

INSPECTION REPORT

BARNTON COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Northwich

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 131681

Headteacher: Mrs D Howarth

Reporting inspector: Diana Mackie
23482

Dates of inspection: 5 - 8 February 2001

Inspection number: 230200

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior school
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Townfield Lane Barnton Northwich Cheshire
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Alan Procter
Date of previous inspection:	N/A

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19343	Marion Howel	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
15334	Julie Hooper	Team inspector	English Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
31904	Colette Gribble	Team inspector	Geography Music Equal opportunities Special educational needs	
18926	Michael Ridout	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology	How well is the school led and managed?
32040	Stuart Wormleighton	Team inspector	Science History	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Barnton Community Primary School, situated on the northwest side of Northwich, is a large primary school for pupils aged from four to eleven and currently has 327 pupils on roll. The school was formed from the amalgamation of Barnton Infant School and Barnton Junior School in September 1998. In September 1999, they were merged on the former junior school site. There are two junior classes in the unit for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. These pupils come from a wide area but most pupils come from the surrounding district. Children start school at the beginning of the academic year in which they are five. When they start, the majority of children have levels of attainment below those expected for their age in literacy and numeracy. There are currently 36 children in the Foundation Stage in classes for children under six and most have had little or no pre-school education. There is a general balance of boys and girls in the whole school but there are significantly more girls than boys in the reception class and Year 1 and more boys than girls in Year 6. Few pupils are from minority ethnic groups and few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals (17 per cent) is broadly in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs (26 per cent) is above the national average. Nearly six per cent of pupils have statements of special educational need. This is about three times the national average. These pupils are taught in two classes by specialist staff. They join the other classes appropriately for a range of lessons.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school. Two schools have been amalgamated successfully to create a caring and friendly community. Pupils achieve well from a low starting point. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and it is often very good in the junior classes. Pupils enjoy coming to school and relationships are good. In the short time that she has been at the school, the new headteacher has demonstrated a clear sense of vision and a focus on improving standards of pupils' attainment and progress. She is ably supported by the outstanding deputy headteacher and the conscientious governing body. The school provides satisfactory value for money and, given its present rate of progress, is set to do better.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well by the time they are eleven. (Achievement refers to the progress that pupils make over time in relation to their starting point.)
- In the juniors, standards are above expectations for most eleven-year-olds in science and music. Standards in art are good in the infants and very good in the juniors.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to school are good and there is good provision for their personal, social and health education.
- Teaching is good overall in the juniors, with examples of excellent teaching. Teachers have introduced the literacy hour well.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. There is very good provision for pupils in the two classes for pupils with moderate learning difficulties.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good.
- Links with parents are good and the community contributes very well to pupils' learning.
- The school is well led and managed.

What could be improved

- In English and mathematics, the achievement of most pupils is not high enough by the time they are seven.
- There is no clear programme of classroom monitoring so that all co-ordinators are more able to have a positive influence on teaching and learning in their subjects.
- Pupils of reception age do not have sufficient opportunities for appropriate outdoor play or the adult support which they need to benefit fully from the curriculum for the Foundation Stage of education.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

This is the first inspection of Barnton Community Primary School, following the amalgamation in 1998 of the previous infant and junior schools in the village. Curricular provision has been planned well and staff professional training has been good. The special unit for pupils with moderate learning difficulties has been maintained very well and pupils are integrated into the main school very successfully. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been introduced effectively and the curriculum for pupils' personal, social and cultural education is good. Pupils' attainment and progress have been monitored well. The headteacher and deputy headteacher ensure clear direction for the school. Governors have played a major role in the establishment of the new school and have steered it effectively through a period of significant staff changes.

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	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	N/A	C	E	E*	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E very low E*
Mathematics	N/A	B	E	E	
Science	N/A	D	C	D	

These results for eleven-year-olds include assessments of a significant number of pupils from the classes for pupils with special educational needs, who did well taking into account their prior attainment. Of the other pupils, the majority achieved appropriate levels for their age in all three subjects and over a third achieved above the expected level in science. The school met the targets it set with the local education authority.

The school's results in the 2000 tests and teacher assessments for seven-year-olds were well below the national average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Compared with similar schools, results were well below average in reading and mathematics and very low in mathematics.

From current inspection, pupils' overall attainment is below national expectations by the time pupils join Year 1 and by the end of the infants. Most children have had little pre-school education and they need more adult support in their first year in school. Overall attainment is currently in line with national expectations by the end of the juniors. This represents good achievement from a low starting point.

