed 70 % were good or better. 30 % were very good and a few lessons in a reception class and Key Stage 1 were exceptional. Similar proportions of good teaching were seen in each of the key stages. Teaching is good for children under five and throughout the school in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, art and religious education. In music, teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and very good in Key Stage 2. In all other subjects it is satisfactory. The quality of teaching is a significant factor in the rising standards of attainment. It represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection when teaching was judged to be sound overall but inconsistent.

14. Teachers display good subject knowledge which is instrumental in motivating and stimulating pupils' interest. Most lessons contain an element of direct class teaching which involves all pupils and ensures a sound basis for subsequent group work. Pertinent use of well-briefed classroom assistants helps those pupils who need reassurance from an adult at each stage of their work. In all subjects teachers work from well structured lesson plans which fit the annual curriculum map. Challenging and realistic targets are set for the range of pupils in the class and additional material is readily available for pupils who work quickly. Teachers have high expectations to which the pupils respond. The school's merit system works well in this respect because pupils are keen to gain praise and reward, not just for themselves but as a contribution to team effort. Teachers command discipline and respect which befits the ethos of the school. In the exceptionally good lessons, expectations are very high, the pace is fast and teaching is rigorous. A prime example was a mathematics lesson with the lower group of pupils in Year 2. The teacher used the short introductory session to test pupils' understanding of 'rounding up and down' to the nearest ten. Many pupils produced answers quickly – the most able in the group carefully explaining the significance of the number 5 when it appeared as the second digit in a two figure number. This was briskly followed by a statistical exercise linked to an environmental investigation on butterflies. The teacher and her assistant spent time with every pupil during the lesson and also found time to check some pupils' progress towards their personal targets. Where teaching was satisfactory in contrast to good, lessons lacked the liveliness, pace and sparkle seen in the better lessons. These lessons made less impact on pupils. Then, although outcomes in terms of achievement and learning were satisfactory there was room for improvement and greater use of initiative on the part of the pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are well taught in mainstream classes and in the small literacy and numeracy groups in Key Stage 2. Teachers are well informed of targets in pupils' individual education plans and successfully adapt their teaching methods and learning materials to enable pupils to make good progress towards them.

15. Literacy skills are being taught well in accordance with a good overall plan. The teaching of numeracy is firmly based on a practical approach which reinforces fundamental concepts before pupils apply them in more formal written exercises. This is effective. As a result, pupils are enjoying mathematics and rapidly gaining confidence in their ability to manipulate numbers in mental work.

16. Marking is well used to assist pupils' understanding of their progress and how they can improve. Teachers make good use of the whole school assessment policy to set targets. These are constantly reviewed with the pupils and revised to reflect achievement. The system works well, particularly for lower ability pupils who are set discrete achievable targets in small steps. Pupils thus gain self-esteem and confidence in their own success. Some good quality homework tasks are set to complement learning but practice is inconsistent from class to class and across year groups. The school needs to communicate to parents more explicitly what it is that is required. Parents rightly expressed concern about this at the meeting for parents and in the questionnaire returns.

17. Monitoring of teaching by the headteacher and subject co-ordinators is effectively identifying the best practices which are then shared by the whole staff. The corporate effort and input, especially in relation to techniques for teaching literacy and numeracy, has a strong impact. All these factors contribute to the pupils' good achievement and progress which builds steadily on previous learning.

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

18. The school's curriculum is rich and balanced and provides very well for pupils' intellectual and personal development. It meets all statutory requirements and those of religious education, and covers the currently recommended areas of learning for children under five. There is good emphasis on literacy and numeracy and the school's strategy is very effective in these areas. Schemes of work contain good guidance to teachers on how literacy and numeracy might be developed in all subjects, such as through creative writing in religious education and history. This is successful in enriching the English and mathematics provision. Despite the strong emphasis on these subjects, which has necessarily reduced the time available for others, the school has maintained appropriate coverage of all subjects.

19. The school provides a very good range of learning activities for the children under five, in the nursery and in the reception classes. Planning is securely based on the new Foundation Stage of learning, and the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. Activities are suitably practical and appropriate for the age group.

20. Curriculum planning is very good. Schemes of work, based on national schemes, clearly set out the skills and knowledge to be learned each year and provide challenge and interest for pupils at all levels of attainment. Teachers in each year group plan together and ensure that all pupils have the same opportunities for learning. Very good links are made between subjects. For example, in food technology, pupils in Year 1 baked biscuits to a wartime recipe, in a history lesson. A very good example of the success of this planning is the way in which the school meets the requirements of the National Curriculum in information technology, despite having inadequate resources. The effectiveness of the subject co-ordinators varied at the time of the previous inspection. Their role has improved greatly and they are now very effective in checking how their subjects are taught, and in supporting improvements. They have worked hard to plan for the introduction of the new National Curriculum in the next school year and are very well prepared.

21. The school recognises the importance of independent learning and investigative work. This is well planned and has a significant impact on pupils' progress and personal development. Teachers ensure that pupils have ample opportunities to learn from first-hand experience and experiment and research for themselves. For example, in a science lesson in Year 2, pupils investigated minibeasts, predicting what snails might like to eat and then testing out their prediction with those they had collected in a minibeast hunt in the school grounds. Pupils also research from books, the Internet and CD-ROM but the lack of good quality books and computers, limits their opportunities. Teachers work hard to make alternative provision. For example, Year 4 teachers have compiled their own information book about Viking longships.

22. Pupils' personal and social development is very well promoted. All the staff work very effectively to give pupils confidence to develop and sustain harmonious relationships. Pupils are taught 'self-help' strategies to help them in outdoor play and classroom activities. These are particularly supportive for pupils with special educational needs. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to discuss a range of important aspects including the dangers of drug misuse. They learn to express their thoughts and feelings with confidence and progressively increasing maturity. Sex education is included in the curriculum at an appropriate time.

23. The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. They are taught in mainstream classes and have full access to the National Curriculum. The provision of smaller teaching groups for literacy and numeracy in Key Stage 2 is particularly good. It enables pupils to benefit from a greater degree of individual attention than is possible in larger groups, and also to benefit from work which is effectively tailored to their requirements. As a result, pupils gain in confidence and self-esteem and build steadily on their own success. The school also makes good provision for the few pupils for whom English is not the first language. These pupils are fully integrated into school life and their language skills are developing well.

24. The curriculum is much enriched by a wealth of extra-curricular clubs and activities, which are very well supported. For example, the choir has 100 members and the orchestra 50. They play a good range of woodwind, brass and percussion instruments. School teams compete successfully against other local schools in a wide variety of sports, including, football, netball, cricket and rounders. A lunchtime keep-fit club provides healthy exercise. There is an annual residential visit for Year 6 pupils, which promotes their academic, physical and social development well.

25. Involvement in and with the community is very good and contributes positively to pupils' academic and personal development. This is an improvement in provision since the previous inspection. The school has very good links with many local businesses, organisations and groups. Pupils in Year 4 worked closely with senior citizens, under the guidance of an Artist in residence, to produce beautiful mosaics for display in a day centre for the elderly. The mini- enterprise scheme is now a well-established feature for pupils in Year 6 who devise and set up a mini company and work closely with local employers to produce, for example, biscuits or a newspaper. This is a very challenging opportunity which introduces pupils to business practices and promotes use of initiative and organisational skills.

26. Pupils participate in local celebration events and charity support. The wider community is well used for excursions, for example to a Tudor house as part of historical studies. Representatives of industry, the church, various institutions and local residents visit the school and contribute to pupils' learning and personal development. Courses for parents for literacy development are arranged in conjunction with a college of further education. The school works closely with other primary schools for curricular development purposes and joint activities, such as sports, are organised. Arrangements for the transfer of pupils to secondary school effectively prepare pupils and enable them to quickly integrate into their new learning environment.

27. The school makes good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all the pupils. These aspects emanate from the curriculum as a whole and have made an increasingly strong contribution to the overall life of the school since the previous inspection. They contribute to the achievement of the school aim that 'children and staff within the school will have respect for others, high moral values, and will feel valued members of the school community'.

28. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. There are opportunities for pupils to reflect and pray during school assemblies. Music is very well used to enhance the spiritual nature of the assembly. The orchestra, ensembles and choirs regularly perform and pupils appreciate how much music contributes to their personal lives. Pupils of all ages have very good opportunities to talk and write about spiritual matters in religious education lessons. For example, a pupil vividly describes the thrill of getting a merit 'In your heart it makes you feel happy and inside something is saying "Well done" '.

29. Good provision is made for moral development which is well promoted through all aspects of school life. Pupils know, understand and follow the school code of behaviour, and are taught to reflect on their behaviour and the effect it has on other people. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to consider issues and values in a secure atmosphere. They recognise the importance of fair play and clearly understand the differences between right and wrong doing. The importance of caring for the world is highlighted in studies such as environmental science and geography. Pupils empathise at their own level with some of the world's problems.

30. The school provides pupils with good opportunities for social development. Achievements are celebrated in assemblies and in class, and pupils receive certificates and merit stickers. When one pupil in Year 6 was chosen as 'star of the day' in his class, the other pupils applauded his achievement with genuine enthusiasm. Older pupils undertake a variety of responsibilities, which include looking after younger pupils, encouraging other pupils to move about the school sensibly, running a tuck shop and distributing registers. There is a good scheme of 'paired reading' through which pupils in Key Stage 2 regularly share books with pupils in Key Stage 1. This is a valuable experience which promotes interest in reading.

31. The school's provision for cultural development is good. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection when the widening of pupils' cultural horizons was a key issue. Studies in art, literature and music teach pupils to appreciate their heritage. Cross-curricular work frequently promotes work of other cultures and pupils enjoy the research involved, for example when pupils in Year 5 emulated archaeologists in trying to identify the use of artefacts found in a 'dig'. Pupils are sensitively introduced to different faiths and religions. They particularly enjoy hearing about these first hand, as for example when a rabbi visited school during the inspection period.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

32. Arrangements for pupils' health, safety and welfare are satisfactory. The monitoring of support and guidance for pupils' personal development has improved since the previous inspection and is very good.

33. The policy and procedures for health and safety are appropriate and risk assessments and safety checks are regularly carried out. In practice, however, some routine precautions are not always efficiently implemented and these were brought to the school's attention during the inspection. Teachers take appropriate safety measures during lessons and out of school excursions and pupils are taught to adopt safe practices. The school uses the services of external agencies well to provide specialist support. First aid cover is adequate.

34. Procedures for child protection are known and adhered to but are not outlined in the staff and supply staff handbooks to ensure that guidance is readily available, particularly to new and temporary staff.

35. Relationships between teachers, classroom assistants and pupils are caring, constructive and mutually respectful. Pupils feel secure. There is effective supervision throughout the day including in the playground. Adult helpers in the school are well briefed about their roles and make a most useful contribution to the care and personal development of pupils.

36. Pupils' personal development is closely monitored and improvements, for example in attitudes, behaviour or effort, are included, if applicable, in the targets which are set for and with pupils. These are communicated to parents. This approach works very well and successfully involves parents in their children's development. Pupils with special educational needs are cared for very effectively. Short term targets are closely related to their needs and pupils gain confidence from meeting them and moving on to new challenge. The learning support assistants and lunchtime supervisors give good support, and the relationships they establish with pupils, particularly those with behavioural problems, make a valuable contribution to the pupils' well being. Parents are pleased with the care and support which their children receive.

37. Good behaviour and conduct are very effectively promoted via very good classroom management, well-publicised rules, rewards and occasionally applied sanctions, and celebrations of success.

38. Some teachers monitor attendance only informally but it, and punctuality, are generally satisfactorily promoted. However, reasons for absence are not always efficiently recorded or reported and therefore the school's annual return and public documents are inaccurate. Statistics quoted on pupils' annual school reports are more reliable because individual teachers, who know the pupils well, enter the details.

39. The school's arrangements for assessing the academic performance of its pupils are good. The headteacher regularly undertakes thorough analysis of the pupils' work in order to check performance in English and mathematics. The data collected is used to plan appropriate programmes of work, and to raise standards. Very effective use is made of the information gained to: set realistic and challenging targets for individuals, classes, year groups and overall school performance; identify strengths and weaknesses in the school's performance and develop the curriculum to more closely meet the pupils' needs.

40. Targets are made explicit to pupils and parents and provide a clear focus for improvement. Parents are happy that target setting resulting from regular monitoring of pupils' progress is encouraging individuals to reach their potential.

41. The monitoring of pupils' academic development is very good. It provides a clear view of the school's performance over time as well as of individual attainment. It is a significant factor in the improving standards of literacy and numeracy.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. Parents are very positive and supportive in their attitudes to the school. The partnership with parents is very productive and contributes well to pupils' progress, especially those with special educational needs. The school and parents work more closely together than was reported at the time of the previous inspection. The very large majority of parents express considerable satisfaction with the school and recognises the substantial improvements which have taken place during recent years. Parents are particularly impressed by the quality of management and teaching and the effects of these on pupils' progress.

43. Parents are very well informed about the life and work of the school and the progress which pupils make. The school's very good practice of involving parents in the system of setting

improvement targets for every pupil is particularly effective and valued by parents. Annual school reports are very well prepared and there are termly opportunities to consult with teachers about pupils' progress. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to contact the school whenever they wish.

44. Many parents work or help in the school and with excursions and by doing so add to the quality of support. They assist pupils with work at home. Through the efforts of the Parent and Teacher Association substantial funds are raised to improve the school's facilities and resources. A small but significant number of parents do not give their full support to the school's efforts to maintain high levels of attendance because they continue to arrange holidays during term time.

45. Good guidance, via meetings and publications, is offered to parents about how they can support their children. Parents made good use of the workshop demonstrating the new approaches to the teaching of numerical skills and the school actively promotes attendance at literacy support courses arranged by a college of further education.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46. The quality of leadership and management is exceptionally good. The headteacher is a strong and effective leader with a clear vision of the school's educational direction. He leads a committed team of teaching and non-teaching staff who work closely together and take pride in the achievements of individuals and the school as a whole. They are united in working together with a common purpose, that of raising expectations and achievement. The creation of senior management and pastoral teams has been particularly effective in promoting a secure and stable environment in which pupils flourish. Subject co-ordinators and key staff have clearly defined roles and they are closely involved in strategic planning. Time is allocated for them to monitor the impact of their work in the classrooms which results in effective feedback to teachers and pupils on how to improve further. The school is well advanced with its target setting procedures which are pertinently informed by the good assessment system. Targets for individual pupils and groups are regularly reviewed and adjusted to reflect progress. The system is exemplary and a contributory factor to the rising standards of work throughout the school. The headteacher has a high profile in the school and is well respected by staff, pupils and parents. Pupils are well known by all the staff whose concern for their interests is a clear reflection of the school's philosophy of care and concern for the individual. Strategies for inspiring optimum achievement are working well and have a very positive impact on the quality of provision.

47. The governing body has extended its role since the previous inspection. It satisfactorily fulfils its statutory responsibilities and is fully aware of its accountability for the school's performance. Governors are allocated specific responsibilities and are actively involved in keeping themselves suitably informed. They frequently visit classes to evaluate the impact of their decisions and to acquire first hand knowledge about the quality of provision. The school development plan has appropriate priorities and takes good account of forward planning. It is suitably modified on a regular basis to reflect changing needs and the success, or otherwise, of actions taken. Most recently the targets have embraced literacy and numeracy, and the development of structures to underpin teaching, assessment and the pastoral care of pupils. Strategic planning has a clear focus matching the aims of the school, in particular, that of encouraging the pupils to believe in themselves and to recognise their own, and others', achievements.

48. Effective management ensures the staffing of the school is adequate and well deployed. Support staff are used very effectively to assist small groups of pupils within class. This successfully enables lower ability pupils to work on similar topics to others, albeit at a more simplistic level. Consequently pupils gain confidence and self-esteem which, in turn, inspires them to achieve at higher levels. The school site is extensive and includes a large, well kept playing field. The buildings are of mixed age but are well cared for in respect to day-to-day maintenance and cleanliness. They have suffered from neglect in previous years but a building and renovation programme is bringing about rapid improvement. This is also enabling the school to group classrooms so that pupils of similar age are in closer proximity. Good use is made of the large, discrete playground spaces. Provision is made for older pupils to play energetic games with soft balls without threat to other pupils. There is good supervision and pupils know exactly what is expected of them. Resources to support learning in the classroom are generally satisfactory, except that there are too few computers. This inhibits the enhancement of information technology skills and their extended use in cross-curricular work. Library facilities are inadequate in both key stages – both in accommodation and the quality and quantity of fiction and non-fiction books. The school has already identified this as a priority for development.

