

INSPECTION REPORT

ABRAM BRYN GATES PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bamfurlong, Wigan

LEA area: Wigan

Unique reference number: 106414

Headteacher: Mr. C. Sheekey

Reporting inspector: Geoff Cooper
223647

Dates of inspection: 27th – 30th March 2000

Inspection number: 187881

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Junior and infant

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Lily Lane
Bamfurlong
Wigan

Postcode: WN2 5JT

Telephone number: 01942 866392

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr. J. Clegg

Date of previous inspection: April 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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		Design and technology	The school's results and pupils' achievements
		Music	Leadership and management
			Key Issues for action
Marilyn Riding	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			Pupils' welfare, health and safety
			Partnership with parents and carers
Jean Fisher	Team inspector	Mathematics	
		Geography	
		History	
		Physical education	
		Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage	
		Equality of opportunity	
Jim Hall	Team inspector	English	Teaching and learning
		Art	
		Information technology	
Georgina Lewis	Team inspector	Religious education	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
		Special educational needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Abram Bryn Gates Primary School is situated in the borough of Wigan in an area of former coal mining and textile industries. The school is about the same size as others of its type with 208 boys and girls aged 4 to 11 on roll. At present there are 113 boys and 95 girls. All pupils are of white United Kingdom heritage. About twenty per cent of pupils are entitled to a free school meal, a figure broadly in line with the national average. Approximately eighteen per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs, also broadly in line with the national average. Of these pupils two have a statement of special need. No pupils are identified as speaking English as an additional language. Attainment on entry to the school is below that of children of similar age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. Although standards are currently below the level expected for pupils of this age, its standards are high in other areas of school life, for example, attitudes, behaviour and personal development. Teaching is good. During the week of inspection there was no unsatisfactory teaching and a significant proportion of teaching was good or very good. Leadership is good and the headteacher's qualities are held in great esteem by parents. Management of the school is satisfactory. This is a low cost school. Taking into account overall effectiveness and cost per pupil, the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Relationships within the school are excellent
- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards the school and their behaviour is very good: within the quality of learning, pupils are interested in their work, concentrating well and developing good independence skills
- Teaching is good: a consistent strength of the school is teachers' skill in the management of pupils and their use of subject knowledge
- There is good provision for the personal development of pupils: spiritual, moral and social provision is very good
- The partnership with parents is very good – parents hold the school in high regard
- There is effective strategic use of existing resources and finance
- The school provides well for pupils with special educational needs

What could be improved

- Unsatisfactory standards of attainment, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and information technology
- the use of assessment to plan for higher attainment and the way the school reports to parents have some shortcomings
- the role of the subject manager is insufficiently developed to provide a clear focus on the standards of the school and what needs to be done to raise attainment
- some aspects of resourcing are unsatisfactory: for computers and outdoor play for children under five
- while development planning has some strengths, its weakness is that it is too broad to give clarity of focus to important priority targets

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 previously inspected in April, 1996. It has improved the quality of assessment, particularly in English, mathematics and science, although there is still room to improve the use of assessment to promote higher standards. The recent building programme has successfully resolved accommodation deficiencies. Policies and schemes of work are in place for all curriculum areas. The school has improved standards of attainment in design and technology and in art. There has been a decline in standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science, much of which can be attributed to major disruption during the building programme and to a considerable change in the characteristics of the school. The school has maintained, and improved, the provision for personal development and this has resulted in a very good quality of behaviour and personal maturity among pupils. Provision for multicultural awareness is satisfactory but not well developed. The quality of teaching is always at least satisfactory and a significant proportion of teaching is good or better. Good leadership has ensured a very positive ethos within the school.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	D	C	E	D	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	D	C	E	E	
science	D	D	E	D	

At the end of both key stages, the school's results in 1999 were well below average compared with schools nationally. These results are not characteristic of the school. A decline in the results for 1999 is due to the nature of that particular class, a significant number of pupils joining the school late in their primary years and the effect of disruption caused by the re-building of the school. Results in previous years have been much better in Key Stage 1, especially in reading and writing. Key Stage 2 results were below average in 1997 but English and mathematics results were broadly in line with national average in 1998. Compared with similar schools, standards in 1999 were below average in English and science and well below average in mathematics. In response to lower standards in mathematics the school has revised its mathematics course to give better step by step experiences for pupils. Although there was a decline in standards in 1999, over four years the school results have improved broadly in line with the national trend. There are inconsistent and small differences in the standards achieved by boys and girls over the years. The differences were more marked in 1999 when boys achieved better standards than girls in both key stages. The school's targets are modest in national terms but challenge the current standards of the school. The school is on track to meet its targets for 2000. In the work seen, attainment in the core subjects is improving but still below the standard expected. There is room for further improvement as standards are not as high as they should be. Current standards in information technology are below the level expected.

The school has not been able to make use of the previous computer room during the building programme.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very positive about their life in school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The good behaviour of pupils is a considerable enhancement to the quality of learning.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils work well together and are very responsible in what they do.
Attendance	Satisfactory: attendance is broadly in line with national averages. There has been a slight decline in attendance but unauthorised absence has been reduced.

THIS AREA OF PUPILS' DEVELOPMENT IS A CONSISTENT STRENGTH.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	good	satisfactory	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.

The quality of teaching is good overall. Teaching was very good in 27.5 % of lessons and good in a further 35% of lessons. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching of English and mathematics is satisfactory. A consistent strength of teachers' skills is very good pupil management and this leads to good qualities of interest, concentration and independence in pupils' learning. Teachers make good use of their subject knowledge. Teaching makes a good impact on the quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs, especially in Key Stage 2. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is sound and beginning to have an impact on standards of attainment.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school teaches the full National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. There is no precise time audit for curriculum provision. Some subjects have insufficient curriculum time and others have too much.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The school has recently revised its policy and provision. Although this has not yet had time to impact fully on the practice of the school, special educational needs pupils are well catered for. This endorses the opinion of parents expressed before the inspection.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. There is very good provision for spiritual, moral and social development that impacts on the quality of relationships and behaviour. The provision for cultural development is satisfactory. The provision for personal development is a significant strength of the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. This is a caring school where a high priority is placed on pastoral welfare. Assessment procedures are satisfactory but there is room for more focused use of assessment to promote higher standards.

The school has a very good partnership with parents. The pre-inspection meeting with parents and the results of the parents' questionnaire indicate their very strong support for the work of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good leadership. Satisfactory management. The headteacher has the full confidence of governors, staff, parents and pupils. The role of senior staff has shortcomings. There is scope for further development of delegated roles of those with management responsibilities. Leadership and management have created a very good working environment in the school with high quality relationships. Staffing and learning resources are satisfactory. The accommodation of the school is good.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors discharge their statutory duties effectively in overseeing finance, staffing and the curriculum. They are less well placed to judge the challenge faced by the school and to support it in managing this. The school does not apply the principles of best value extensively, although self-evaluation is a step in this direction.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school is aware of the need to raise its standards of attainment. A recent self-evaluation exercise has given valuable insight into its performance indicating ways in which it can move forward. The school has good data that can be used to further develop in this direction.
The strategic use of resources	Good. All resources are used effectively.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• children like school and make good progress• teaching and leadership and management are good• school has high expectations and achieves good behaviour• that school is approachable and works closely with parents• that school promotes positive values	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• provision of homework• provision of extra-curricular activities

At their pre-inspection meeting and in letters to the registered inspector parents expressed their confidence in the school and, in particular, the way stability has been maintained throughout the building project. A minority of parents had a concern about the provision of homework. Homework is provided on a regular basis although the inspection team judges that the school could make better use of this to support pupils' learning. A few parents felt that there was little provision of extra-curricular activities. The inspection team identifies an adequate range of extra-curricular activities, particularly in sport. There is currently no extra-curricular provision in the arts, for example, for music activities. This aspect of extra-curricular provision has been made in the past but has proved difficult during the extensive building work.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. When they enter full time schooling the attainment of children is very wide but overall it is below what could be expected for those of the same age. The attainment of the current group of children is rather better than that of those in the past. Teaching in the reception class is good and children are well on target to achieve the desirable learning outcomes for children by the time they are five.

2. The results of standard national tests for pupils in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in 1999 indicate attainment that is well below the national average. When compared with similar schools, attainment is below average in writing in Key Stage 1 and well below average in reading and mathematics. For pupils in Key Stage 2, attainment in English and science is below average and well below average in mathematics. These results are not reflective of the standards attained during the past four years. During this period, school results have risen broadly in line with the national rate of improvement. In the school year 1999 there was a significant change in the characteristics of the school, a large number of pupils were admitted late in their school career to both key stages and the school suffered severe disruption due to a major re-building of the school. Additionally, a higher proportion than is usual of seven year olds and eleven year olds who took the national tests were identified as having special educational needs. Attainment in the school has varied widely over the past four years. It is only in the most recent year that there has been such a great decline in standards achieved. Until 1999, the differences between the attainment of boys and girls have been inconsistent and usually relatively small. However, results in 1999 revealed that boys performed better than girls did to quite a significant degree. A higher proportion of girls was identified as having special educational needs than is usual in the school. Gender differences were present for both key stages, although the difference in science in Key Stage 1 teacher assessments was small. The school has no pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds.

3. The findings of inspection week indicate attainment a little higher than that assessed through standard national tests.

4. For pupils at the end of Key Stage 1, attainment in the subjects of English, mathematics and science is below the standard expected of seven-year-olds. Within English, speaking and listening is in line with that standard. Listening skills are particularly well developed. Attainment in information technology is below the expected standard. At present there is insufficient use of information technology across the curriculum and the school is not able to offer dedicated lessons in a computer suite. Standards in the foundation subjects of art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education are broadly in line with those expected of pupils of similar age. However, it is not possible to judge whether attainment in religious education is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus as insufficient evidence is available.

5. At the end of Key Stage 2, attainment in English, mathematics and science is below the standard expected of eleven-year-olds. As in Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2 pupils have well developed listening skills and their attainment in speaking and listening is in line with the national standard. Attainment in information technology is below the expected standard. Much of this is due to the fact that the school lost its dedicated computer room during the building programme. It is due to update its information technology provision next term

through National Grid for Learning funding. Standards in art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education are broadly in line with those expected of pupils of similar age. Attainment in religious education is in line with expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.