Current standards in English and mathematics are below expectations for seven-year-olds. They are in line with expectations in science. Most pupils do not achieve well enough in Year 1 because the pace of lessons is too slow when reception and Year 1 pupils are taught together. Progress accelerates in Year 2, where writing skills have improved and pupils write for a wider range of purposes. Pupils make increasing use of their skills in mental arithmetic. More investigative work has improved pupils' performance in science. Most eleven-year-olds achieve standards which are in line with expectations in English and mathematics and above expectations in science.

Standards in design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education are similar to those typically expected for seven and eleven-year-olds. In music, standards are broadly average for seven-year-olds and above what is normally seen for eleven-year-olds. Pupils achieve well in art by the end of the infants and very well by the end of the juniors. Outstanding work in art reflects the very good leadership of the subject and the high quality expertise of staff, particularly in the juniors.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Most pupils are enthusiastic about school and they are keen to be involved in activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most pupils behave well in lessons and play happily together at break times.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils help to keep their classrooms tidy and are eager to take on responsibilities. Relationships in the school are good.
Attendance	Satisfactory.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

During the inspection, teaching was excellent in five per cent of lessons observed, very good in 24 per cent, good in 30 per cent, satisfactory in 34 per cent and less than satisfactory in six per cent. Teaching was better in the juniors than in the infants. In the Foundation Stage for the youngest children, where teaching is satisfactory, there are too few classroom assistants for children to gain the maximum benefit from activities. When there is support in lessons, staff engage well with the children and help them to achieve at a good rate. In the infants, teaching sometimes lacks pace and activities are not chosen carefully enough to keep pupils engaged in learning for the whole lesson. In the best lessons, the good teaching leads to good levels of pupils' learning and good quality work, for example in science and art. Teaching in the juniors is good overall, with examples of very good and excellent teaching, especially in the classes for pupils who have special educational needs. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory in the infants and good in the juniors.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. An interesting range of educational visits adds relevance to pupils' learning. The school has worked hard to introduce the new curriculum for the reception class. The new National Curriculum and the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been introduced successfully.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Individual education plans are followed up well and the special unit makes very good provision for the variety of pupils needs. Teaching there is of a consistently high standard and pupils are integrated appropriately into mainstream classes for lessons from which they will benefit.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual development is good in assemblies. Pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong. The school enriches pupils' experiences through thoughtful provision of cultural activities which enhance their skills, knowledge and self-esteem.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Well. Child protection procedures are clear and welfare support for the pupils is good. There are good procedures for monitoring pupils' academic performance and personal development.

The school works well in partnership with parents, who are well informed about the curriculum. Parents support the school well in social and fundraising events. The quality and range of learning opportunities for pupils are good overall, with particularly good provision in art, ICT and music. Activities such as residential visits and trips to places of interest enrich the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs, especially those in the unit for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, are well supported with appropriate individual education plans.

Procedures for monitoring pupils' attendance and behaviour, including bullying, are good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a clear sense of vision for the school. Senior staff have worked very hard to unite the newly amalgamated school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Well. Governors fulfil their roles conscientiously and give their services effectively to support the school. They have managed the amalgamation of two schools well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Governors plan well to meet the needs of the school.