49. The school makes optimum use of funding from various sources, including sponsorship. Monies are spent prudently and linked to priorities in the development plan. The budget is well managed; the

school and governors endeavour to ensure that spending decisions are cost-effective with respect to the quality of provision and its impact on pupils' achievement. Staff training is appropriately linked to current developments, particularly in numeracy and literacy.

50. There has been a significant improvement in the school since the previous inspection. Re-structuring of staffing, better teaching practices and more relevant policies for academic and pastoral care have resulted in higher standards of achievement throughout the school. Overall, the school provides a good all-round education for its pupils and gives good value for money. It is in a strong position to build on its success and has good capacity for further development.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

51. To further improve the work of the school the headteacher, staff and governing body should:

- (1) * Provide suitable library areas in both key stages to further promote independent reading and research
* Provide a wider range of good quality fiction and non-fiction books as soon as is practicable.
(Paragraphs 6, 48, 64)
- (2) Provide more opportunities for pupils to practise information technology skills and incorporate them in cross-curricular activities.
(Paragraphs 48, 104)
- (3) Ensure that the homework policy is implemented consistently throughout the school, and that pupils and parents know exactly what is expected of them.
(Paragraphs 16, 66, 75)
- (4) Check that administrative procedures, such as the recording of attendance, are followed explicitly.
(Paragraph 38)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	78
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	35

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	24	41	30	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	410
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	54

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	44

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	25

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.9
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	28	33	61

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	25	27
	Girls	33	33	33
	Total	56	58	60
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	92(70)	95(70)	98(84)
	National	82(80)	83(81)	87(84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	25	26
	Girls	33	33	33
	Total	55	58	59
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	90(82)	95(81)	97(90)
	National	82(81)	86(85)	87(86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	1999	29	31	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	21	23
	Girls	24	28	23
	Total	40	49	46
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	67(73)	82(90)	77(91)
	National	70(65)	69(59)	78(69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	21	22
	Girls	25	29	23
	Total	43	50	45
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	72(72)	83(90)	75(88)
	National	68(65)	69(65)	75(71)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	3
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	343
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	17
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.1
Average class size	28.6

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	264

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	na

Total number of education support staff	2.3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	71

Number of pupils per FTE adult	11.3
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups		

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/9
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	£
Total income	679,462
Total expenditure	679,462
Expenditure per pupil	1,552
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	0

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	425
Number of questionnaires returned	131

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57.3	40.4	1.5	0.8	
My child is making good progress in school.	55.7	39.7	2.3		2.3
Behaviour in the school is good.	38.2	52.7	5.3	1.5	2.3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23.7	50.4	15.3	6.1	4.6
The teaching is good.	64.1	30.5			5.3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42.7	41.2	13.7	1.5	0.8
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	77.1	19.1	2.3	0.8	0.8
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	71.0	26.0			3.0
The school works closely with parents.	48.1	43.5	6.1	0.8	1.5
The school is well led and managed.	74.0	25.2			0.8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44.3	50.4	0.8		4.6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	39.7	47.3	7.6		5.3

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

52. Children under five are taught part-time, mornings and afternoons, in the nursery or full-time in two reception classes. At the time of inspection there were 51 children in the nursery and 55 in the two reception classes, only ten of whom had not reached their fifth birthday. Overall, children's attainment on entry is below average. Many have limited social skills and their listening skills are poorly developed. They make good progress in the nursery and, by the time they enter the reception classes, standards of attainment are improving. The good progress continues and by the time they are five, attainment of the vast majority of children, including those with special educational needs, is average in language and mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development. Children make steady progress in their personal and social education but this is still below average by the age of five.

53. All children respond very well to the stimulating activities provided by conscientious staff in the nursery and reception classes. Classrooms are bright, attractive and welcoming to interest and motivate pupils. The curriculum is progressive and relevant and provides a good range of challenging activities focusing on what the children are to learn. Record keeping is thorough and consistent and assessment is well used in the planning of pupils' work. The quality of teaching in all areas of learning in the foundation stage is good, and often very good. Teachers and support staff work together as a team and this has a positive effect on the quality of learning. High quality leadership provides clear direction for all staff and this has done much to enable children to make a very good start to their compulsory school life.

Personal and social development

54. The development of pupils' personal and social development is given high priority. Children are treated in a sensitive, caring way and this helps them to gain in confidence. Through carefully planned play situations such as the nursery café and the teddy bear hunt, opportunities are provided to help stimulate language and develop pupils' social skills. Pupils behave well, treat adults with respect and are learning to take turns and share. Relationships are very good. The family grouping in the nursery is particularly helpful in establishing a secure, happy environment in which the children feel comfortable and learn best. Staff encourage pupils to become independent in a variety of situations. They demonstrate their growing social skills, for example, when sharing a snack or taking a magic carpet ride together in the nursery.

Language and literacy

55. A significant number of children enter the nursery with limited language skills and lack confidence when talking to others. Some very good teaching was observed in which teachers highlighted individual children's specific needs prior to working with them on a one-to-one basis in activity sessions. Teaching and support staff place appropriate emphasis on language development and provide many opportunities to widen children's vocabulary and stimulate conversation. They are encouraged to listen carefully, and to ask and answer questions as fully as possible. Nearly all children show an interest in books. They enjoy hearing stories read to them. Children in the nursery, as well as those in the reception classes, particularly enjoy sharing their books in the paired reading sessions with pupils in Year 6. This activity is of mutual social benefit to both ages. All children under five learn to recognise their names as they place name cards in identified places in registration time. They are introduced to letter sounds in their names and apply this knowledge when learning to recognise a few familiar words. By the time they enter the reception classes many children have developed good phonic skills and they are ready to read. The reading ability of some children working in the reception classes exceeds that expected for their age. A significant number of children can write their first and sometimes second name and words are beginning to be recognisable in their early writing. They are developing good pencil control and beginning to form letters correctly. Some children are starting to work within the National Curriculum and are aware of story structure and rhyme. Overall, children make good progress

Mathematics

56. Children in the nursery are familiar with number rhymes, stories, counting games and songs. They successfully sort and match objects by shape and colour. The majority can recite numbers to

ten and sometimes beyond. A substantial number can write numbers and sometimes sequence them. Understanding is consolidated when children estimate and count the number of cups of sand needed to fill a container. They enjoy cutting out and counting the number of clothes for Teddy's suitcase and are satisfactorily learning how to record their findings. Children build on these skills in the reception classes. Using beads and cubes they follow patterns and identify what comes next in the sequence. Some children can partition numbers and use the correct terminology. Teaching is good and support staff are effectively deployed, as, for example, when helping children making pattern strings on the computer. Where teaching was very good the learning objectives were highly focused based on assessment of children's work in the previous lesson. This information was extracted from thoughtfully planned discussion at the end of lesson when children talked about what they had been learning. Evidence from the inspection indicates that children are achieving well and making good progress.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

57. The rate of learning in this area of the curriculum is good. Children satisfy their curiosity through a range of carefully prepared and interesting activities. They enjoy working on the computer and observational skills are developing well. Children explore and recognise features of their immediate surroundings on their 'bear hunt' walk and collect interesting objects to look at more closely in the nursery. They appreciate nature and enjoy their small garden area and range of potted plants. Children are gaining an understanding of the past and how people change over time through pictures of school or holidays long ago. Those in the nursery use imaginative play when spending time outdoors under canvas cooking for Teddy and writing his diary. They work well together as a group to raise and lower a large parachute on which Teddy is given a ride. In the reception classes children listen to true stories of past times such as the Hound of Gelert. They know the difference between day and night and how this affects animals. Early geography skills are developed as they draw plans of the classroom or write simple directions to their school. The wider world is brought closer to them as they consider living in hot and cold countries, extending this knowledge to create pictures of 'hot' colours. They can distinguish between things that are alive and those that have never been alive. The good quality teaching and enthusiasm of adults does much to encourage and extend learning in this area of development.