6. Several factors contribute towards the small rise in standards during inspection week. The school is now established in its new and redeveloped building. Pupils and teachers are able to concentrate on the teaching and learning process, something they have not been able to do for 18 months. The school has been very successful in integrating the large number of pupils admitted during that time. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Much of the improvement in the progress of these pupils can be attributed to additional school provision through recently revised procedures and enhanced teaching and non-teaching staffing. There is an added impact from the national strategies in literacy and numeracy for all pupils. Although standards in literacy and numeracy are still not as high as they might be, they are improving. A lack of brisk and incisive writing skills hinders progress in science, although teachers design valuable practical tasks that challenge pupils and this has supported improvement. The school has agreed targets with the local authority that are modest in national terms but challenge the current standards of the school. The inspection team believes that the school is on track to achieve its targets for summer 2000.

7. The school can identify some improvement in standards since the previous inspection, although attainment in English, mathematics, science and information technology has declined. Standards have improved in design and technology and in art through both key stages. The school's results in standard national tests have varied widely from year to year: whilst at present they are below the national average, there are occasions when they have been above the national average.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Relationships within the school are excellent. The school functions as an orderly and caring community with all adults providing very effective role models for the pupils. The school is well thought of in the local community. Parents appreciate its flexibility and accessibility. Comments from parents at the pre-inspection meeting for parents indicate that the school helps children learn, be secure and confident by creating a positive environment. Pupils can be seen caring for and supporting each other. They are confident, articulate and willing to talk about themselves and their feelings. They are not afraid to ask for help if it is needed.

9. Pupils are keen to come to the school. They enjoy learning and are soon involved in a range of activities. Pupils who have transferred from other schools say that what they like about the school is being able to learn. Pupils show initiative, eagerly volunteering to help with tasks such as litter picking, looking after the overhead projector in assembly and organising the tuck shop.

10. Behaviour throughout the school is very good which considerably supports and enhances learning. Pupils move around the school in an orderly manner. They are courteous, polite and helpful at all times. Friendship groups look after each other. Pupils themselves discourage unfriendly actions in the playground. Pupils rise well to the high level of expectation of behaviour. Members of the local community speak highly of the behaviour of pupils outside school.

11. The excellent relationships of pupils enable them to work positively both individually and co-operatively. Pupils show a high level of care and trust both for each other and especially for younger pupils and for those who find learning difficult. In reception, a pupil helped another to finish a task and in Year 3 a pupil described how she had helped a friend who was finding something difficult to learn. Pupils who have found school life difficult in other schools talked about well they were welcomed in this school and how secure they now feel in their school life. This is a comment echoed by a number of parents.

12. Attendance at the school is satisfactory. It is broadly in line with the national average. It has fallen slightly since the previous inspection but unauthorised absence has improved recently. Registration is orderly. It is sometimes impersonal but this is a response to the need to be brisk and not to lose teaching time. Any latecomers are recorded by office staff at the school door. There is satisfactory monitoring of absent and sick pupils by both staff and parents. Punctuality is satisfactory. Most lessons begin on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. The quality of teaching is good. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed during inspection week, which maintains the standard of teaching seen at the last inspection. Some very good teaching was observed in both key stages. A consistent strength of teachers throughout the school is their management of pupils, which is reflected in the excellent relationships and very good behaviour and attitudes of pupils.

14. Teachers throughout the school are secure in their knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy. The teaching of English is satisfactory with some good and very good teaching in the reception class and in Years 1, 3 and 6 where work is well matched to pupils' abilities and the plenary sessions are very well used to reinforce learning. Pupils are enthused by inventive activities and increasingly join in the discussions as their confidence in their knowledge increases. In other classes, however, activities and work set is not always sufficiently targeted to take account of the wide range of attainment amongst pupils, particularly in writing skills. Teachers develop pupils' confidence in speaking well by well-structured discussions and pupils are encouraged to listen carefully and make relevant contributions.

15. The teaching of mathematics is satisfactory overall with some good teaching evident. Understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy is secure and planning for lessons is at least satisfactory, and sometimes good. Teachers give pupils clear presentations of mathematical concepts in class sessions but this is not always supported by the challenge provided to pupils in ensuing activities and tasks that are suitable for their ability. The school has recently been able to increase its teaching staff at the end of Key Stage 1 so that there is additional provision for small group teaching.

16. The under fives are well taught. Lessons are brisk and purposeful. Children are kept busy with interesting tasks. As a result they concentrate for long periods of time. Management of children is suitably firm, characterised by good relationships. Teacher knowledge is used well to promote all aspects of the areas of learning for children of this age and also to provide a bridge into the earliest stages of the National Curriculum programmes of study. Good use is made of on going assessment and there is good provision for children identified as having learning difficulties.

17. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory, with three out of ten lessons being good or very good. Teachers manage pupils well creating an industrious working atmosphere in classes in which pupils are productive and work at a good pace. Pupils in lower Key Stage 1 make good progress in letter blends through interesting class activities which are tackled with enthusiasm and enjoyment. They are challenged in their work in mathematics and English through careful questioning and activities that are appropriate to the pupils' needs. Pupils at the end of this key stage reinforce their knowledge well at the beginning of lessons through careful questioning and purposeful activities designed to link previous learning to the current lesson. For example, in a whole class session on number work, the teacher leads pupils well through odd and even number recognition and multiples with a high level of participation. There is a very broad range of attainment in Key Stage 1 classes. Although there are some different tasks for pupils of different ability, these are not always fine tuned to fully challenge the learning needs of all pupils.

18. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is good. It is never less than satisfactory: over 70 per cent of lessons are good or very good. Planning for lessons is mostly good with clear objectives identified and pupils are aware of what they being asked to do. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure. At the beginning and end of this key stage, subject knowledge is good or very good and teachers engage pupils very well in class discussions with enthusiasm, insight and humour. For example in Year 3, pupils increasingly participate in questioning on plurals and begin to suggest their own words ending in "y" or "f", making the plurals accurately. In Year 6, pupils answer challenging questions in positive and negative numbers through well-focused, lively discussion led by the teacher. However, teachers' subject knowledge in information technology is less secure, and pupils across the key stage are not given opportunities to develop their skills and understanding in modelling and data handling to a level which is suitable for their age. In classes in the middle of Key Stage 2, whilst pupils are engaged thoroughly in discussions, and questions by the teachers are well structured, the level of work is sometimes inappropriate in mathematics and English. This is evident where activities and themes are insufficiently targeted on the weaknesses and strengths of pupils.

19. The direct teaching of information technology seen is satisfactory. Pupils in upper Key Stage 1 increase their level of skill in word processing through well-focused activities. The teacher ensures that concentration is sustained by well-timed individual intervention and relevant prompting. Subject knowledge is sound, enabling the teacher to respond promptly to pupils' queries in the use of the keys to amend text on screen. However, apart from word processing, there is little evidence of the use of information technology throughout the school in other lessons to raise attainment in the information technology programmes of studies. It was not possible to see enough teaching in many foundation subjects to make an informed judgement about its quality and impact on pupils' learning apart from physical education, where teaching is satisfactory in both key stages. However, in the few lessons seen, class management is generally good and teachers' planning in these subjects is sound.

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

20. The quality and range of learning opportunities in the school is satisfactory. The curriculum is broad and sufficiently balanced. A system of delivery through themes or topic work is used to deliver the foundation subjects. There is no curriculum time audit to ensure adequate coverage of all subjects. Currently there is no system to monitor the way in which the delivery in some areas of the foundation subjects is met to ensure that adequate opportunity is given for the humanities: geography and history. Overall, the school meets

the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum. There are insufficient identifiable learning opportunities at Key Stage 1 for religious education. There is additional support for the religious education curriculum through assembly themes. During the building programme, the school has been obliged to take its computer room out of operation. This has made it difficult for it to address the programmes of study in information technology. Provision for information technology is due to be upgraded with support from the National Grid for Learning project.

21. A valuable planning structure includes long, medium and short term curriculum planning. The weekly plans introduced in the autumn term 1999 are a useful tool in tracking curriculum delivery of the foundation subjects and religious education at Key Stage 1. Policies and curriculum schemes of work are in place to support the step by step development of what pupils should know, be able to do and understand. This is a better situation than at the time of previous inspection. Some policy documents are elderly. The school is aware of the need to review regularly and has planned time for this to be done.

22. At both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 the strategies for developing literacy and numeracy skills are satisfactory with some examples of good practice in providing tasks matched to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. Topic work approach gives opportunities to integrate science and foundation subjects. However, there is no regular audit to ensure that all pupils receive a balanced diet by the end of each key stage.

23. There is provision for extra curricular activity in sport, with an enthusiastic football team, netball and rugby teams. The football match during the inspection was well supported by parents. The school also has teams in swimming, cross-country, athletics, rounders cricket, volleyball, basketball and 'high fives'. At the time of the inspection there was no provision in music, although the school has had a choir and musicians in the past. The building programme has disrupted some of the activities.

24. The school has an equal opportunities policy. This is not always followed in its full detail. Occasionally pupils are withdrawn from assembly for other activities. Assembly makes a valuable contribution to the spiritual, moral and social development of all pupils. One of the assemblies seen, led by a member of a local Christian group, was inspirational. The pupils' response to the person and the message was a shining example of the importance placed on worship and its place in delivering spiritual, moral and social development.

25. The school has policies for sex education and child protection. A home and school agreement has been developed recently. The delivery of health education is well supported by external health providers; an example was the input from the dental nurse at Key Stage 1. There are subject links with science and religious education. No pupils are withdrawn from religious education or sex education.

26. The community is involved in many aspects of the school; local clergy have been involved in support for religious education and also assemblies. Parents are involved as class room helpers and a programme has been in place to train them. One parent has graduated to becoming an employee of the authority as a consequence of the initial involvement at the school.