There is an adequate number of staff; the size and condition of the accommodation are good and the amount and condition of learning resources are satisfactory. The recently appointed headteacher has strengthened the school's resolve to raise standards of pupils' attainment and confirmed its capacity to succeed. The high quality leadership of the deputy headteacher, who acted as headteacher until the new head was appointed, has had a significant, positive effect on the amalgamation of the previous two schools. The governors apply the principles of best value when making spending decisions.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most parents say that their children like school and are making good progress. • The majority of parents think the behaviour in the school is good. • Most parents think that the teaching is good. • The majority feel that the school expects their children to work hard, achieve their best and become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A significant number of parents are not satisfied with the amount of homework set, feel that they are not kept well informed about how their children are getting on or do not think that the school works closely with parents. • Nearly a third of parents who returned the questionnaire do not think that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views of the school. The amount of homework set is satisfactory and is similar to that set in many primary schools. Parents receive satisfactory levels of information on their children's progress in annual reports and open evenings. Appointments can be made at other times if parents wish to know more about how their children are getting on. The school makes satisfactory efforts to work closely with parents. They are encouraged to help in school, there are meetings about the curriculum and parents help their children regularly with reading. There is a satisfactory range of after-school activities, in line with those seen in most schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children enter the reception class with a wide range of attainment. Initial assessments carried out soon after the children start school indicate that overall standards are below those expected for children of this age. There is little provision of pre-school education in the area and many children have not benefited from the early activities outlined in the curriculum for the Foundation Stage of education, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Although children, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress and their achievement is satisfactory, the majority of children do not attain the expected standards in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development by the time they join Year 1. They reach the expected standards in personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development.
2. Pupils achieve well by the time they leave the school but their achievement is better in the juniors than in the infants. Inspection findings indicate that, by the time they are eleven, the majority of pupils attain levels expected for their age in most subjects, with good attainment in science and very good attainment in art. Compared with their attainment on entry to the school, these standards represent good achievement. Pupils' achievement varies in the infants and is satisfactory by the time they are seven years old. Throughout the school, the rate of pupils' achievement is closely linked to the quality of the teaching. Challenging but realistic targets for results in the 2001 National Curriculum tests, which the school expects to meet, have been set with the local education authority.
3. Results for eleven-year-olds in the year 2000 National Curriculum tests included assessments of a significant number of pupils in the unit for pupils with special educational needs. These pupils performed well based on their prior attainment. The majority of the other pupils achieved level 4, the expected level for pupils aged eleven. The school's overall results show that standards of pupils' attainment in English were well below average nationally and very low in comparison with similar schools. In mathematics, the school's results were well below average compared with all schools and compared with similar schools. In science, pupils' performance was average in comparison with all schools and below average compared with similar schools; over a third achieved level 5, the higher level. The trend from 1999 to 2000 was downward in English and mathematics and upward in science.
4. Inspection findings are that, by the end of the juniors, standards in English and mathematics are broadly in line with expectations and they are above expectations in science. Pupils use their skills in speaking and listening effectively as they contribute to discussions, explain their ideas and ask questions when they need help with their work. The school's introduction of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy is having a positive effect on standards in English and mathematics. Teachers are planning lessons with increasing skill to meet the needs of individual pupils and to ensure that pupils have a good grounding in the basic skills. Pupils enjoy reading and benefit from the good organisation of the school's library, where there is an interesting range of books for pupils to extend their skills of research. The school has focused on the improvement of pupils' writing skills and there are examples of writing of good quality in Year 6. In mathematics, pupils benefit from regular teaching of multiplication facts and from the teachers' quick-fire questions in mental arithmetic lessons. In science, the school has broadened opportunities for pupils to be engaged in investigative work so that they find things out for themselves and are excited by the subject.
5. In the year 2000 tests and assessments for seven-year-olds, the school's results in reading and mathematics were well below the national average for all schools and well below in comparison with similar schools. In writing, results were well below average nationally and very low when compared with similar schools. The trend was downward from 1999 to 2000 in reading, writing and mathematics. The pupils' performance in teacher assessments was well below the national average.