Creative development

58. All children enjoy singing a range of songs from memory, often spontaneously singing while working or playing in the nursery. As part of their holiday topic, children in the nursery mimic real life in the travel agent's shop, writing, telephoning and booking holidays on the play computer with confidence and enthusiasm. With adult help children make three-dimensional models of places to stay such as a holiday cottage, hotel and caravan. In the reception classes, children experiment with a variety of media such as dipped string and shaped sponges, to create colourful paintings and prints. They mix red, yellow and orange paint for their 'hot' collage and incorporate symmetrical patterns for their butterfly wings. Teaching is exciting and stimulating and children make good progress from their starting point in this aspect of their development.

Physical development

59. Good opportunities are provided for children to develop physical skills and co-ordination in the nursery. They ride wheeled toys with increasing control in a secure, fenced area. There is plenty of additional space for climbing frames and equipment such as a tunnel, igloo and an outdoor playhouse. Good use is made of the school field to practise physical skills and develop spatial awareness. Manual dexterity is appropriately developed as children cut, draw and paint with growing skill and handle small apparatus. Teachers plan a range of experiences for children to play imaginatively and interact freely with each other. In the reception class there is limited access at present to large, outdoor equipment but in an outdoor physical education lesson children made good use of a large space to practise throwing and catching skills. They listened well, stopping and starting on command. Good opportunities are provided for children to help themselves and develop independence. Overall, satisfactory provision is made for children's physical development and progress is good.

60. The provision for children under five has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Accommodation and resources are better and good liaison between teachers in the foundation stage and Key Stage 1 is ensuring that work constantly builds on prior learning.

ENGLISH

61. In national tests for seven-year-olds in 1999, the pupils' results in reading and writing were above the national average. They were well above average when compared to schools of similar background. Pupils' results in the tests for eleven-year-olds in 1999 were similar to the national average. They were above average when compared with similar schools. The school, through analysis of its results, identified some variation between the performance of boys and girls. It has successfully implemented strategies to eliminate this and no significant variation was recorded during the inspection. The results of the most recent tests in 2000 were received during the inspection. They indicate a further increase in the proportions of pupils reaching the levels expected for their age in both key stages. In Key Stage 2 the results were the highest recorded by the school to date. Attainment in English is marginally lower than in mathematics. Since 1996, the school's performance in national tests has improved at a greater rate than seen in most schools although there was a slight drop in Key Stage 2 in 1999. This reflects the spread of ability in the cohort which contained a higher than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that standards are continuing to rise with a high percentage of pupils working at the expected and higher levels at the end of each key stage. Standards of work seen during the inspection were well above average at the end of Key Stage 1, and above average at the end of Key Stage 2.

62. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with average standards of attainment. They make very good progress over the key stage in developing skills of speaking and listening, reading and writing. This pace of learning is a direct result of the highly focused teaching of literacy skills experienced by these pupils since they entered the school. Pupils in Key Stage 2 did not benefit from the same quality of experience in their earlier years as is now the case. Comparison of the performance of the current Year 6 in national tests at age seven with their present attainment indicates they have made good progress over the key stage. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported during the Literacy Hour, often by a non-teaching assistant, and make good progress. The grouping by ability for English in Key Stage 2 enables the teachers to provide appropriate support more easily for the full range of ability in each year group. The smaller groups provided for the lower attaining pupils support their progress well. Careful monitoring of individual pupil's progress is used very effectively to set relevant and challenging targets and to plan work which closely meets their needs. Together with the full implementation of the National Literacy Strategy, these initiatives have a significant impact on progress.

Speaking and listening

63. Standards in speaking and listening are well above average by the end of Key Stage 1. The vast majority of the pupils communicate clearly with their teachers and with each other. They have good listening skills. In whole class activities and in groupwork, they listen carefully and respond appropriately. They follow instructions accurately, for instance, in the Literacy Hour and in physical education lessons. In discussion sessions at the end of lessons pupils are articulate in explaining what their group has done. They are becoming confident and show imagination in acting out stories. Higher attaining pupils choose words carefully and suggest a variety of interesting adjectives, for example, when describing a birthday cake. Standards of speaking and listening at the end of Key Stage 2 are good. Almost all pupils are confident and speak purposefully in discussion. They present their case well in class debates, for instance, on the question of fox hunting, and question the point of view of others. They adapt their style and use of language to carry out interviews with adults or other pupils. Pupils collaborate well in groups to present a news report in journalistic style. The more able pupils appraise their own performance maturely when filmed. Many pupils take part enthusiastically in the annual dramatic production for parents and friends.

Reading

64. Standards of reading at the end of Key Stage 1 are well above the national average. The majority of the pupils have particularly good knowledge of letters and their sounds, which they use effectively with context and picture clues to decode unfamiliar words. Almost all enthusiastically participate in reading aloud as a class or group, with appropriate expression and with accurate attention to punctuation. They show understanding of the main parts of the story and are beginning to make judgements about the action of the principal characters. For instance, in the story of Jack and the Beanstalk, they consider whether Jack had done the right thing in selling the cow for beans. All know about the layout of books and higher attaining pupils are confident in using contents, index and glossary pages. They use alphabetical order competently when checking the meaning of words in a dictionary. By the end of Key Stage 2, reading skills are above average. The vast majority of the pupils are independent readers. They use their reading skills effectively to promote learning across

most of the curriculum. Less able pupils have difficulty in understanding beyond the literal and in making inference from the texts. Higher attaining pupils have well-developed skills of skimming and scanning to obtain information quickly from set fiction and non-fiction materials. In both key stages, whilst there is good provision for learning during the Literacy Hour, the range and quality of reading books for individual use is poor. Many are outdated and unattractive and do not stimulate enthusiasm for reading. The language is sometimes unsuitable, for instance, the words 'elucidate' and 'adjudicate' did not help a Year 2 pupil to understand the story. Many older pupils bring their own books from home for independent reading. Whilst the overall level of reading skills is high, the pupils' knowledge of a range of authors is not so well developed, and their ability to select a favourite author and explain their preference is limited. Pupils in each key stage retrieve information efficiently from appropriately matched set texts and from compact disks, but their skills of finding books and information from a library is undeveloped. The quality and quantity of books in the libraries in each key stage is not conducive to independent learning, and currently access to library facilities and space for private study is poor.

Writing

65. Standards in writing are well above the national average at the end of Key Stage 1. The vast majority of the pupils write purposefully using narrative, instructional and descriptive writing as well as poetry and lists. They develop their ideas in a series of sentences usually with accurate use of capitals and full stops. They plan their work successfully with the help of a set format, to tell a story with a beginning, middle and end. Higher attaining pupils choose words carefully for effect, for instance, describing the seaside with 'sand like gold', and 'crystal clear sea'. They are beginning to use speech marks, exclamation and question marks appropriately in their own writing. Most pupils make good attempts at spelling phonetically and generally spell regular and familiar words accurately. Handwriting is usually neat and well formed, but is not joined. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards in writing are above the national average. The majority of the pupils have sufficient skills to support their learning in other subjects. Less able pupils are aware of the main features of different forms of writing and are starting to adapt their work for the anticipated reader. Pupils adapt their writing to produce short reports based on sensational newspaper headlines. They use an appropriate short sentence structure to record points succinctly. When writing in narrative form, most pupils sustain their ideas to write at length. Their stories are organised and interesting, with appropriate use of basic punctuation. The highest attaining pupils show more imagination in their story writing, choosing words effectively to create tension and atmosphere. They use a range of punctuation including speech marks and apostrophes and divide their work appropriately into paragraphs to aid clarity. Spelling is usually accurate, and handwriting neat, legible and joined.