27. The curricular requirements of pupils on the special educational needs register are well met. Pupils are supported in class or withdrawn on a group basis. Provision to meet the code of practice and the pupils' individual education plans is in place. The needs of pupils with statements are met in a variety of ways; in class support and individual out of

class provision. The documentation of pupils on the special educational needs register is very good and there are strategies to review and monitor them regularly. The review process is thorough and ensures the movement of children onto and off the register. The use of a standard format for individual education plans has helped to give confidence to staff less experienced in special educational needs assessment processes. The provision of in-class support at Key Stage 2 and for children under five is good with teachers and non-teaching assistants working closely to provide for pupils with special needs. At Key Stage 1 it is satisfactory. So far, there has been no opportunity to evaluate the new staffing arrangement for the end of this key stage.

28. Provision for spiritual development is very good. The act of collective worship plays a significant role in developing pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. It also makes a major contribution to the delivery of religious education in the school. Pupils' participation in the assemblies observed showed a clear demonstration of the commitment to the development of the spiritual welfare of children. The teaching of religious education observed was well planned and reflected on pupils' past learning. The response of pupils to the assemblies and the lesson clearly demonstrate the caring ethos being fostered in the school. Pupils examined feelings and showed a mature spiritual understanding. They expressed delight at the choice of a well-loved hymn and awe when shown a beautiful house and garden.

29. Provision for moral development is very good. Expectations of good behaviour are high and pupils respond very well to these; older pupils support younger pupils in their behaviour, reminding them how to behave. Standards of behaviour both inside and outside the classroom are very good. Pupils clearly know what is acceptable and what is unacceptable behaviour.

30. Pupils' social development is very good; older pupils demonstrate a caring attitude toward younger pupils. They are courteous and polite in their relationships with adults. Relationships are harmonious throughout the school and adults set a good role model. There is a high level of mutual respect between adults and pupils. In discussion with pupils, all were open in their conversations, expressing their views with confidence.

31. Cultural development is satisfactory. The religious education curriculum at Key Stage 2 teaches an understanding of faiths other than Christianity, for example, the faith communities of Islam and Judaism. Some aspects of physical education and music focus on promoting an understanding of a range of cultures. For example, the Heartstone Project, which supports physical education, religious education and health education, compares Western and Indian cultures. Inspection week music in year 3 and 4 was planned around an African theme. Topic work provides opportunities to develop knowledge of local culture, for example, in history and geography. Visits such as that to Tatton Park give a practical approach to learning about the past.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

32. The school continues to be the happy place with a caring ethos found during the previous inspection. Its strength can be recognised in the way teachers, support staff and parents work together to achieve a safe and secure environment. The teachers and support staff have a caring attitude towards the pupils. They know pupils and their families well, and make every effort to inform them of their children's welfare. The headteacher and other members of staff are at the school gate morning and evening to talk to parents about their children. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are not allowed to leave the school until a parent or carer arrives.

33. Relationships between teachers, support staff and pupils are outstanding. There is a Child Protection policy. Staff are aware of their responsibilities; though not all staff have had recent in service training on child protection. There are good arrangements for dealing with sick children. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported. Behaviour throughout the school is good. Pupils move around in an orderly manner. They are well disciplined and good behaviour is characteristic of them. The school has high expectations of pupils and their social conduct.

34. Parents co-operate with the school in the promotion of good behaviour and are encouraged to contact the school should a problem arise. Supervision of children during lunch time and other breaks is good. Satisfactory procedures are in place to promote good attendance. Staff telephone parents to check on absent pupils. Health and safety regulations are monitored through monthly contract meetings. The school is clean and well looked after, a great improvement compared with the previous inspection. Aspects of school safety, pointed out at monitoring visits, are systematically attended to.

35. The monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development is satisfactory. Procedures are in place for assessing pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science. Assessment for science is very thorough in Key Stage 1 and developing in Key Stage 2. The literacy and numeracy programmes, which are being used by all staff, provide a clear guide to assessment and future planning. Assessment in other subjects is not as well developed. The school has identified this in the school development plan as area for improvement. Record keeping is satisfactory and in the area of special educational needs it is good. Parents are kept well informed of pupils' progress. Parents value their regular meetings with teachers and the annual report on the progress of their children. The school is about to change the format of reports to parents, to ensure that each subject of the National Curriculum is reported separately.

36. No clear use is made of assessment information to develop plans for what needs to be learned next. However, this is an area identified by the school for improvement. Satisfactory use of assessment is made to group pupils within the class and to target pupils needing additional adult support. However, the provision of different tasks for pupils of different attainment are not consistently well planned throughout the school. The curriculum planning process is still being developed and it is hoped to incorporate similar strategies to those used in the core subject areas to improve the relationship between curriculum planning and assessment. The use of topics and themes for most foundation subjects makes the monitoring and supporting of academic progress complicated. Where subjects are not identified clearly through the topic it is difficult to say what progress a pupils has made in the subject. There are some individual examples of good practice within the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

37. The views of parents' and carers of the school are that it is an excellent school. There is a high level of satisfaction and agreement that the school provides positive attitudes to learning, children like school and make good progress.

38. The partnership between parents and the school is very good and is a real strength to the school. Parents feel they have an open relationship with the school, which responds to their needs. For example a third parents' evening has been introduced so that any parent can come and discuss problems. The school has a flexible approach in that parents can visit the school at any time. Visits are made to parents before children start school and

parents attend class assemblies and school productions. Parents and pupils work together to put on an art, craft and technology exhibition during the year. The impact of parents' involvement with the school is good. An increasing number of parents support teachers in the classroom. The home school agreement is in place. The parents' questionnaire shows that a large majority of parents are satisfied with the work of the school but a small number would like more consistent provision of homework. Parents are involved in the "Abram Bryn Gates Association", organising fund raising events for the school.

39. The level of information given to parents is satisfactory. Parents are kept informed of their children's progress through two formal evenings for parents and one informal evening to discuss the progress of their child. There are also meetings before pupils take standard tests and a "meet the teacher" occasion at the beginning of the school year. School holds meetings with parents on home/school agreement, literacy and numeracy strategies and on other curriculum matters as well as the governors' annual report to parents and discussions on children's annual progress report. Parents of children with special educational needs are involved in the review process. At present, a newsletter is being organised by pupils and members of the parents' committee. Parents are satisfied with the written reports they receive about their child's progress. They say that they value the comments made by teachers. However, the school is aware that these reports do not report all subjects of the curriculum separately. A new format is being prepared for the next round of reporting to parents.

40. At the pre-inspection meeting with parents and when interviewed, all parents spoke highly of the quality of relationships between themselves and the staff. They expressed appreciation of the accessibility of staff and their openness and approachability. A parent who described the school as a "family institution" summed this up. A number of parents wrote letters expressing their pleasure in the way the school receives and integrates new pupils and in the way special educational needs are handled.

41. The contribution of parents to children's learning at school and home is good. Parents support the school by getting involved informally in their children's learning. Parents talk to their children about what they are learning. At the parent's meeting one mother described how her daughter had explained to her father (an electrician) how circuits worked. Another example of the relationship between home and school was the model brought from home and built with help of a parent. It was very important to the pupil that she had an opportunity to talk about this to the rest of the school. There was much agreement at the parent's meeting that learning is fun.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

42. Leadership and management in the school are satisfactory. The headteacher provides good leadership through the clarity of his vision for the school and the way in which he communicates this effectively to staff, pupils, parents and members of the governing body. It is this sense of community and shared purpose that has carried the school through a very difficult period of disruption. The aims of the school are clear and well delivered in practice. It has particularly high values in the areas of relationships and personal and social standards. Parents give much praise to the school in this. Responsibility is not well delegated in the school. For example, the role of the co-ordinator does not involve classroom monitoring, except in literacy and numeracy, the regular and systematic scrutiny of planning and pupils' work. This restricts the whole school evaluation of its standards. However, senior staff have recently completed a school self evaluation exercise which will help to take the school forward.

43. The governing body is committed to the school, ensuring that it fulfils its statutory duties through the receipt of good advice from the local authority. Governors are heavily involved in strategic decision making in relation to staffing and finance and in this way help to move the school forward. They are less well involved in overseeing the work of the school in detail. For example, there has been little classroom visiting by governors to see progress in literacy and numeracy and the first draft of their annual report to parents is prepared on their behalf. This does not put them in a strong position to give full support to the school in the challenges it faces.

44. The school development plan has strengths and weaknesses. Its strengths are two fold: it is the product of work by all members of staff with subject responsibilities and it is used as a working document which is added to as the school year progresses. Its weakness lies mainly in that it is not sufficiently selective in the priorities identified: they are too many and too general. As a result, evaluation of success is not well focused. The plan has no section that identifies criteria for success, time scales and cost implications. However, within the limitations of the plan the school has some success in ensuring that developments do take place. The high quality of relationships within the school supports it in its need to improve and develop. All adults working in school have a shared commitment to its well being. No newly qualified teachers have joined the school staff in recent years. The school has adopted the local authority model for induction of new staff when this is necessary. The school takes part in the initial training of teachers and provides good experience for students training as nursery nurses.

45. The school has good control over its budget and the governors are well informed. There are good systems for effective control of spending. The budget is well balanced in its distribution of funds to staffing, resources and accommodation needs. Good use is made of an efficient peripatetic bursar service that safeguards the payment of school costs. Finance is suitably deployed to support school priorities and developments. The school is clear about its use of specific grants, for example, in the support of pupils with special educational needs. The school is not yet making good use of new technology. Although computers are frequently used in the classroom, the building programme has meant the loss of the room formerly used as a computer suite. However, there is a useful development plan to put into place when the school begins to benefit from National Grid for Learning funding in the next few months. Some members of staff use new technology for their administrative work although this is not an extensive feature of the work of the school.

46. The school has an appropriate number of qualified and experienced teachers. Some co-ordinators do not have qualifications in the subjects they lead. Co-ordinators are identified for all core and foundation curriculum areas. One teacher has responsibility for both English and mathematics and this is a heavy workload in the light of recent initiatives in these subjects. The provision of suitably qualified and experienced support staff is satisfactory, and support for pupils with special educational needs is good, particularly in lower Key Stage 2, where support is effectively targeted on groups and individuals, contributing much to the advancement of pupils' learning.