6. Current inspection findings are that, by the time they are seven years old, pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is in line with expectations for their age. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are not high enough and most pupils do not reach the level expected for their age. In science, pupils' attainment is in line with expectations. The pace of teaching in Year 1 is too slow and pupils do not achieve as well as they could. There is too little adult support in the mixed-age classes where there are young reception-age children who, quite naturally, demand the teachers' attention. Some ground is gained in Year 2 so that, considering most children's low levels of attainment when they start school, overall progress in the key stage is satisfactory.
7. Pupils develop good levels of interest in books and reading and they enjoy investigating patterns of numbers and investigating simple shapes. Teachers have introduced the recommended structure for lessons in literacy and numeracy and this ensures that pupils benefit from the direct teaching of letter sounds, simple English grammar and simple rules of arithmetic. In science, pupils are inquisitive and enthusiastic. The youngest pupils gain increasing levels of knowledge about the animals and plants in the world around them. By the end of the infants, pupils explore with increasing scientific skill; for example, when they investigate simple electrical circuits.
8. Throughout the school, standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are rising rapidly and are now in line with expectations for seven and eleven-year-olds. There is evidence of very good work in some aspects of the subject in the juniors, where pupils word-process confidently to edit their writing and create simple newspapers. They include digital photographs which they have taken and import pictures from a data bank to illustrate their work. In Years 5 and 6, pupils create attractively organised web pages to tell other people about their hobbies and interests. Pupils' skills in monitoring and control are not so well developed. However, pupils at both key stages are aware that the printer is under the control of the computer. In the juniors, practice in plotting the movement of a point on the screen, using an appropriate package, is increasing pupils' knowledge of computer control. In the infants, pupils acquire early skills in data-handling as they collect and order information in simple graphs. At both key stages, the use of ICT in art is very good indeed and there are examples of beautiful repetitive patterns and imaginative pictures. In the infants, pupils use a range of 'tools' to outline and fill in their drawings. In the juniors, pupils' work becomes more detailed and creative. Pupils use CD-ROMs confidently to support learning throughout the curriculum.
9. By the end of both key stages, pupils achieve standards in line with expectations in the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. As they grow older, pupils become increasingly aware of a good range of faiths, with emphasis on Christianity. By the time they are eleven, pupils relate stories from both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. They recognise that there are similarities and differences in the way people of a variety of faiths worship and conduct their lives. Pupils gain increasing understanding of the importance of religion in the lives of many people. In the infants, pupils relate special times in their own lives, such as how they were named, to those of children of other faiths. They learn about the significant festivals of the Christian year and learn that festivals feature in all religions. In both key stages, pupils learn about people who have made significant contributions to the way we think and behave.
10. Standards in art are very good by the time pupils leave the school at the age of eleven. This reflects the school's very good provision and the high levels of teachers' expertise, especially in the juniors. Pupils explore the use of colour and different materials to create imaginative pictures, textile designs and three-dimensional work. Standards for seven-year-olds are above those normally seen for their age because of the carefully structured schemes of work which help pupils to gain skills in a systematic way and include opportunities for them to experiment and develop their imagination. The ethos of the school is raised through the highly professional and attractive displays of outstanding work, showing a wide range of techniques, especially in the juniors.
11. By the time pupils are eleven, their attainment in music is above that normally seen at the end of the juniors. The attainment of seven-year-olds is in line with expectations for their age. In assemblies, music lessons and clubs, junior-age pupils sing well. They sing the words of songs clearly and reflect the mood effectively as they sing with a good sense of rhythm, pitch and dynamics. Pupils gain experience of following a conductor and improving their performance when they sing in the school choir. The school band, which includes some higher attaining musicians, performs beautifully in assemblies and provides other pupils with examples of good quality music

making. Skills in composition develop appropriately as pupils organise their own arrangements for percussion instruments.

12. In design and technology, geography, history and physical education, standards are in line with expectations by the end of the infants and juniors. Pupils develop appropriate levels of skills, knowledge and understanding to find out how things work, understand the world around them and enjoy sport and dance. In history, pupils know that there are many ways to find out about the past. In geography they know that the way people live in different parts of the world is affected by a wide range of factors such as climate, the nature of the land, vegetation and transport. In physical education lessons, pupils become more aware of the importance of exercise in keeping healthy.
13. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make very good progress in the acquisition of English, integrate well and soon make similar progress to their classmates. Pupils with special educational needs in the mainstream of the school benefit from high levels of staff expertise in the special classes. This expertise is used very effectively to inform provision throughout the school. Pupils' individual education plans include achievable targets which are met in a well-structured, step-by-step way. In the two classes of the special unit, the high quality of the teaching ensures that pupils make very good progress based on their prior attainment.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Children in the reception class enjoy coming to school and soon settle well. They learn to be considerate and to share equipment. In whole-class discussions, they sometimes call out but gradually learn to take turns to speak. Children develop appropriate levels of self-esteem because teachers value their contributions and display their work. As they learn and play together, children gain greater awareness of different views and ways of life. They develop an understanding of what is right and what is wrong. Children's ability to work independently develops more slowly because there is insufficient adult support to set them on the right path. For most children, this is their first experience of having to get on with things by themselves.
15. Pupils in the infants and juniors show positive attitudes to school and enjoy the broad range of opportunities provided. Most pupils listen carefully in lessons. They respond well to the teachers' questions and give answers which are sensible and relevant to discussions. Pupils are interested in what they are learning and show respect for one another. The broad range of pupils' abilities provides valuable opportunities for them to appreciate each other's talents and value the contributions they make to the school. Pupils in the special classes enjoy the lessons they share with other classes. Because they have their own personal targets for improvement, for example in English and mathematics, pupils throughout the school gradually become more responsible for their own learning and recognise that they will have to make an effort to improve their performance. Pupils co-operate well; they support each other and work well together. They relate well to one another and to the teaching and non-teaching staff. Relationships in the school are good.
16. Parents' positive views of pupils' behaviour were borne out by inspection findings. The school is an orderly community and pupils are generally well behaved, both in lessons and during the less structured times of dinner and playtime. There have been no exclusions in the past year. The majority of pupils move around the buildings sensibly. Pupils are polite to visitors and often open doors or offer help.
17. Throughout the school, most pupils love to be asked to help in the classrooms. They help to set out equipment in physical education lessons and clear up at the end of art and craft lessons. Older pupils are involved in organising collections for charities. Most pupils take their homework seriously and work hard to reach their personal targets and improve their progress. Pupils who play musical instruments practise at home and play proudly for the rest of the school.
18. The attendance rates at the school are broadly in line with national averages. Pupils arrive at school on time with very few latecomers. The importance of regular attendance is mentioned in