66. The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the previous inspection and is now good overall. In Key Stage 1, teaching is very good. All lessons were at least good with half, including one excellent lesson, being very good. In Key Stage 2, teaching is good. One lesson was very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject. The National Literacy Strategy is implemented thoroughly in all classes. This provides a consistent approach, and a continuity from class to class, which enables the pupils to make at least good progress. Basic skills are taught well. In Key Stage 1 especially, the clarity with which letters and their sounds are taught leads to the systematic acquisition of reading skills. Stimulating displays in Key Stage 1 classrooms provide a particularly rich setting for learning. Planning throughout the school is of a very high quality. Clear and relevant objectives and targets provide pupils with good knowledge of what they are expected to learn and promote purposeful and successful outcomes. Class discussion sessions are used efficiently to consolidate and extend learning as well as to assess the success of the lesson. Day-to-day assessment is used very well to plan future work. The teachers' high expectations ensure that work challenges pupils to do their best and extends their learning at a good pace. The teachers manage pupils well. Their genuine use of praise builds up the pupils' confidence and enthusiasm for the subject and spurs them to greater effort. The calm and purposeful working atmosphere established by teachers in most classrooms enables the pupils to sustain concentration and work hard. Support staff are well deployed and contribute significantly to the good pace and security of pupils' learning. Whilst groupwork is usually well organised there are times when progress is slowed because there is insufficient adult intervention to enable pupils to take full advantage of the learning situation. Occasionally literacy sessions become unbalanced. The whole class teaching element goes on too long and not enough time is left for pupils to complete group tasks, or for the final session to be fully effective. Homework is used very well to support learning in some classes, but this is not consistent across the school.

67. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to co-operate and collaborate on tasks in all age groups. Pupils respond very well and are enthusiastic and responsible. Older pupils are encouraged to use their reading skills to help the younger ones in short paired reading sessions each week. They are extremely co-operative and helpful in managing the task. The high commitment to hard work,

and sense of purpose of staff and pupils throughout the school has a particularly positive effect on the rate of learning.

68. The school is very successful in promoting literacy across the whole of the curriculum. Most subject policies provide guidance on how this is to be achieved. Art work and music, for instance, are used to stimulate creative writing. Book making and research on the Victorians in history and the writing of post cards from various holiday locations in geography promote writing and reading skills. In personal and social education lessons and in religious education, good discussions promote the pupils' ability to articulate their feelings and explain their point of view.

69. The curriculum co-ordinator and headteacher provide very effective leadership. Thorough analysis of test results, samples of work, and monitoring of teaching ensure a precise overview of the school's performance. This is used well to develop the curriculum and set targets for improvements. There is a high commitment to raise standards further

MATHEMATICS

70. Overall, pupils' results in the 1999 national tests for seven and eleven-year-olds were above average when compared to all schools and well above average when compared to schools of similar background. Over the past four years results have risen from below to above the national average in both key stages. The results of the most recent tests in 2000 were received during the inspection. They indicate that the good standards are being sustained. The school is meeting, and sometimes exceeding, the targets set by the governors. The rate of progress in mathematics has exceeded the national trend. Overall, attainment in mathematics is marginally better than in English and science by the time pupils leave school. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.

71. Observation of lessons, examination of written work and discussion with pupils and staff indicate that by the end of Key Stage 1 standards of work are well above those expected of seven-year-olds. On entry to the key stage, pupils' attainment is average. The teaching builds up confidence in the application of number skills through the use of a wide variety of stimulating materials and techniques. Teachers are quick to recognise when pupils do not understand and they then employ alternative strategies to assist learning, for example 'a half followed by a half' was discussed when some pupils found a quarter of 80 too difficult. By the end of Year 1 most pupils have a sound understanding of number bonds to 20 and many work beyond this. By the end of the key stage pupils are successfully applying their basic knowledge of number to shape, space and measure. They satisfactorily learn to handle and interpret data, and make reasoned judgements from bar charts and pictograms. A particularly good example in a Year 2 class was the extrapolation of information about the number of butterflies found in the local environment on different days of the week. Teachers encourage pupils to cross check their work for accuracy, such as when subtraction is understood to be the reversal of addition. Mathematical terminology is introduced at the earliest opportunity and pupils use it well and appropriately.

72. Pupils in Key Stage 2 did not benefit from such a consistent approach to mathematics in their earlier years in school and consequently their starting point in Year 3 was lower. Current practices focus on consolidating understanding and application of basic principles. Examination of pupils' work and observation of lessons confirm that by the time pupils leave school, attainment is above average. Pupils have a good grasp of numerical skills. The grouping by ability within year groups is effective because the narrower range of abilities in each teaching group enables work to be targeted more specifically. As a result, pupils make faster progress and, of equal importance, gain confidence from working with others of similar ability. By the end of the key stage, the most able pupils comfortably cope with intricate aspects of mathematical topics and tackle open-ended questions well. Lower ability pupils work at a more simplistic level but they pay attention to accuracy and achieve an acceptable degree of success. The below average attainment at the beginning of Key Stage 2 which constrained progress in past years has been eliminated. Now, as in Key Stage 1, pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, achieve well and make good progress from their starting point at the beginning of the key stage.

73. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy is proving beneficial through its structured approach, emphasis on basic numeracy skills, and development of strategies for the manipulation of numbers. The brisk mental mathematics sessions at the start of lessons are effective in focusing attention on the many different ways of solving numerical problems. Pupils enjoy mathematics and consider it fun. As a result most are self-motivated and they maintain good momentum throughout the lesson. Interesting and varied merit award systems encourage pupils to work hard towards their

personal targets. In addition, they promote initiative and independence – qualities which are contributing to the rising levels of attainment. Pupils respond well to teachers' high expectations in respect to the presentation of written work. It is neatly presented and indicative of pupils' recognition of the need for a logical and organised approach to mathematics. Pupils respond positively to teachers' comments which are constructive and helpful in showing them how to improve. Pupils have pride in their work and achievements.

74. Mathematics is used well to support work in other subjects. Computational, measuring and data handling skills are used effectively and extensively in subjects such as design and technology, science and geography. Pupils use their initiative in transferring skills from one subject to another which results in a good overlap in cross-curricular work. The use of information technology skills in mathematics is less marked because of the shortage of up-to date computers. Where they are used, the outcome is good, for instance in the Year 6 project based on horse racing. Pupils produced meaningful computer graphs and charts demonstrating understanding of the analysis of relevant statistics. A similarly good standard of thought-provoking work was seen when a small group of higher ability pupils in Year 4 investigated interesting relationships between fractional numbers and percentages.

75. Overall, the teaching of mathematics is good throughout the school. All the lessons observed were satisfactory and the quality of teaching was good or better in 65% of them. It was very good in 21%. Similar proportions of good teaching were seen in each key stage. The quality of teaching contributes significantly to pupils' learning. It is much more consistent than at the time of the previous inspection. Teachers have successfully embraced new techniques for teaching numeracy skills. The well-balanced, three-part lessons are providing good opportunities for pupils to gain and extend knowledge, practise new skills and share ideas. The short concluding element to each lesson succeeds in summarising what has been learned and in setting parameters for future lessons. The good teaching is characterised by rigorous planning, matched to targets for groups and individual pupils, high expectations and good class management. This results in pupils knowing exactly what is required of them. Teachers have developed a climate for learning in which pupils gain satisfaction from their own success. The good quality of teaching is a significant factor in the fast pace of pupils' learning and their good progress. Homework is set in various forms – written, learning, investigational, fact finding – but pupils (and parents) are not always clear about what is expected or what actually constitutes homework. The policy needs clarification through better communication.

76. The significant improvement in mathematics since the previous inspection reflects the school's commitment to maximising the potential of all pupils. This has been achieved through detailed and flexible planning, a good team spirit amongst staff, and the development of a rigorous assessment system which highlights pupils' specific needs. The co-ordinator's management of the subject has proved very effective to date and there is still capacity for further development.

SCIENCE

77. In 1999 the teacher assessment of pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 indicated that attainment was above average. Pupils' results in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 were below the national average, contrary to results in previous years which had risen steadily from below to well above average since the previous inspection. The lower level of attainment in 1999 is partly explained by the higher proportion of lower ability pupils in the year group. Pupils' misinterpretation of questions was also judged to be a contributory factor. Overall attainment in science was average when compared to that of schools of similar background. The results of the Year 2000 national tests were received during the inspection. The proportions of pupils reaching, and exceeding, the expected levels for their age are similar to those achieved in 1998 when attainment was above the national average. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. Scrutiny of pupils' work over the year and evidence from the inspection confirms that standards of work are above average at the end of both key stages. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection when standards were described as generally sound.

78. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils know how to record information in simple charts, diagrams and illustrations, and write descriptions of their findings. They respond to expectations to present their work well and to suggestions as to how it could be improved. When planning experimental work they know that conditions must be the same for tests to be fair. In Year 2 pupils were finding out about minibeasts. They made good use of the school field to collect snails on a minibeast hunt, and predicted what the snails would choose to eat. These predictions were sensible, based on the pupils' prior knowledge. Pupils demonstrate good knowledge of what living things need to survive. Higher achieving pupils organise their own discussions in a mature manner for their age.

79. By the time pupils leave school they design their own investigations with thought for the task and implications for practicalities. They use scientific language appropriately, and make accurate observations and measurements. Sensible predictions are made about possible outcomes of experiments, and methods are modified in the light of results. For example, in Year 6, pupils tested different brands of washing up liquid and predicted which one would produce the best solution for blowing bubbles. They devised their own tests, selected suitable equipment and carried out the tests rigorously. Results were recorded systematically, enabling pupils to draw conclusions from their findings. Subsequently they were challenged to discover whether it was possible to blow a bubble that was not spherical. Information technology is sometimes used to plot findings but its use could be extended. Pupils co-operate well in group work. Written work is well presented and shows good understanding and attention to detail. Higher achieving pupils write at length, and use a good range of technical vocabulary.

80. All pupils achieve well in both key stages. They make good progress in their learning and understanding of scientific ideas and concepts and build on their previous knowledge. There is great emphasis on pupils finding out through investigation, which was an area identified for improvement at the previous inspection. Pupils become more independent learners as they move through the school. They share tasks and co-operate well in group work. The younger pupils can classify living things and things that have never been alive. By Year 4 pupils can make connections between concepts. They understand that the four seasons relate to the orbit of the sun round the earth, linking physical and life processes. Older pupils organise their work well, and draw mature conclusions from the results of their experimental work.

81. Pupils' attitudes to science are good, as is behaviour. They are enthusiastic and work well, particularly in practical sessions when they are excited by a sense of sharing in discovery. Occasionally work does not build on previous knowledge and then learning is less secure. Discipline is well managed by good teaching, appropriate and challenging tasks, and use of praise based on the school code of behaviour. Homework is occasionally set to follow-up classwork, to extend learning and develop pupils' skills as independent learners.

82. Teaching is good overall in both key stages. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when there was some unsatisfactory teaching. No lessons fell into this category in the current inspection. Teachers give clear explanations and demonstrations that give pupils the confidence to experiment. They have a good awareness of the learning needs of the pupils of different ages. Expectations of pupils are high and teachers share the learning objectives with the pupils so they know what they are aiming to learn. They make good use of the discussion session at the end of lessons to consolidate pupils' learning. Classroom assistants are well briefed so that practical work gets off to a brisk start. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge which is transmitted with enthusiasm. Lessons are well planned, work becoming progressively more demanding for pupils of higher ability. Pupils' work is well marked and in some classes teachers give pupils targets for areas to improve. This could profitably be applied in all classes. Pupils with special educational needs are enabled to make good progress through the provision of suitable tasks, resources and directed adult support.

83. The whole approach to science has improved since the previous inspection. Good emphasis is placed on the development of enquiry skills alongside the acquisition of scientific facts. There is good capacity for further development particularly when more computers become available.

ART

84. Two art lessons were seen during the inspection. Evidence gathered from the lessons, from work displayed throughout the school and from discussions with pupils indicates that pupils' work in both key stages is at least similar to that found in most schools and sometimes better. This is an improvement on the previous inspection when standards in Key Stage 2 were found to be variable, and sometimes unsatisfactory.

85. During the inspection, work displayed in the school corridors followed the theme 'Hot Colours'. Pupils in the reception classes learn to use colour well in a variety of ways. They paint bright pictures, use sponges or their hands for printing, and produce bold patterns by blowing paint with straws. By Year 2, pupils develop a more sensitive use of colour and technique as demonstrated when they used computer images of their own faces as the centres of flowers in a collage showing happiness and sadness. In Key Stage 2, pupils make good use of sketchbooks. Their art work shows sensitive

use of tactile materials and increasing attention to detail in painting and drawing. By Year 6, pupils refine and evaluate their own and each other's ideas, for instance when they worked together to produce a Millennium quilt wall hanging. Each pupil designed and painted a square for the quilt using fabric paints and one pupil made good use of information technology to develop his design. They worked very carefully, manipulated their brushwork with skill, patience and attention to detail and were pleased with the success of their results. Pupils study the work of great artists, and enjoy experimenting by working in the different styles

86. Pupils have good attitudes to art and are enthusiastic. They behave well and listen carefully to instructions. They put their own interpretations and ideas into practice, refine and develop their skills, and adapt and improve their work. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

87. Teaching is good overall. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and make clear plans which include opportunities for the assessment of pupils' progress. Pupils are well managed and lessons are exciting. A good range of learning opportunities is provided. The stimulating teaching motivates pupils and contributes to their good learning and application of skills. Occasionally, learning objectives are rather abstract for younger pupils.

88. The scheme of work places appropriate emphasis on the progressive development of skills. The stated aim of the policy is that 'the development of art and craft skills will lead to the personal fulfilment and satisfaction of each child'. Planning is carefully monitored and portfolios of pupils' work are well used to assess progress. Display themes are based on topics chosen jointly by staff and add great quality to the school's environment.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

89. During the inspection, only one lesson was observed. Judgements are based on this, work displayed around the school, photographic records and discussions with pupils and the subject co-ordinator. Standards of work by the end of both key stages are similar to those found in most schools, and improving rapidly. All pupils are achieving satisfactorily and learning throughout the school progressively builds on previous knowledge and acquisition of practical skills.

90. Work displayed in Year 6 shows the pupils can successfully work from a design brief to design, make and modify a structure. Pupils were given the task of building a structure that would support a one kilogram weight, using only straws and pipe cleaners. They built a range of different shaped structures, and provided convincing written evidence of reasoning behind the processes followed from the original idea to the finished products. Pupils successfully evaluated their structures, assessed their suitability for the purpose and said how they would develop and adapt their design. In Key Stage 1, pupils designed and made puppets. In a simplistic way they too showed understanding of design processes. As they progress through school pupils develop their practical skills and learn to measure, construct and record accurately. Each 'design and make' project has a specific purpose. For example, in Year 1 pupils join card together to make moving legs for the Three Little Pigs. In Key Stage 2, work is suitably extended to more complicated processes. A particularly interesting task was the Crashed Vehicle Project undertaken in Year 5 in conjunction with County Road Safety Department. This project aimed to show the effect of impact on a structure and pupils enjoyed designing, making and reinforcing the vehicles to be used in their tests. The school recently held a 'Technology Day'. Pupils from reception to Year 6 were grouped together, with staff and parent volunteers. Each group had to design and make a Millennium banner, and build a chair to seat the smallest member of the group. Results were displayed in the hall and prizes awarded for the best designs. The day was judged to be so successful, both in relation to the subject and as an exercise in collaborative working, that it is to become an annual event.

91. Evidence from the inspection indicates that teaching is good overall in both key stages. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Teaching is good because the pupils are set challenging objectives, planning is thorough, and teachers are confident in their knowledge of the subject. The climate for learning is enhanced by good relations between adults and pupils and well-directed deployment of classroom assistants to support specific groups of pupils. In the lesson seen there was a good working atmosphere throughout the session, and a genuine sense of excitement when the pupils tested their prototype vehicles in a crash simulation. Results were carefully discussed and evaluated for possible improvements.

92. At the time of the previous inspection there was no co-ordinator for design and technology. Good leadership from the present co-ordinator has motivated the staff and shows in the improving standards of pupils' work. Development in the subject has been rapid and there is scope for further improvement

GEOGRAPHY

93. Three geography lessons were observed during the inspection. Supporting evidence from pupils' work and teachers' plans indicates that standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. At ages seven and eleven, pupils' work is similar to that in most primary schools.