47. The accommodation is good. There has been a substantial building and refurbishment programme carried out since the last inspection and the overall quality of the environment provided for pupils has improved significantly. The new Key Stage 1 block is spacious, clean and light and the addition of a second hall or gymnasium is a notable feature. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have the benefit of more space in classrooms, better storage facilities, and a comfortable, bright environment in the library.

48. The resources that the school provides are satisfactory. There has been an

improvement in the stock of books provided for pupils since the last inspection, particularly in Key Stage 2, where the availability of both fiction and non-fiction books has risen significantly. The newly established library has sufficient relevant, up to date books and classroom collections are sound. Key Stage 1 has a small, but easily accessible, library in its own part of the school. Resources in most other subjects are satisfactory with some exceptions. There are insufficient artefacts for history and in reception there is a mismatch of chairs to tables in some cases. The under fives area lacks large wheeled toys to develop gross motor skills. Provision of resources in art is enhanced by considerable local authority backup, for example through visiting artists.

49. Although the school has not yet begun to formally use the principles of best value, it does as a matter of course endeavour to get best value in distributing its finances. It is a low cost school in comparison with schools nationally. It is aware of the need to compete in the standards its sets. It can point to significant improvements since its previous inspection, although there is still work to do. Standards have risen in some areas. Although there is a decline in standards in other areas, the four-year trend is broadly in line with national improvement. Assessment is now better than it was. There is better provision of book resources. The quality of teaching has improved. The key issue regarding accommodation and safety has been completely resolved with the building programme. Although there needs to be continued review and revision, there are policies and schemes of work for all subjects. Further improvements have been made in developing the partnership with parents and raising the standard of relationships throughout the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

50. The headteacher, governors and staff should:

- (1) raise standards of attainment (Paragraphs: 2, 4, 5, 63, 70, 79), particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and information technology by:
 - building further on the impact which national strategies are having on standards (Paragraphs: 6, 68, 71);
 - making more effective use of assessment to plan what pupils need to learn next (Paragraphs: 35, 36, 77, 86);
 - making more use of subject co-ordinators and other senior staff to oversee standards, teaching and learning (Paragraph: 42);
 - being more precise about the most urgent school priorities, constructing the school development plan against those priorities (Paragraph: 44);

In addition the school should consider the following minor issues:

- the provision resources for information technology and for outdoor play for children under five (Paragraphs: 45, 48, 60, 106)
- the revision of annual reports to parents (Paragraphs: 35, 39)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	40
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	27.5	35	37.5	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	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	208
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	42

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	37

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	39
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.0
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	18	7	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	15	13
	Girls	5	6	6
	Total	18	21	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	72 (84)	84 (87)	76 (77)
	National	82 (77)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	15	13
	Girls	6	6	5
	Total	19	21	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (87)	84 (87)	72 (87)
	National	82 (87)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	13	18	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	8	10
	Girls	11	5	12
	Total	19	13	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	61 (72)	42 (57)	71 (61)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	7	8
	Girls	6	4	6
	Total	11	11	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	35 (60)	35 (64)	45 (53)
	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	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	208
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.89
Average class size	29.71

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	52.5

Financial information

Financial year	1998/1999
	£
Total income	311 812
Total expenditure	314 451
Expenditure per pupil	1 436
Balance brought forward from previous year	23 303
Balance carried forward to next year	20 664

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	164
Number of questionnaires returned	87

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	29	7	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	56	41	2	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	57	40	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	47	17	4	6
The teaching is good.	69	27	1	2	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	70	26	2	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	92	7	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	82	18	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	76	24	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	86	13	0	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	68	27	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	48	4	2	7

Other issues raised by parents

Parents expressed appreciation of the manner in which the school has managed a difficult period of disruption during the building programme and in the way a large group of new pupils have been successfully integrated into all year groups in the school. The inspection team agrees that this has been managed well.

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

51. Thirty children are admitted to the reception class at the beginning of the school year in which they are five years old. Because the school year begins in August, the children born in that month are three when they enter the reception class. At the time of the inspection, there were nineteen children attending full time in the reception class, eleven of whom were below statutory school age. All the children have a full year in the class, prior to the National Curriculum Years 1 and 2. No comparison with the previous inspection can be made, as the last inspection report did not include a section on the children under five.

52. Satisfactory induction procedures are in place to support the children as they begin their education in school. An open evening for parents, when parents learn about the work in the reception class, helps the children to make a positive start to their school life. There are follow up home visits. There are three formal open evenings during the school year, but parents are welcome at a mutually convenient time to consult with the teacher. Advice on the education of their children is outlined in a useful handbook, which is currently being updated. On entry, the children attend school half time for between two and four weeks, after which they attend full time. The children needing learning support are identified early, are given good support and as a consequence, make good progress towards the expectations for their age group. There is no official early years co-ordinator, but the class teacher has adopted the responsibility and works successfully, and with commitment to provide an appropriate curriculum to raise the children's levels of achievement. There is good ongoing assessment of the children, beginning with a baseline test, which showed the attainment of these children to be below what is expected at this age. In relation to their levels of initial attainment, most boys and girls make good progress from their starting point when they begin school. The classroom provision is appropriate for the needs of the children, but there is a lack of provision of large out-door equipment such as wheeled toys and climbing frames. The desks and chairs are unsuitable for these children.

53. The personal and social education of children under five is very good. By the time they are five, most children are on course to exceed the standards expected for their age. Children, including those with special educational needs, make good gains in their learning in relation to their levels of initial attainment. The promotion of language and literacy skills is given an appropriate amount of time, and planning is clear, detailed and focussed. The teaching is good. In good and very good practice the teacher has a very good knowledge of the educational needs of young children, defines and maintains limits of appropriate behaviour, and establishes an ordered routine, which offers security to young children. This has a positive effect on children's learning, their rate of progress, behaviour and self-esteem. There are very positive attitudes, a highly developed sense of morality and a work ethic, which permeates the classroom. This is the result of sensitive teaching by the teacher and the classroom assistant both of whom are experienced in the educational needs of young children. Children are happy to come to school. They enjoy a good relationship with adults, trust them quickly, feel secure and become more confident in their attitude and work. The teacher uses praise effectively and demonstrates her awareness of the personal needs of the children by providing opportunities to develop their self-esteem, such as setting tasks, which are realistic, but challenging and rewarding. Adults set very good examples for the children to follow. They value the children's individuality, treat them with respect and expect them to play together co-operatively and behave responsibly when they work independently.

54. The children begin to develop an appropriate understanding of right and wrong and readily accept codes of conduct for example, when working together in group situations. The majority of children share, co-operate and show a well-developed sense of responsibility in their behaviour. Most work collaboratively, when and where appropriate, for example, in the various role-play settings, during sand play and in the range of tabletop activities. They sustain interest for an appropriate amount of time and concentrate during their tasks. They co-operate well when taking turns with number games and show independence and self-reliance in activities such copying the letters of the alphabet and when using the computer.

55. Personal skills are developed well. Appropriate talk and actions regarding personal hygiene and safety, are skilfully introduced. Children wash their hands at appropriate times, and most children change their clothes with little assistance and fold and store them neatly in their physical education bags before going into the hall for their physical education lessons. Opportunities are given for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, in a dance lesson, the children reflect on their enjoyment of the work at the end of the lesson. The children have positive attitudes to learning and an appropriate code of behaviour underpins their work in the classrooms, which allow the children to work in an atmosphere suitable for intellectual and creative effort. The local community is used for work in geography, and the children become familiar with well-known local heritage sites such as 'The Three Sisters Park' opposite the school.

56. By the time they are five most children are on course to attain standards that are in line with those expected in language and literacy. Children, including those with special educational needs, make good gains in their learning in relation to their levels of initial attainment. Records show that only two children were able to write their first names legibly on entry. Activities promote the literacy skills well, and the majority of children make good progress from their initial low attainment. For example, large sized letter and word trees made by the children, promote their reading skills and are used effectively when children need to refer to words and letters to support their individual writing. Teaching is good with some very good practice seen.

57. In speaking and listening most children listen very well and join in discussions sensibly, demonstrating their developing language skills. They listen attentively to the teacher and show a high level of interest in the Literacy Big Books such as 'Never Snap At A Bubble' used to familiarise them with story, text and punctuation. They recognise that print carries meaning, and make the connection between print and words. They begin to be aware of the use of full stops, capital letters and speech bubbles. The children's responsible attitudes and good behaviour reflect maturity, which is evident in their work and their relationships with other children. Most children have the vocabulary to express themselves clearly and can describe the features of living creatures such as a frog. Books are stored in an attractive library corner, but are not deployed to different areas of the classroom to enhance the opportunities for children's awareness of different types of reading. The children enjoy books. They show interest in them, handle them carefully and correctly and listen with enjoyment to stories, nursery rhymes, and poems. Their work shows well-developed skills of early writing. Many can copy or write their own names, legibly and show good pencil control. A few children copy-write under a sentence written by the teacher. The teacher gives children daily opportunities to use the computer programmes to reinforce reading skills and also sound. Tapes are introduced to develop listening skills.

58. By the time they are five the children are on course to attain standards in mathematical understanding which will be in line with those expected for this area of

learning. Children, including those with special educational needs, make good gains in their learning in relation to their levels of initial attainment. Teaching and planning is good and there is a wide range of curriculum opportunities to reinforce and consolidate mathematical knowledge and understanding as well as skills. Classroom activities promote the numeracy skills well, and the majority of children make good progress from their initial low attainment. For example, the children refer regularly to a number washing line and to a large picture of a caterpillar to count on and backwards to 20. The teacher takes every opportunity to develop children's matching, sorting and counting skills. Most pupils make good progress in counting and number skills and simple mathematical vocabulary and the teacher uses a variety of games to reinforce and consolidate these. They sing the number rhyme 'Alice the Camel', correctly, enthusiastically and with enjoyment. Most children count successfully to 20 in ones and twos and order numbers to 20. They use language satisfactorily to describe the names of shapes, such as a circle and a square. Every opportunity is given to pupils to develop pupils' mathematical skills and this promotes a high level of interest. Opportunities are given for the children to use the computer and many children use the mouse and cursor correctly.