the prospectus and parents are discouraged from taking holidays during term time. Registration is completed satisfactorily.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. During the inspection teaching was excellent in five per cent of lessons observed, very good in 24 per cent, good in 30 per cent, satisfactory in 34 per cent and less than satisfactory in six per cent. Teaching was better in the juniors than in the infants. As a result, pupils acquire skills, knowledge and understanding at a faster rate in Years 3 to 6. Throughout the school, most pupils work hard and want to do well but they achieve greater success in the juniors because lessons are taught in a brisker way and pupils are more productive.
20. In the Foundation Stage for the youngest children, teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have introduced the new curriculum for the Foundation Stage positively and lesson plans include appropriate activities for the age group. When they teach the class as a whole, teachers question children well and encourage them to share their ideas and feelings. In literacy and numeracy lessons, children develop appropriate social skills and extend their skills of speaking and listening. Teachers involve them effectively in discussions and encourage them to ask and answer questions which sort out their thoughts and ideas. There are good opportunities for pupils to practise mark making which leads to writing. However, children do not always benefit sufficiently from activities because teachers divide their time between two age groups, since there are also pupils from Year 1 in the classes.
21. The quality of teaching in the infants is generally satisfactory and teachers have a sound knowledge of the subjects they teach. In the best lessons, the teachers' secure subject knowledge and choice of interesting tasks lead to good levels of pupils' learning and work of good quality, for example in science and art. In these lessons, teachers sit with pupils, engage with them well and extend their learning through good questioning. The overall teaching of English and mathematics is satisfactory, with some good lessons in which pupils make significant gains in their learning. In literacy lessons, pupils make good progress in sessions where staff guide pupils' reading effectively; pupils explore the text, look for specific words and improve their knowledge of letter sounds and shapes. When teachers enthuse pupils, help them to 'hold numbers in their heads' and bring a sense of fun to mathematics, pupils enjoy the subject and are keen to succeed. However, higher attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they could in numeracy lessons when activities are not challenging enough. Good teaching in art resulted in pupils reflecting on their own experiences, learning different painting techniques and gaining knowledge about interesting features of the work of Van Gogh. In their short periods of time with each class, support staff engage well with pupils and help them to achieve at a good rate. Where teaching is less successful, it is because lessons lack pace and activities are not chosen carefully enough to keep pupils engaged in appropriate learning for the whole lesson. For example, in a numeracy lesson in Year 1, children needed more help to follow the instructions about making shapes with pieces of fabric. They soon became restless, wasted time and did not extend their learning at a good enough rate.
22. Teaching in the juniors is good overall, with examples of very good and excellent teaching in mainstream classes and in the specialist classes for pupils who have special educational needs. Teachers throughout the key stage are usually enthusiastic, well prepared for lessons and secure in their subject knowledge. They manage the pupils well so that there is a purposeful working atmosphere in lessons and pupils make good progress. In most numeracy lessons, teachers keep pupils 'on their toes' as they ask quick-fire questions in mental arithmetic and expect pupils to answer promptly. In the two lessons which were less than satisfactory, work was not structured well enough to keep pupils purposefully occupied and this resulted in wasted time. In literacy lessons, teachers choose texts which maintain pupils' interest and extend their knowledge and understanding of the rules of punctuation, grammar and spelling. Teachers' secure subject knowledge is a significant feature in the best lessons. Good teaching in physical education in the juniors helps pupils to make good progress and attain skills at an effective rate. Throughout the school, the good quality of the teaching in science accounts for the rising standards in the subject. Pupils' high levels of attainment in art, good performance in music and improving skills in ICT are the result of good teaching. In ICT, teachers' secure subject knowledge

enables them to support pupils as they acquire new skills in the computer suite and practise them in their own classrooms.