94. Pupils achieve satisfactorily throughout the school and in some lessons make good progress. Pupils in Year 1 study weather in Cheadle and use computers to create weather maps with appropriate symbols. They plan a route around the school grounds and display this with photographs of significant features. The project is built on in Year 2 and, at the end of the key stage, pupils have a basic knowledge of the area in which they live and compare it with more distant places such as the seaside. They indicate the countries of the British Isles on a map and satisfactorily compare the features and way of life on Scottish and Mexican islands. In Key Stage 2 pupils develop these skills satisfactorily over time, drawing simple maps with grid references and studying world maps. By the time they leave school the majority have a sound knowledge of geographical features and draw and interpret maps satisfactorily. They compare and contrast places well and know how the environment affects the way people live.

95. Pupils are interested in finding out about life in their own town and in other locations. Where the teaching is good pupils are eager to discuss and offer their views. Where it is satisfactory rather than good, they are interested and concentrate well on their tasks, but are not enthused about their work. Pupils in Key Stage 1 like the way teachers use toy bears to extend geographical knowledge. Reception and Key Stage 1 classes each have a bear which pupils take turns in taking home or on holiday with them. They complete a diary of the bear's travels, complete with photographs, and this stimulates discussion in class. In Year 6, pupils envisage themselves on location in a village they study and they empathise with the people there. This contributes well to pupils' own spiritual and cultural development.

96. Evidence from the observation of lessons, pupils' work and teachers' plans indicates that teaching is at least satisfactory and often good in both key stages. This is an improvement on teaching at time of the previous inspection, which was unsatisfactory in Key Stage 1 and sound overall but sometimes poor in Key Stage 2. In one of the lessons observed, in Year 2, the teacher displayed excellent teaching skills, which promoted very good learning for her pupils. The teachers' high level of knowledge and expertise was well used in providing challenging and stimulating tasks that maintained the enthusiasm of pupils throughout. Teachers have sound knowledge and understanding of geography and plan for appropriate coverage of both the skills and knowledge to be taught. They match work well to the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, and this enables pupils to understand their tasks and achieve what is expected. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to investigate independently and to work together in groups, which enhances their personal development. They make appropriate use of worksheets to support learning, which is a significant improvement on the previous inspection, when the overuse of commercial worksheets was criticised. Teachers arrange many good visits into the locality and further afield to enrich the work done in class. For example, pupils in Year 3 visited Carsington Water, in their water cycle studies, where they looked at the effects of pollution and measured temperatures and rate of water flow, using electronic sensors. The annual residential visit to an outdoor centre gives pupils in Year 6 relevant first-hand experience of life in a different location. These visits promote interest and deepen understanding very well.

97. Geography is promoted very effectively. The co-ordinator checks the quality of teaching and pupils' work, making perceptive comments about how they might be improved. She has recently reviewed the scheme of work to meet the requirements of the new National Curriculum and this puts the school in a very good position to improve provision further.

HISTORY

98. At the end of both key stages pupils' work is typical of that of most others of their age. This is a similar picture to that given in the previous inspection report. However, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, now achieve appropriately and this is an improvement in the subject as previously achievement varied between classes.

99. Pupils at Key Stage 1 develop a sound awareness of the past by investigating changes in their lives and those of their families. They have a satisfactory understanding of the order of events in time. This is supported by the way in which teachers use timelines in all historical studies. Pupils

build an appropriate historical vocabulary and extend their understanding through stories of famous people, such as Samuel Pepys and Elizabeth 1st. They understand that life was very different in times gone by and gain a good understanding of this when interviewing their parents and grandparents about their lives. Pupils know about the Second World War and again the involvement of their own families in talking about their experiences and providing artefacts, such as tin helmets and ration books, promotes their learning very well.

100. Skills and knowledge build satisfactorily through Key Stage 2 and, at age eleven, pupils have a sound understanding of life in different eras in the past. They develop good investigative skills through the use of historical artefacts and research on the Internet, on CD-ROM and in books, although these are limited. For example, pupils in Year 3 handled replicas of sports equipment used by the Ancient Greeks at the Olympic Games and noted the changes and similarities with today's games. In Year 5, pupils demonstrate good factual knowledge and understanding of aspects of Victorian society and recognise changes within and across the Victorian period, such as the development of industry and transport.

101. Pupils enjoy history. They like handling the artefacts and discuss them sensibly, showing respect for their uniqueness and antiquity. Pupils appreciate the many opportunities for visits and role-play, for instance when they dress up in Roman clothing and armour or take the part of Vikings on a longship.

102. Three lessons were observed during the inspection and teaching was good in two of these and satisfactory in the other. Supporting evidence indicates that the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and often good in both key stages. Consequently pupils learn well and develop good attitudes to their work. This is an improvement on the previous inspection when teaching was of variable quality and sometimes unsatisfactory, with a heavy reliance on commercial worksheets. Teachers plan carefully to make lessons interesting by using a good variety of activities. Where teaching is good, teachers bring history to life by their use of artefacts and role-play, which encourage pupils to ask and answer questions about the past. Written work is well matched to the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Teachers provide very good opportunities for pupils to practise and extend their literacy skills. For example, pupils make notes, research information, write accounts, lists and stories about the past. Good opportunities for drama and discussion promote their speaking skills and confidence very well.

103. History is enthusiastically promoted throughout the school. The quality of teaching and pupils' work is checked thoroughly and areas for improvement highlighted. The scheme of work has been reviewed, in line with the new National Curriculum, and the school is in a very good position to improve provision further.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

104. Most pupils are achieving the expected levels of attainment in all aspects of the subject at ages seven and eleven, as at the time of the previous inspection. This is a credit to the school, as there are insufficient up-to-date computers to provide regular practice for pupils. The school has only just been allocated its national funding and a new computer suite is due to be provided very shortly.

105. At age seven, pupils have made satisfactory progress and have sound operational skills. They write reports and stories using a word-processor, carrying out simple editing, such as cut and paste. For example, pupils in Year 2 highlighted, cut and replaced verbs in a sentence, changing the tense. Pupils successfully operate the mouse to edit and enhance text, and to lift and replace illustrations from a 'clip art' bank. They can enter data into a data base and devise simple programs to control a robotic toy or move a turtle around the screen. Skills develop progressively throughout Key Stage 2 and by the end of the key stage pupils confidently use computers and other technological equipment. In Year 6, they type text into a desktop publisher and insert pictures and photographs taken on the school's digital camera. Statistical Information is analysed and appropriately interpreted in various forms such as bar charts, line graphs and pie charts. Pupils effectively learn to devise simple programs to control events and use electronic sensors in measuring. They use a video camera to record their various activities and the Internet and CD-ROM to research information in other subjects. Last year pupils in Year 6 produced a newspaper as part of a mini-enterprise project. This successfully promoted both information technology and literacy skills. The newspaper was published in conjunction with a local newspaper and pupils raised money for its publication by selling advertising space in the paper. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils.

106. Pupils are very interested in using computers. They usually work in pairs and share equipment sensibly, with more experienced and skilled pupils supporting others. However, some older pupils express frustration at not having enough opportunity to practise and research because of the insufficient number of up-to-date computers. Parents also express justifiable concern about this.

107. As at the time of the previous inspection, basic skills are well taught. Teaching is satisfactory in both key stages. Teachers have satisfactory skill levels and are confident in their teaching. They use their weekly lesson time well to teach the whole class new skills and then provide opportunities for every pupil to practise these before the next lesson. Demonstrations and instructions are clear and pupils understand what to do. However the fact that some time elapses before they have a turn in practising the skills slows the rate of progress that they can make. Whilst this is satisfactory overall, it could be better and many pupils are capable of achieving higher standards. Teachers make very good links with other subjects. For example, pupils in a Year 4 mathematics group used initiative when working on fractions and percentages at a level which was well above that expected for their age. The co-ordinator is released on a regular basis to teach groups of older pupils and this supports their progress well. In most classrooms there are word-processed captions and instructions which promote the subject but there are insufficient examples of pupils' own work. Two good examples displayed were the work on fox hunting in Year 5 and the good autobiographical writing, with inserted photographs, in Year 3.