59. By the age of five attainment in knowledge and understanding is at the expected level. Children, including those with special educational needs, make good gains in their learning in relation to their levels of initial attainment. Teaching is good. The teacher plans effectively, through topic work, to ensure that the children are introduced to history, geography, science, design and technology and information and communication technology. Planning shows that the work is progressively hard, yet interesting and appropriate for all abilities of children. Topics such as 'Ourselves', 'Homes' 'Celebrations' are used well. The teacher provides good opportunities for the children to explore and recognise features of living things. The children use the school field and take short walks to note the growth of bulbs and flowers in spring and observe the changes in their environment brought about by the onset of autumn.

60. By the age of five attainment in physical development is at the expected level. Children, including those with special educational needs, make good gains in their learning in relation to their levels of initial attainment. Teaching is good, and contributes to the very good behaviour of the children and the sound development of their physical education skills. There is good management of the children so that all pupils benefit from physical education lessons and well-established routines, which give them. The children are given the opportunities to develop their imagination and communicate feelings through dance, such as making animal faces as they travel and jump round the hall in the character of the animal chosen. However, there is no large outdoor equipment, such as a range of wheeled toys, slides and climbing frames to develop and extend the children's gross motor skills and this area is a weakness. The children use a range of creative material, and finer motor skills develop well. Many children hold pencils, paint brushes, felt pens and crayons correctly and use them well with care and precision, showing increasing dexterity.

61. Standards in creative development are good by the time children are five. Teaching is good. Children are encouraged to express their feelings and are given opportunities to experience a wide range of activities in art, craft, music, dance, story making and imaginative play. The children use their imagination through art, music and singing and have daily opportunities to explore colour through painting, collage and crayoning. In one lesson, the combination of the child's creative effort and the good quality paint used, added an attractive texture to a recognisable painting of a human with a smiling face and eyes, and in the background a brilliant sun.

62. The curriculum for the children in the reception class is good and follows the 'Desirable Learning Outcomes' specified for children of this age. It is broad, balanced and relevant and is planned to meet the needs of all the children, including those children with special educational needs. Efficient planning allows this curriculum to integrate, successfully, with the early stages of the National Curriculum. This gives children in the reception class the opportunity to further progress in their work, when they are ready to do so. The adult provision for the children is professional and supportive and the teacher is well supported by the classroom assistant. They encourage the development of pupils' skills and confidence by using a variety of methods such as whole class, group, small groups or individual teaching. The teacher's expertise and enthusiasm, along with the recent modification of curriculum planning and the widening of assessment procedures have made a significant impact on the teaching and learning. This is particularly so in mathematics, with the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy in September 1999. It is already having a significant impact on the standards of teaching and the gains in learning that the children make. Good assessment procedures for the children such as the baseline entry are used well. These are used early to identify the specific needs of the children when they enter and again when they leave. Useful day-to-day assessment notes of all the children are kept and used to plan future work and also to set targets for the children's future learning. Communication and links with parents are good. Adults, including parents, work together as a mutually supportive team for the benefit of all children. This teamwork contributes significantly to the caring ethos of the school and the achievement of the children. The new extension classroom has adequate resources, many newly acquired. These are easily accessible, and are well used.

ENGLISH

63. The 1999 national tests showed pupils achieved standards in reading and writing that were well below national average. By the time pupils left at the end of Key Stage 2, attainment in English was also well below the standards achieved nationally. Compared with similar schools in 1999, standards were below average. A significant number of pupils have joined the school in the previous two years in proportion to the size of the age group and, together with the nature of the class, this has resulted in a decline in test results in 1999 compared to 1998. Differences in the attainment of boys and girls have not been significant over the past four years until 1999 when boys performed better than girls. A large proportion of girls was identified as having special educational needs in that year. The school's standard test results have fluctuated a great deal from year to year. However, the school trend for improvement is broadly in line with the national trend over four years.

64. Inspectors judge attainment in English to be below the standards expected nationally at the end of both key stages. Although standards have declined since the previous inspection, there is an improvement from national test results in 1999 for both key stages. Good teaching and the National Literacy Strategy are having an impact on standards.

65. At the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, attainment in speaking and listening is in line with the standards expected nationally. Key Stage 1 pupils listen attentively in class both to the teacher and to each other. Their answers to the teacher show that they have considered what they have heard and, in a lesson on the use of an index and a glossary, Year 2 pupils show a clear understanding of the vocabulary used by their confident oral responses. Pupils in Year 3 understand that instructions have to be in a logical sequence in a lesson on written instructions. They demonstrate their understanding by following the teacher's explanations carefully and speaking logically, with some pupils developing ideas orally. In Year 4, pupils confidently read limericks that they have

composed, with many pupils showing understanding of the nature of the rhyme. Year 6 pupils confidently discuss the use of official language and most are keen to give their opinions. They listen to each other carefully and develop their ideas thoughtfully at the beginning of a lesson and enthusiastically at the end.

66. Attainment in reading is below those standards expected nationally at the end of both key stages. In Year 1, higher attaining pupils read aloud with some confidence and expression, using their knowledge of letters and sound/symbol relationships. Other pupils are less confident and more hesitant in their recognition of familiar words. Most pupils in Year 2 read hesitantly but correct themselves. They use phonic clues to read words such as "mountain" but need help with other words such as "strange" "she" and "found". They do not talk confidently about the plot or other books that they have read. Some pupils read with some expression and recognise many words such as "judged" and "invisible". These pupils talk confidently about the plot and characters and understand the difference between fiction and non-fiction books, correctly identifying the contents and index. Pupils in the lower part of Key Stage 2 read confidently and correct themselves, although with little expression. Most pupils in Year 4 read a book of their choice confidently and with some attempt at expression, describing characters and aspects of the plot. They understand the difference between a contents page, index and glossary. Most pupils in Year 6 read fluently with occasional hesitation and they attempt to put expression into their reading. They describe the plot in simple terms and recall the main elements of their previous book. A minority of pupils in this year group read fluently and with expression, demonstrating good recognition of complex words. They talk confidently and at length about the story and characters in their book and have a clear understanding of the use of a contents, index and glossary.

67. At the end of both key stages the attainment of pupils in writing is below the standards expected nationally. Most pupils in Year 1 show good progress in letter formation over time and many write clearly. They develop ideas simply but sometimes in sentences. A minority of pupils develop ideas well, sometimes in sentences, but mostly in phrases. Pupils in this year group work together on a computer program to identify blends, showing accuracy in their choices. Pupils in Year 2 form letters clearly and good progress is made over time amongst lower attaining pupils in developing their handwriting. Most pupils develop their ideas logically, but without punctuation. A minority of pupils use punctuation and basic grammar well to develop their ideas. In a lesson with penguins as the theme, some pupils use dictionaries but do not refer to them for spelling. There is a weakness throughout Key Stage 2 in the development of pupils' handwriting, spelling and punctuation. In oral responses to the teacher's questions in a lesson on writing instructions and understanding plurals, most pupils in Year 3 understand that instructions have to be written in a logical sequence. Some pupils suggest words ending in "f" for which the plural is "ies". However, many pupils, in their written work, misspell polysyllabic words and some misspell simple monosyllabic words. The development of written ideas is less clear amongst most pupils compared to their spoken responses. Many pupils in Year 4 show an understanding of the concept of a limerick. They confidently read their limericks to the class, some with clear emphasis on rhyming. However, when writing the rhymes, many pupils make mistakes in spelling, few join their letters and writing is slow. Pupils' exercise books in Year 5 show that spelling and punctuation is weak. Many pupils misuse or omit full stops and capital letters. Ideas are developed in simple sentences with little punctuation and among higher attaining pupils there is misspelling of words such as "friend" and "great". Year 6 pupils confidently discuss the use of official written language and develop their ideas thoughtfully together in a class session. Some pupils write their views on a given text, "If pictures could speak", and refer to specific sentences when giving their opinions. They use language such as "Very imaginative, and short sentences make it exciting" to express

their views. Most pupils in this year group, however, write slowly and handwriting is not always joined. The structure of the writing is simple and there is little evidence of more complex grammar being used to extend their ideas. Spelling is a weakness among many pupils.

68. The standard of teaching is satisfactory, with very good teaching evident in Years 1 and 6. The management of pupils is a strength of teachers across the school, which is reflected in the way pupils respond so well in discussions and questioning in lessons. Clearly established routines are evident in classrooms, which contributes to productive lessons. Very good teaching is typified by challenging lessons in which pupils sustain concentration and make good progress. In these lessons, teachers demonstrate very good subject knowledge, which increases pupils' understanding well, particularly in class teaching situations. For example, by using expressive language to emphasise the use of exclamation marks. Planning for lessons is thorough and teachers across both key stages make good use of their knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy. There is evidence in lessons of information technology being used for word processing and to increase pupils' skills through spelling programs. However, pupils do not use computers to extend their drafting and planning skills and the work they do is neither demanding nor structured. In many lessons observed, there is insufficient focus, in activities and tasks, on providing a wide enough range of work which is appropriate for the specific strengths and weaknesses of pupils. Whilst the marking of pupils' books is generally consistent and up to date, the weaknesses and strengths identified do not appear to inform planning sufficiently in lessons. The school has recently added to its staffing to enable pupils in Key Stage 1 benefit from smaller teaching groups. This initiative is still to be evaluated.

69. Resources are generally sound, and the newly refurbished library is intended to help ensure the further development of pupils' library skills. The subject policy and schemes of work are sound. The recently introduced strategies for assessment, and monitoring of lessons and progression, are now providing the subject co-ordinator with information to identify strengths and weaknesses in the subject more clearly. The subject co-ordinator, whilst also being the co-ordinator for mathematics, nevertheless has a clear picture of current weaknesses and has worked hard to institute strategies to address these and improve the subject even more in the future.