23. In most classes throughout the school, teachers manage pupils well so that their behaviour is good. In some lessons in the juniors and in the classes for pupils with special educational needs, teachers' management seems effortless and good behaviour is established firmly as the norm. In the best lessons, when teachers have high expectations and make these clear to the pupils, some very good work results. This occurred in religious education in Years 3 and 4, in mathematics and art in Years 5 and 6, and in a range of subjects in classes for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils are encouraged to become increasingly independent so that they find things out for themselves. For example, older pupils use the school library sensibly for research work.
24. Throughout the school, teachers keep good records of pupils' progress so that most lessons are planned at the appropriate level and pupils learn in a systematic, step-by-step way. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make very good progress in the early stages of learning English so that they are soon able to join in with activities confidently and make similar progress to other pupils. Teachers follow the individual education plans well for pupils with special educational needs who are in mainstream classes. These pupils develop good levels of self-esteem and make sound progress in the infants and their progress improves in the juniors. They benefit from the high levels of expertise in the special unit which are shared with all staff.
25. Teaching in the two classes for pupils with moderate learning difficulties is very good indeed. Teachers and support staff work together well as a team so that pupils benefit from high quality provision throughout the day. Pupils' individual education plans are carefully prepared and implemented so that pupils make good progress as they learn in a systematic and appropriate way which meets their individual needs. Staff engage with pupils, encourage and praise them so that their self-esteem is raised and they are confident learners. Resources are used very effectively. For example, staff make sure that pupils learn by observing and listening and by handling a good range of equipment. This enables pupils to gain increasing levels of competence in literacy, numeracy and the other subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education.
26. Overall, literacy and numeracy are taught and promoted satisfactorily throughout the school. Pupils' skills in English are extended well in many subjects, especially in the juniors, when teachers use specific vocabulary, in, for example, mathematics, science and art. Mathematical skills are employed in measuring activities in science, geography and design and technology. Teachers' plans often include aspects of ICT so that pupils use computers regularly as tools for learning. This aspect of planning is an important development in teaching throughout the school. Pupils develop good levels of independence in ICT.
27. Support staff are deployed effectively so that pupils benefit from learning in small groups in a range of subjects. Learning support assistants are involved in planning, are clear about the learning objectives and give support of good quality to pupils. Parents provide valuable help in a range of lessons so that teachers are able to focus on particular groups and give them concentrated teaching. Teachers use a range of appropriate resources imaginatively to reinforce pupils' learning, from simple washing lines with pegged numbers in numeracy lessons to interesting and exciting CD-ROMs to extend pupils' understanding in many subjects. Pupils benefit from well organised homework to consolidate and extend what pupils have learned in school and prepare for future lessons.

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

28. The school provides an appropriately broad and balanced curriculum for all its pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. The good range of activities enables pupils to learn in a variety of interesting ways. The curriculum meets statutory requirements to teach all subjects in the National Curriculum and religious education and younger pupils are provided with an appropriate curriculum based on the recommended early learning goals for children in the Foundation Stage. On the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools, there was a full audit of curricular provision at both schools and

existing systems were merged into an appropriate two-year rolling programme for the whole school. The school has made a sensible decision to review and update this later in the year when the first two-year cycle has been completed. Appropriate, largely nationally recommended, schemes of work are in place for all subjects, which give appropriate guidance to teachers and ensure that pupils develop their skills, knowledge and understanding progressively as they move through the school.