108. The co-ordinator promotes the subject well. He has developed a scheme of work, based on the national scheme, which provides not only for coverage of the required curriculum but also highlights how the skills should be applied in all other subjects in each year group. This is effective in ensuring that pupils' experience and attainment levels are maintained, despite the low level of computers. The school is in a good position to improve and raise standards when it receives its new resources.

MUSIC

109. Pupils throughout the school, including those with special educational needs, make good progress overall and by the ages of seven and eleven achieve standards that are above those found in most schools. Pupils achieve particularly well in Key Stage 2 and a substantial number make very good progress at this stage. The good improvement since the previous inspection is due to the high quality leadership and specialist teaching of the subject co-ordinator, and the many opportunities offered to pupils to extend interests and skills in a wide range of extra-curricular musical activities. There are large infant and junior choirs, and a large orchestra. All perform to a high standard.

110. Pupils in Key Stage 1 sing well in pitch and are building up a wide repertoire of songs. They are gaining confidence in performing with a range of percussion instruments. By the end of the key stage they are developing good listening skills. Through the work of composers such as Rossini and Debussy, pupils in Year 2 explore the mood and effect of sea music, extending their knowledge to produce an imaginative sea picture on percussion instruments. They appraise their own music making and that of others through composition and performance and are beginning to incorporate musical elements such as dynamics into their work. Some pupils play the recorder well and work hard towards gaining certificates in competence offered in the published scheme composed by the music co-ordinator.

111. Musical skills are further developed in Key Stage 2. Pupils compose and perform with growing confidence. The wide range of pupils' abilities and experiences in music is well catered for. Those with less musical talent receive appropriate support, not only from the teacher but from other pupils. Expertise gained in instrumental lessons is incorporated into class lessons. Good cross-curricular links are made, for example when pupils in Year 3 experiment with sounds associated with building the pyramids. Throughout the key stage pupils become more competent in recorder playing in both class lessons and ensemble work. The composition work by pupils in Year 6 is good and forms part of a project within the Arts Induction programme in local schools.

112. The pupils' response to music is very good. They work hard in lessons and enjoy the activities. They demonstrate pride in their efforts as, for example, when they strive to gain their certificates in recorder playing, sing in the school choir or play in ensembles. They co-operate well when taking turns to compose or perform.

113. The quality of teaching is good, and very good where there is specialist teaching. The school benefits from the services of visiting music specialists, including a parent who teaches drum skills. They make a considerable contribution to the standards and progress of the large number of pupils

who receive tuition in wind, brass, string and percussion instruments. The subject is well led by an enthusiastic and committed co-ordinator. Resources are good and teachers use them well. The school enjoys a good and well-earned reputation for its involvement in a variety of musical activities and events at both local and national levels. The school has recently produced a commendable compact disc.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

114. During the week of the inspection, all physical education lessons were based on the acquisition of games skills. Scrutiny of planning and discussion with the subject co-ordinator indicates that the school provides an appropriately balanced programme of physical education which includes gymnastics, dance and games in both key stages as well as athletics, cross-country and swimming in Key Stage 2. Adventurous pursuits for Year 6 is provided in an annual residential visit.

115. Standards seen during the inspection were similar to those found in most schools. They are more consistent between classes than at the time of the previous inspection and unsatisfactory work has been eliminated. Progress over time is satisfactory. At the end of Key Stage 1 the pupils demonstrate sound control of their bodies when moving in contrasting styles with large bouncy steps or small quiet ones. They use space safely with awareness of others and show a willingness to practise to improve their performance in specific activities. Due to the constraints of the curriculum, it was not possible to observe Year 6. In Year 5, however, the pupils take part responsibly in team games and sustain energetic activity over time. They understand and appreciate the need for rules in team games. Over 90% of pupils can swim the required distance of twenty-five metres by the time they leave the school.

116. The quality of teaching was satisfactory in all lessons observed. Following recent training, all staff involved have secure knowledge and understanding of the subject. The curriculum co-ordinator provides sound support in most age groups, which promotes the progressive development of skills from year to year. Classes are well managed so that little time is wasted and pupils are made to concentrate on learning. Groups in each year are efficiently organised so that all have a chance to participate in games and do not spend undue time waiting their turn. There are good opportunities to practise skills but insufficient attention is given to showing pupils exactly how to improve performance. More direct demonstration by staff or by pupil exemplar is needed to enable good progress to take place. Too few opportunities for pupils to appraise their own work and that of others slow the rate of learning.

117. The pupils respond very positively to the good role models and encouragement provided by staff. They compete fairly and co-operate enthusiastically with a partner or as part of a team.

118. A good range of extra-curricular activities substantially enhances the curriculum for pupils in Key Stage 2. These include fitness club, cricket, football, cross-country and netball. The school enjoys considerable success in local football, netball and cross-country leagues, in athletics, cricket festivals and in local swimming galas. It benefits from close links with Stoke City football club, which provide coaching sessions for boys and girls.

119. The school has recently acquired a good range of small apparatus, which supports the teaching and learning of games skills very well. There is a shortage of larger equipment for gymnastics.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

120. Pupils' attainment at the ages of seven and eleven meets the requirements of the Local Agreed Syllabus and exceeds them in several areas, notably in learning from religion and in the quality of written work. Standards have improved since the previous inspection when they were judged to be satisfactory.

121. By the age of seven most pupils have a clear knowledge of the main beliefs of the Christian faith and a good basic knowledge of Islam and Judaism. They are familiar with the key features of a Christian church and can explain accurately how it differs from a synagogue. They understand the importance of prayer and praise in morning assemblies and compose their own prayers with care. Pupils talk confidently about holy books and special customs and practices. For example, after a lesson in which a visiting rabbi told a Year 2 class how Queen Esther saved her people from destruction, pupils could explain accurately why and how the Jewish festival of Purim is celebrated. Pupils' written work is of a high standard and the wide range of writing makes a very good

contribution to the development of their literacy skills as well as providing excellent opportunities for exploring the spiritual side of life. For example, pupils explain the reasons for prayer – ‘for people to get better and to help people to be brave’, and reflect on their own need for forgiveness – ‘for being bossy at home and shouting at my mum’. Higher attaining pupils write eloquently of how David’s thankfulness for God’s goodness inspired him to compose his psalms of praise.

122. By the age of eleven pupils are familiar with the important events in the life of Christ and they have a good understanding of Christian sacraments and spirituality. For example, they can relate the truths contained in the Beatitudes to present day life, and, in reflecting on the suffering and death of Christ, they write with sensitivity about their own experiences of losing people they love. Pupils also have deepened their knowledge of Islam and Judaism and have a good grasp of basic religious beliefs and rituals of worship in Hinduism. Written work is very well presented, often with attractive illustrations, as in the booklets on Hinduism produced by pupils in Year 6. Pupils are encouraged to write at length and a strength of the writing is the way in which both girls and boys express their feelings and ideas with confidence. For example, a pupil explains his ideas about God: ‘I think that God is a big man that can hold the universe in his hands. He made everything that lives. My opinion about God is that he is the best thing ever’.

123. Pupils’ attitudes and behaviour are usually very good. Most pupils enjoy the subject. They are receptive to ideas, and the majority respond thoughtfully in discussion. They show respect for religious artefacts and listen courteously to visiting speakers.

124. Teaching is good overall. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen and in one lesson teaching was very good. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection when some unsatisfactory teaching was recorded. Teachers have a sound knowledge and understanding of the subject and use resources well. For example, the visits to local churches and the talks given by local clergy enable pupils to gain first hand knowledge about beliefs and ways of worship in the different Christian churches and in Judaism. Teachers encourage the development of pupils’ moral awareness through discussions on consideration of the feelings of others and on codes of behaviour such as the Ten Commandments. Pupils learn how to improve their written work from the very helpful comments which teachers write at the end of each assignment.

125. Management of the subject is good and there is clear educational direction. The co-ordinator has worked effectively in supporting teachers in their lesson planning and in helping them to feel confident with the learning materials. Resources have improved but they are still too limited. The subject has a high status in the school and morning assemblies make a strong contribution to pupils’ religious education.