MATHEMATICS

70. In the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, attainment was well below the national average and that of similar schools. Trends since 1997 in Key Stage 1 have been consistently well below the national average with a significant decline in 1999 and in Key Stage 2 have been broadly in line with the national trend. At the last inspection, standards were judged to be satisfactory in both key stages and therefore have declined. This can be attributed to the major disruption caused by the building programme and also to a considerable change in the characteristics of the school.

71. Inspection findings indicate that standards are rising in Key Stage 1 and 2 but will continue to be below the national expectations. This improvement is due to a number of factors: the successful management of the National Numeracy Strategy which is having a positive impact on standards, particularly at Key Stage 1; the introduction of a detailed scheme of work to support teaching methods; focused planning with clear targets so that work matches and challenges pupils of different attainment; the increasing emphasis given to the teaching of mental calculations; and the school's determination to raise standards.

72. By the end of the Key Stage 1, most pupils use and apply mathematics in problem solving activities such as interpreting a bar chart to see how many more children have their birthdays in January than in February, but this is an area of mathematics with weaknesses. Most pupils have satisfactory oral and mental skills and recall of number facts. They add and subtract numbers up to and beyond 10, count in twos, fives and tens and are beginning to understand place value to 100. Higher attaining pupils can multiply using two, three and five times tables, can double tens and calculate half of forty. Pupils know the difference between odd and even numbers and are beginning to recognise pattern in a 100 square. They use non-standard and standard measures fairly accurately, and add and subtract to 20 using money. They name the properties of a few simple shapes such as triangle, rectangle, hexagon and square. They understand and use vocabulary such as multiples.

73. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards of attainment are below the national average, but pupils' strategies for solving mental calculations have improved. The school has responded to the weaknesses identified at the last inspection and provides satisfactory opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge and skills effectively for problem solving. However, many pupils experience difficulties when the problem solving requires several processes to arrive at the correct answer. By the age of eleven, many pupils carry out a variety of mental and written computations correctly and most know their tables satisfactorily. Lower ability pupils are less successful and need support. The majority of pupils have a satisfactory understanding of place value, ordering and rounding. They show a developing understanding of place value in numbers to a 1000. Many pupils describe, satisfactorily, relationships such as multiple, factor and square and recognise proportions using fractions, decimals and percentages to describe them. However, lower attaining pupils experience difficulty in remembering the operations involved. Pupils measure objects using metres, centimetres and millimetres, using decimal notation when required. As they move through this stage, they build on their previous learning about two and three-dimensional shapes and their properties. Pupils collect and interpret data in a range of graphical representations. They use frequency charts and display them in the form of line and block graphs and explain their findings, such as the type of dog food and petrol in Year 6, but this area of mathematics is weak, and, as noted in the last inspection, pupils do not apply these skills, regularly, across other subjects. Mathematical vocabulary is introduced systematically and most pupils have a sound knowledge of terms such as perimeter, median and range.

74. Pupils' attitudes towards mathematics are good overall. In Key Stage 1, they respond quickly to the teacher's requests, concentrate well and remain on task throughout the lesson. Almost all have positive attitudes to mathematics, enjoy using the resources and readily apply intellectual effort in lessons. At Key Stage 2, in most lessons attitudes to work is good and all pupils' enthusiasm remains high. Behaviour is good but a small minority of pupils in some classes is easily distracted and loses concentration when the teachers are engaged elsewhere. However, when their attention is fixed on the lesson, they are eager to learn and respond positively to challenge, such as the mental table tests. The majority of pupils in both key stages, including those with special educational needs, make good gains in their learning, due to their positive attitudes towards mathematics.

75. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 continues to be satisfactory with good teaching seen. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 has improved and is satisfactory to good, being good overall.

76. Where teaching is good, the teacher's subject knowledge is good, and there is thorough planning, preparation and organisation to allow the pupils to make very good gains in their learning. There is good subject knowledge. There is a good relationship between pupils and teachers. Resources are used to support pupils' understanding and develop number skills. Good progression is built into the lesson, for example, pupils progress from simple horizontal addition, to using addition 'wheels'. Teachers plan, deliver the subject well and this results in teaching of a good standard. Clear explanations of the work are given and pupils understand exactly what they have to do. There are effective demonstrations on the board and good questioning. Well-prepared, appropriate resources for all pupils' capabilities are used so that all pupils make gains in their learning. Where teaching is satisfactory, the planning objectives are clear and teaching activities are detailed. Pupils are well supported in their work. Although extension tasks are prepared for pupils, tasks are not refined sufficiently to meet the needs of the wide range of ability in the classes. There is insufficient time allowed at the end of the lesson to reinforce the main teaching points. During the inspection there were few examples of computers being used to support pupils' learning in mathematics. This was also identified in the last inspection report.

77. The subject is effectively led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator, who has made a significant input into the development of the subject since she was appointed. The school has worked hard as a team, and has made good use of the support of the local education authority. The policy and detailed scheme of work provides teachers with detailed guidance to help them plan for each term, each half term and each week. These factors have a positive effect on the quality of teaching and the raising of individual pupils' achievements in mathematics. Work has begun on the assessment of pupils' learning but this is an aspect scheduled for further development by the school. Advice as to how to modify future work in the light of assessments made during individual lessons is to be refined to include regular and systematic planning and assessment of what pupils know, understand and can do in all the areas of mathematics, relevant to pupils of this age. Another area for development is the better use of computers to help pupils learn. Homework is used to consolidate work in the classroom, such as the learning of tables and pupils have weekly tests in school.

78. The resources for the subject are satisfactory. New equipment and teachers' resources have been bought to facilitate the numeracy strategy and are well used by both the teachers and the support staff, with the exception of computers.

SCIENCE

79. Attainment in science is below the standard expected at the end of both key stages. This represents a decline from the standard established at the end of the previous inspection but coincides with a significant change in the characteristics of the school and with the disruption of a major building project.

80. The results of national tests in 1999 indicated standards at the end of Key Stage 2 that were well below the national average and below the average of similar schools. Teacher assessments for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 indicate a similar standard of attainment. Trends in attainment have remained static over a four-year period and have not improved in line with national improvements. There has been no significant difference in the overall attainment of boys and girls. However, boys did better than girls in 1999.

81. The standard of work seen during the inspection is a little better than the 1999 standard test results. The work of pupils at the end of both key stages in 1999 suffered from great changes during the school year – the admission of a large number of pupils late

in their school career and difficulties caused by the building project. The stability now established is having an impact. Teachers are able to work in a quiet environment and this has an impact on the quality of pupils' learning. Practical work is taking place which considerably affects the thinking pupils need to do, further impacting on the acquisition of new learning.

82. Inspectors judge that attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is below the level expected. By the time they are seven pupils have acquired a broad range of experience across the science curriculum. They observe and record what they see. In Year 1 they use their senses to 'test' different types of fruit jelly using taste, sight and smell to identify fruit types. They are enthusiastic about their practical work and develop effective observational skills. Pupils in this year group have investigated living and not living things and have done work on sources of light. Pupils in Year 2 discussed planting seeds and the best conditions for growth. They have a good knowledge of the early steps in fair testing, explaining to the teacher what should be kept the same and what could be changed. The understanding of these pupils is much better than their skills of explanation. For example, pupils had a ready understanding that plants need warmth, light and moisture to grow. They had some idea what would happen to plants left in different environments and could suggest the effect on a seed growing in a cool place, a dark place and without moisture. However, only about half of the class were able to cope with an appropriate written task reflecting what they had talked about. Pupils make satisfactory progress in the development of understanding and in their approach to practical work but lack of progress in the use of literacy skills hinders overall attainment.

83. At the end of Key Stage 2 attainment remains below the level expected. A lack of well disciplined recording skills holds up the progress pupils make. Pupils in Year 3 discuss their measurements of water temperature. They understand that the temperature of water rises after it comes out of the tap into a warm room. They measure the changes in temperature accurately. They measure the temperature of ice as it melts, correctly identifying the freezing point of water as zero degrees. They take part in a wide ranging discussion on the different forms water can take, as a liquid, a solid and some know that water exists in the atmosphere as water vapour. It is much more difficult for them to record the measurements they have taken and explain in writing what they understand. Pupils in Year 4 have good understanding of some aspects of human biology. They listen attentively to the dental hygienist supporting this area of the curriculum and enjoy her practical demonstrations. Their answers to her brisk questioning reveal a good understanding of dental care and the importance of a healthy diet. Pupils in Year 5 have acquired useful practical skills: they measure the amount of force required to move a load across different surfaces, recognising that surfaces differ in their resistance. However, they find it more difficult to record their results accurately and although they understand the principle they are unable to offer or define the word 'friction'. Year 6 pupils read charts and tables to analyse the scientific data they contain. They are keen to answer the teacher's questions and most answer with some degree of accuracy. However, their written responses are less accurate. Some answer the question that they *think* should have been asked rather than focusing closely on the question that *has been* asked. This reduces the correctness of their written response.

84. Particularly in practical activities, pupils are responsive to science. They enjoy discussing with the teacher and with each other what they already know about their practical activities. They make progress by investigating and observing. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is at least satisfactory in relation to their prior attainment. They learn better in practical work than in written tasks.

85. The teaching of science is satisfactory. Three of the seven lessons seen were good. Teachers manage pupils well and as a result pupils' learning is well supported by good behaviour and a willingness to work hard. Subject knowledge is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. This has an impact on the quality of practical work through which pupils learn to think and question. Where teacher questioning is brisk, as in the dental health session, pupils are full participants in the learning. Long talk sessions have less impact. Towards the end of these sessions some pupils lose their concentration, occasionally chat among themselves and do not listen carefully enough to instructions about what they have to do next. There is some useful teaching of subject specific vocabulary that supports pupils' literacy skills. However, lack of quick basic skills in writing and number slow the progress some pupils make in their learning. Therefore, while teaching of science is frequently good, there is insufficient impact on attainment to raise standards to the level expected.