29. The school has implemented the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy well overall, but the latter is established more securely in the juniors than in the infants. This helps teachers to plan appropriate sets of lessons and individual lessons in a systematic way. The school provides effectively for equality of opportunity and positively reinforces this, for example through the inclusion of pupils in the special classes into the mainstream lessons. The curriculum is enriched through the provision of a suitable range of extra-curricular opportunities, including sporting and musical activities, throughout the school year. The school makes good provision for homework, which is usually set regularly in all classes.
30. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. It is very good in the two classes for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Arrangements for identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory in the infants and good in the juniors. A register of special educational needs is kept by the well-qualified and experienced co-ordinator and appropriately detailed individual educational plans are provided for identified pupils. Pupils with statements of educational need have appropriate support of good quality. Provision for these pupils is reviewed appropriately.
31. The school makes good provision overall for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, through assemblies and many other areas of the curriculum. This thoughtful provision enriches the curriculum and helps to raise pupils' self-esteem.
32. The school develops pupils' spiritual awareness well. Through the religious education syllabus and assemblies, the school provides pupils with knowledge and insight into a range of values and beliefs and enables them to reflect on their experiences. Through outside visits, and especially to Delamere Forest, pupils are given the chance to marvel at the wonders of the natural world. Opportunities are also made in other subjects in lesson time. For example, in a science lesson the teacher was demonstrating the principles of combustion to the older pupils, who were totally enthralled as they watched the changes in paper as it burned.
33. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. Principles distinguishing right from wrong are promoted appropriately and consistently by all staff, who provide very good role models for the pupils. From an early age pupils are taught to reflect on their own and others' actions; for example when they discuss the behaviour of characters in stories. The school has a clear and well understood system for behaviour management, to which pupils respond well. This clear moral code provides a firm basis for the good behaviour evident throughout the school, both in the classroom and outside.
34. Provision for pupils' social development is similarly good. Pupils are encouraged to work co-operatively and take responsibility for their work and for others. Older pupils often read to younger ones and pupils in the special classes. Class and school responsibilities increase appropriately as pupils get move through the school. Older pupils regularly help to clear up in the hall after dinner. Most pupils willingly volunteer to undertake duties, such as 'litter patrol' and in doing them demonstrate a good level of commitment. Supporting charities through fund-raising events further develops pupils' social awareness and their knowledge and understanding of the wider community. All pupils in the junior classes are given the opportunities to take part in residential visits, which strongly influence the development of good social skills. Activities, such as the 'Lighthouse Café', when pupils in Year 2 invited parents and friends to share the day with them, provide valuable social experiences.
35. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good overall. Pupils are provided with a wide range of opportunities to appreciate their own cultural traditions, especially through visiting local sites in connection with their historical and geographical studies. In addition, an appropriate range of opportunities is provided for pupils to develop an understanding of the diversity of other

cultures. Much of this is taught through stories from other cultures in literacy lessons, studies of contrasting communities in geography, study of the work of a range of artists, appraisal of music from other cultures and the study of other religions in religious education lessons. Working with visiting artists, writers and poets from their own and other cultures also enhances pupils' awareness of customs and ways in their own and of others' lives.

36. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education through all areas of the curriculum. Pupils value the opportunity to share their own thoughts and problems through 'circle time', when they sit in a circle to talk about such things. Appropriate sex education and drugs awareness policies are in place. The school's links with its partner institutions are good. The school has regular links with pre-school associations and the transfer arrangements when pupils move to secondary schools are very effective, including induction visits by pupils and from staff of the secondary schools. A very useful and recent initiative to promote a common understanding of teaching and learning in the primary school has been set up between the primary and secondary schools. Links with local colleges for the training of students are effective. There are very good links with the immediate locality, such as sponsorship, organised competitions and visits from industrial firms in connection with pupils' science work. These further enrich the range of curricular opportunities provided for the pupils.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

37. The school has appropriate facilities for twenty-four junior pupils with moderate learning difficulties. These pupils are taught in two classes, each of which is staffed by teacher and a learning support assistant, all of whom are well qualified and experienced. In addition, there is support from a part-time classroom assistant who works with younger pupils who have more severe difficulties. The classes are managed and led very well. Pupils join mainstream classes for pastoral, social and extra-curricular activities and some are integrated appropriately for other lessons, too. There are strong links with other specialist schools in Cheshire. The high levels of staff expertise in the special classes are used effectively throughout the school, particularly in the formulation of individual education plans for pupils and in providing advice for teaching and support staff.
38. All the pupils in the two special classes have been statutorily assessed, according to the Code of Practice, and issued with statements of special educational needs (1996 Act). The range of their needs is complex. Most pupils have moderate learning difficulties. In addition, there are some pupils with more severe learning difficulties and challenging behaviours. The unit also caters for pupils with medical conditions such as ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder). This range of needs requires a co-ordinated approach between the school and outside agencies in order to set up and maintain procedures, such as administering medication and establishing positive, effective and well-structured behaviour management strategies. The school also has a range of radio-aided equipment used for hearing-impaired pupils.
39. Standards of teaching in the two classes are very good, with examples of excellent teaching. Despite pupils' complex needs and the very low levels of attainment on entry to the special classes, most pupils are achieving better levels than predicted. Because of the staff's very good preparation of appropriate work and their skilful management, pupils show high levels of concentration, co-operation and commitment to the tasks. This contributes to the pupils' good progress. Lessons are planned very effectively with precise and challenging targets set for every pupil. Literacy is promoted well and there is appropriate emphasis on the teaching and learning of letter sound and patterns. Numeracy is taught in a step-by-step way which helps pupils to build effectively on what they already know. Teachers meet pupils' needs very effectively, seen, for example, when younger pupils were involved in shared reading activities in order to increase their interest in reading for information and pleasure. Together, they read an enlarged text of the story of Red Riding Hood. They then acted out the story, made puppets and were involved in writing and computer activities. At the end of the lesson, pupils reviewed what they had learned and discussed their own progress. All pupils benefited and each pupil had gained knowledge, understanding and skills at levels which extended their learning.
40. There is a high level of teamwork within and between the two classes. This creates a positive working and learning atmosphere which raises pupils' self-esteem and increases their desire to learn and succeed. Staff are very good role models and there is a sense of mutual respect between pupils and adults. There are high expectations of pupils' personal behaviour to which