86. The subject is well managed. The new co-ordinator has established a scheme in Key Stage 1 that ensures sufficient coverage. It is planned within topics. The existing scheme in Key Stage 2 has some areas of duplicated coverage. However, there is good coverage of all areas of the science curriculum. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to continue the revision of the scheme of work. A good assessment system has been introduced into Key Stage 1 and there are plans for how this will extend into Key Stage 2. The results of standard tests have been effectively analysed. The school knows where there are areas of weakness and steps are being taken to reinforce learning in these areas. At present the school has few strategies to give the subject manager a good overview of teaching and learning. There is a co-ordinator day once a year to support an audit of provision that in turn informs development planning for the next year. However, there is no systematic review of planning to check what is being taught. Nor does the school have any provision for sampling pupils' work to review the outcomes of lessons. Classroom observation of teaching and learning has been limited to other subjects. Although the co-ordinator works hard to maintain the leadership of the subject, at present, she is not able to have a full view of what is being taught and what else needs to be done. Resources for the subject are not generous but are sufficient.

ART

87. At the time of the inspection only one lesson was observed. Judgements on standards are based on the analysis of work, discussions with pupils, teachers and the art co-ordinator that indicate that standards of achievement are satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

88. Pupils in Year 1 use blocks to build up a picture of a tree by repeat printing with successful results. Pupils in Year 2 develop their drawing skills by illustrating word-processed poems. They paint small pictures of spring and make daffodils in relief, adding colour. There are some good examples of illustration where pupils carefully relate their drawing to a story that they have written to produce a comic strip. Sound progress in understanding repeating design is evident when pupils paint a repeating wallpaper design showing careful control. Pupils in lower Key Stage 2 work with scratchpaper, developing their technique well through exploring pattern and texture. In history, pupils produce portraits of Boudicca, demonstrating sound painting technique. In upper Key Stage 2 pupils are given opportunities to work with a wide variety of media. There is evidence of good work in textiles using the theme of the seasons and choosing colours accordingly. As well as painting and drawing, for example to make pictures about characters from fairytales, pupils' three-dimensional work and experience is sound. They make figures with a modelling medium and paint them and make moneybanks from papier-mâché in an animal

form.

89. It is not possible to make a secure judgement on the quality of teaching from the limited evidence available. However the subject is well led, planning is secure and resourcing is sound with considerable input from the local education authority available to the school. A range of activities for pupils impact on their learning. For example, for a substantial part of one week a term, pupils work on a theme such "The Sea" or "Books", using a variety of media. There is an art exhibition once a year where parents and pupils exhibit work together in the school.

90. The range of work which pupils were able to do during the building programme was significantly reduced. Resources, most notably water and the kiln, were unavailable in the temporary classrooms and the scale of the work that pupils produced was limited. Nevertheless, progress has been made since the last inspection in the range of work produced, particularly in Key Stage 2. Although the pupils have only recently moved back into the main building, there is evidence that much work is being done, for example, in display and curriculum planning, to establish a sound basis for future development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

91. Very little direct teaching of design and technology was seen during the week of inspection. Judgements are secured on planning, discussions with teachers and pupils and on the examination of artefacts made by pupils.

92. Pupils' attainment is at the expected level for pupils aged 7 and 11. This is an improvement on the judgement of the previous inspection.

93. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make satisfactory progress in learning the design and make process through a range of practically based activities. They make simple games from balsa wood. They plan how to improve their playground. Calendars are designed and made at appropriate times of the year. Other pupils design and make bookmarks for their own use. As part of the designing process, pupils make a list of the materials they will need. They use a suitable range of tools, such as rulers and scissors. Finishing is usually done by painting or colouring the product. Key Stage 2 pupils extend the range of tools and materials used. Much work continues in paper and card but also pupils work in a variety of textiles and resistive materials. Pupils make nets to create three-dimensional shapes. They develop some bookmaking skills. Some learn paper-folding techniques and use a range of fixing devices. Older pupils in this key stage design vehicles and make decisions about how they should be powered. For example, some of the machines are elastic powered and other have small electric motors. At the end of the design process pupils evaluate their design, talking to classmates about what was successful, what they found difficult and what improvements they would make to their finished product.

94. Very little direct teaching was seen and therefore no judgement can be made. From the evidence of pupils' artefacts, teachers' understanding of the needs of the subject and the needs of their pupils is sound. It is also clear that pupils take pride in their making. Year 5 and 6 pupils observed making powered vehicles showed a high level of commitment and concentration to the task. All pupils make appropriate progress in understanding the design and make process and in developing skills necessary to support their work. Some pupils with special educational needs make good progress in the small groups within which they work.

95. The improvement since the previous inspection is the result of a more structured approach to the subject through policy and scheme. However, the subject co-ordinator recognises the need to offer more structured guidance to ensure the step by step development of skills. So far the school has made no use of the national guidance which is available for the subject. At present there are no strategies for the assessment of attainment in the subject. The artefacts created by pupils indicate more secure teacher knowledge is impacting on the standard attained. The resources available for work in design and technology are adequate. There is a sufficient range of materials to use. There are enough tools but the provision of tools could be extended even further to continue the enhancement of standards. During the year there is a craft and technology exhibition where parents and pupils show items worked on together.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

96. During the inspection, timetabling arrangements permitted only two lessons in history in Key Stage 2 to be observed and none in geography in either of the key stages. However, evidence from scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' documentation, displays, and conversations with teachers and pupils shows that satisfactory progress is being made in both subjects and the standards found in the last inspection have been maintained. History and geography are taught satisfactorily through topic work in Key Stage 1 and units of work in Key Stage 2, both of which cover the work that has to be learned in the National Curriculum. Most pupils satisfactorily acquire, use and extend history and geographical skills and vocabulary through these investigations.

97. Key Stage 1 and 2 standards in history continue to be in line with those found in most schools and pupils make satisfactory gains in their learning. Pupils have a sound understanding of the historical concepts and knowledge expected of seven-year-olds by the end of the key stage. Pupils know about life in the past and have a satisfactory understanding of how domestic life and education have changed over time. There are links with other subjects, such as science. In Year 1, pupils compare heating by stoves and lamps in the past with the electricity of the present. Their skills in historical enquiry are appropriately developed by visits to places such as the Victorian schoolroom at Wigan, and Haigh Hall, but the examination of artefacts in school is less well developed. Pupils have a satisfactory awareness of chronology by sequencing events in their own lives from when they were born to the present day and the significant times in their day and the seasons.

98. By the age of eleven most pupils can identify and describe the main features of life in a past civilisation such as the Ancient Greeks. They gain insight into what life was like for people living in significant periods in English history such as the Tudors and the Victorians. In Year 3 understand the reasons for the fall of the Roman Empire and use their geographical skills to locate the relevant places. Historical vocabulary is developing well. In Year 3, pupils learn 'special' vocabulary such as 'invaders' and Year 5 pupils are aware of Greek words such as 'alpha', the first letter of the Greek alphabet and an 'amphora' used for storing foodstuffs. Year 6 pupils become more conscious of environmental change. Artefacts to enhance pupils' learning in history are few but the school is aware of this. During the inspection the pupils had the opportunity to study and handle Greek objects brought into school by an archaeology outreach service from Liverpool University. This however has not been regular practice.

99. Pupils' standards in geography in Key Stage 1 and 2 continue to be in line with those found in most schools and pupils make satisfactory gains in their learning. At Key Stage 1, pupils study the local environment and have an increasing awareness of the local features such as the church, and amenities such as the shops and the local swimming

baths. Many pupils can indicate the routes needed to get there. They have less awareness of places further afield, but currently the school is planning to study an alternative location such as Blackpool. Through their study of 'The Weather' and 'The Seasons' they have a growing awareness of contrasting climatic conditions and use an appropriate geographical vocabulary satisfactorily. Work on mapping skills was not seen.

100. At Key Stage 2, a programme of geographical topics covers, satisfactorily, the National Curriculum programmes of study. By the age of eleven pupils have an appropriate knowledge of their own region, other countries and contrasting areas such as the 'Rain Forests'. For example, Year 4 pupils study Coniston as an alternative United Kingdom region, Year 5 study a European locality such as France and Year 6 research into a contrasting locality such as the 'Rain Forests'. They use mapping skills to trace the course of major rivers, for example, the Nile, the Amazon and the Danube and identify the countries along their route. They acquire the associated geographical vocabulary such as source, tributaries and mouth.

101. Insufficient teaching of history and geography was seen to give a firm view of standards. In the few lessons seen in history, pupils had positive attitude to their learning and were extending their understanding and vocabulary satisfactorily, but recorded work was less successful due to a weakness in, spelling and hand writing skills. Overall, pupils' geographical and historical work is well linked to other subjects. In Year 5, stories such as 'Orpheus' and 'The Wooden Horse of Troy' are linked to the work on Ancient Greece and good art displays reflect the work undertaken on topics such as 'The Weather', and the 'Victorians'.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

102. The attainment of pupils in information technology is below the standards expected at the end of both key stages. Whilst the school meets the statutory requirements for teaching the subject, there has been a decline in standards since the last inspection. Although there is evidence of the curriculum being studied by pupils at various stages through the school, pupils do not build skills and knowledge systematically to raise attainment to a satisfactory standard.

103. Pupils in Year 1 use a spelling game on the computer to increase their understanding of letter blends and use the keyboard accurately to move around the screen. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils enter simple text. They use the delete and space keys appropriately. Most pupils understand the use of the shift key to make a capital letter. A minority of pupils insert a letter by using the mouse and cursor. Most pupils print out their work with the correct input of commands. There is little evidence that pupils have used information technology to sort and classify information or to control devices and describe the effects of their actions. Most pupils do not understand how to store and retrieve information.

104. Pupils in Key Stage 2 use computers in many lessons to construct text or sentences to support their learning. However, they do not make progress in developing word processing skills or combining different forms of information, and keyboard skills are weak. Pupils in year 4 use an adventure program to make decisions and pupils are aware of the consequences of their choices to progress to the end of the game. Pupils in Year 5 construct a repeating pattern by giving a series of instructions, which they then print out. Year 6 pupils describe the use of a maze puzzle, which develops their skills in on screen control, and they use a paint program to produce simple coloured drawings. Some pupils in this year use the library database to find a book and describe the process clearly and they

use CD-ROM to access information, but there is no evidence that they add to or amend information that has been stored.

105. Only one lesson was seen during inspection week in which information technology was directly taught, and it is not possible to make a secure judgement on the quality of teaching. However, from the work seen, discussions, and tasks given to pupils, teachers lack confidence and their subject knowledge is insufficiently secure to develop pupils' skills and understanding appropriately. In the lesson seen and from observations in other lessons of computers being used, pupils concentrate on their work and enjoy what they are doing. They share time on the computers with others and co-operation is good.

106. There has been a substantial building programme in the school, which meant that the computer suite that had been set up was dismantled and not available for whole class teaching. This has impacted on standards. Much of the current hardware and software is outdated and there is not the capacity to ensure future delivery of the curriculum at a satisfactory level. However, current financial arrangements suggest that, now that the building programme is complete, substantial additions are to be made to the current resources. The current monitoring, assessment, and tracking arrangements, however, are insufficiently developed to take full advantage of future development in resourcing.

MUSIC

107. Standards in music are in line with the standard expected at the end of both key stages. Very little direct teaching of music was seen during the inspection. Judgements are based on discussions with staff and pupils, scrutiny of school documents and planning, as well as the small amount of music seen.

108. Much of the school's work in music is related to public performances. Daily worship contributes significantly to the standards achieved. Listening to music is a planned part of each day. Pupils listen to a wide range of music from classical orchestral music to folk music and 'pop'. The result of this planned experience is that pupils acquire a broad taste in music. They describe what they like and how the music affects them. Older pupils talk about a range of classical composers and their work. They know the families of instruments and have some knowledge of how instruments are used to create effect. Singing is another part of the daily routine of the school. In assembly, pupils sing quite naturally and spontaneously in two parts, younger pupils singing the first part and older pupils singing the second part. The quality of singing is satisfactory. Pupils join in willingly and enthusiastically. Most pupils sing tunefully and words are clear. Younger pupils have some opportunities to play percussion instruments, creating parts to accompany songs they sing. However, this composing and performing part of the music curriculum is not a strong element of what is taught. The school is enthusiastic about its public performances for special occasions such as Christmas. It is an expectation that all pupils take part. This is an encouragement towards higher attainment in music. Some pupils use instruments to accompany their songs. While this gives some pupils good experience, there is no guarantee that all pupils get this quality of experience.

109. In the little music seen, the teaching was satisfactory. There is some musical background and expertise that the school uses effectively in assembly and hymn practice. Pupils respond with enthusiasm to music. Older pupils discuss their musical experiences in lively fashion. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment.

110. The school has a useful outline scheme of work. Adhered to systematically it ensures that all aspects of the music curriculum are taught. However, there is no school audit of curriculum time to guarantee to the subject the minimum time needed for this. At present there is no school strategy for assessing attainment in music. Whilst subject management is sound in terms of school expectations there is a lack of impact in ensuring that the full curriculum for music is taught.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

111. Standards in games and gymnastics by the end of both key stages continue to be in line with those expected nationally. They are typical of what is expected for pupils at seven and eleven. Scrutiny of school planning, interviews with the physical education co-ordinator and talking to pupils indicate that the school teaches an appropriate curriculum and meets the national requirements.

112. No dance lesson was seen in Key Stage 1 and only one at Key Stage 2. Judgement on dance is made therefore on the one Year 6 lesson seen. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils in Year 6 attain at a level above national expectations. They move imaginatively and creatively and put together sequences of very expressive movements. There is a growing emphasis on pair and group work and pupils produce very good dance sequences responding to each other sensitively and creatively. They have an appreciation of the mood of the music and respond well to the rhythm. Pupils demonstrate high degrees of self-discipline, and personal organisation.

113. In gymnastics, pupils perform basic skills in travelling, being still, finding space and using it safely, both on the floor and using apparatus. They refine their skills of travelling on hands and feet in different ways and recognise quality actions in these movements. Most pupils show satisfactory control of actions such as forward rolls and handstands and make sound use of the physical education equipment, but the combination of jumping, turning, rolling and balancing together to produce a routine was not seen. Higher attaining pupils give good thought to the quality of their forward rolls, but a few less successful pupils do not use the correct techniques necessary.

114. By the end of Key Stage 2, much of the pupils' basic skill learning has been consolidated in dance, gymnastics, and games. In games, they understand and play small-sided games. Boys and girls make satisfactory progress in using tactics of defence and attack during football, netball, rugby and volleyball. Levels of hand and eye co-ordination, awareness of space and team play develop well. Pupils kick and retrieve a ball and understand the need to be accurate when passing. Many pupils control the ball well and try to improve their performance. Theoretical aspects, such as games, rules and strategies combined with the concepts of fair play and sporting behaviour are soundly developed and older pupils devise their own games and team rules. This makes a good contribution to pupils' moral and social development. Most pupils recognise the need for warm up exercises and appreciate the effects of exercise on the body. During all lessons, most pupils respond positively to physical education, work with enthusiasm and are keen to demonstrate their skills to other pupils.

115. In the four lessons seen, the quality of teaching and learning ranged from satisfactory to good and was satisfactory overall. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the elements of the subject they were teaching. All are familiar with, and include warm up procedures in their lessons and have due regard for health and safety procedures. Most teachers develop pupils' listening skills by giving pupils opportunities to answer and discuss good work. Where teaching is more effective, pupils are given clear guidance as to what to

do. Skills are built on from previous lessons so that techniques are refined and pupils make gains in their learning. In these lessons, pupils listen attentively to instructions, are well behaved and sensible. They work well together in groups and learn from each other's contributions. They work collaboratively in pairs, in groups and in teams, acquiring a good working relationship. In satisfactory lessons, teachers' instructions are clear, lessons are conducted at a satisfactory pace, but the opportunities for pupils to refine their techniques and further develop their skills are limited. Most teachers maintain a steady pace that keeps pupils occupied, but occasionally pupils who do not fully participate in the lesson are not identified. Most pupils at both key stages, including those with special educational needs, enjoy the various components of the physical education and show enthusiasm and co-operation. They are good opportunities for pupils to co-operate with others or compete fairly in team games and this makes a good contribution to their personal development. Enjoyment of this subject is very obvious and is confirmed by the high participation rate of older pupils in the very wide range of physical education related extra-curricular clubs.

116. The curriculum is planned satisfactorily throughout the school. Overall, appropriate amounts of time are given to each area of the physical education curriculum as pupils move through the key stages and there is a satisfactory balance of activities taught, which fully comply with the National Curriculum. As noted in the last inspection only Year 4 pupils have weekly swimming lessons. However, there is sound provision for the development of swimming skills and the co-ordinator indicates that by the time the pupils leave the school most pupils swim for 25 metres and many swim further. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and use appropriate methods and resources to achieve the curriculum objectives. Pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 attend a residential outdoor education centre where they take part in a range of activities including canoeing, orienteering, swimming and walking.

117. Co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. The school has responded in part to the last inspection criticism and has produced, recently, a revised physical education policy document, which reflects a broad and balanced curriculum, but as yet it has no assessment policy or procedure to ensure that individual pupils' learning and teaching across both key stages is monitored. There are no formal on-going records kept of pupils' skills which, if in place, would serve to help teaching match pupils' differing abilities better and serve to accelerate the progress pupils make over time. However the school recognises the need for this development to further enhance pupils' learning. There are a wide range of extra curricular activities such as football, rugby and netball in the autumn and cricket and rounders in the summer. An enthusiastic teacher enters pupils for local swimming and athletic events and competitions in which they are successful. Dedicated parents regularly coach and support the rugby, football and other seasonal teams.

118. The school has adequate resources to deliver the curriculum and currently a resource audit is being undertaken by the co-ordinator. Equipment is readily accessible and maintained, satisfactorily. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 continue to change for physical education in the classrooms or resource areas. This practice remains unsatisfactory for pupils of this age. There is good accommodation in the new hall for indoor physical education, although the teachers find the acoustics poor. In spite of extended building modifications the school retains field space of good quality for outdoor games.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

119. It is not possible to make a judgement on standards of attainment in religious education at the end of Key Stage 1 as most of the work is oral and much is incorporated into pupils' experience in assembly. By the time they are eleven, pupils attain standards that are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.

120. At Key Stage 1 religious education is generally integrated into topics. There was some evidence of religious education influencing topic work through this key stage. For example, pupils in Key Stage 1 showed samples of work on 'self' and 'special people', which are part of the expectations of the local syllabus. However, the evidence is insubstantial. The topic work approach means that it is not easy to check that the teaching of religious education meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus adopted. Most of the work in Key Stage 2 is through work sheets. Much is based on studies of Christianity but some is based on Judaism and Islam as required by the syllabus. The requirements of the agreed syllabus are met by the end of Key Stage 2.

121. Attitudes to religious education and the religious education content of assembly were very positive; pupils' behaviour in the assemblies was very good. Pupils respond well to questions and show sensitivity in some of their observations. The assemblies make a valuable contribution to religious education at both key stages.

122. From observations of the teaching of religious education and the assemblies pupils have a good knowledge of the Christian faith and are able to share this knowledge. Some of the work seen is characterised by simple worksheet. Additionally, there was some good use of open ended task setting that gave the opportunity for pupils to reflect. The concern about provision identified at the time of the previous inspection has not been successfully addressed. The school's approach – through assembly and through topics in Key Stage 1 – make it difficult to check on curriculum coverage. There is a policy document for religious education that supports teaching. A syllabus has been developed for both key stages. The relatively new subject co-ordinator has identified the curriculum needs of the subject. It is intended that the requirements of the scheme will be planned more rigorously into the curriculum.

123. Good use is made of visitors to support religious education and there are plans to develop this further. Consideration has been given for separate assemblies for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils to target teaching and learning more effectively. Monitoring and assessment procedures are not yet securely in place for religious education. More spacious accommodation with areas for art and craft work now provides for the development of a wider variety of ways of delivering religious education. Resources are broadly satisfactory but the range of texts is not great to ensure suitability for all ranges of ability. The library has some suitable reference books to support religious education.