pupils respond well, showing good levels of personal responsibility and initiative. Pupils' present their work very well; their handwriting is well formed and written work is completed with a sense of pride. This is reflected in the displays of work which include examples of writing by the staff. Resources are used imaginatively to motivate pupils. In an excellent religious education lesson for older pupils, the teacher stimulated the pupils' interest very effectively by showing them a beautiful copy of the Qur'an and informative photographs about Muslim worship. As a result, the pupils listened attentively, in an atmosphere of awe and wonder, and made very good gains in learning.

41. Pupils are assessed when they join the classes and regular assessments are carried out, particularly in English and mathematics. All pupils have access to a broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum which includes all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. Staff keep helpful regular records of how pupils are getting on so that they have a clear picture of each pupil's level of attainment. This information is used very effectively to inform the next stage of planning of work. Pupils are encouraged to assess their own performance. In a lesson about instructional texts, for example recipes, older pupils were encouraged to question, interpret and discuss their work so that they extended their knowledge of compound words and imperatives. The teacher used an excellent range of visual aids and computer software to reinforce the lesson objectives.
42. In both classes, there is a strong ethos of caring and commitment from staff and pupils. The 'traffic lights' system of positive behaviour management, which helps pupils to check their behaviour as soon as possible when things go wrong, is used alongside a range of effective and structured approaches to improve pupils' self-worth and self-control. Staff respond quickly and sensitively to deal with individual difficulties in an effective and non-confrontational manner. The successful integration of pupils into the mainstream classes has led the school to consider further development of this practice when it is helpful and appropriate for pupils.
43. The school receives valuable support from outside agencies, including the educational psychology and learning support services. Governors are very supportive and actively involved in the work in the special classes. They ensure that funding is allotted appropriately and that statements are reviewed and met as legally required.
44. Links with parents are very good and regular meetings are well supported. Some are of an informal nature, such as coffee mornings, and others are clearly focused on the pupils' particular needs. Parents are welcome in the classes at any time and information regarding pupils' progress and welfare is communicated very effectively.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45. The school promotes a positive ethos where pupils are known and valued as individuals. There are effective child protection procedures in place and these are known and understood by all the teachers. The school has adopted the local authority's health and safety policy and the guidelines are followed. During the inspection minor health and safety matters were drawn to the attention of the school, particularly the need for individuals to have clear understanding of the specific responsibilities. There are secure systems in place for the lunchtime supervision of the pupils and the midday staff are well aware of their duties and carry them out effectively. Procedures for monitoring pupils' attendance are satisfactory.
46. There is a very effective behaviour policy, which is known and understood by the pupils. The school rules are clearly displayed throughout the school and the teachers use them consistently. Pupils are known as individuals and there are good relationships within the school. The class teacher plays an important role in the pastoral care of the pupils, who know to whom they can turn to for help. There is a well understood and effective anti-bullying policy. The pupils are confident that any incidents will be dealt with fairly and quickly and the school fully involves the parents. There have been no exclusions during the past year.
47. There is good support throughout the school for pupils with special educational needs and specifically for those pupils with statements of special educational need. The school's co-ordinator works closely with all staff to produce consistent records which are used to identify pupils, allocate adult support, advise class teachers and guide future planning. Pupils with

statements of need receive the appropriate amount and type of support as outlined in their statutory assessments. The school's rigorous and sensitive support for pupils is demonstrated through the twice-yearly meetings, held to consider how they are getting on and evaluate provision for them.

48. Procedures for the overall assessment of pupils' attainment and progress are good. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are assessed in line with national procedures. As part of the local education authority's drive to raise standards in all schools in the area, pupils in Year 3 and Year 6 are assessed so that realistic targets can be set for groups of pupils in the school. Comprehensive data has been collated to monitor and track pupils' progress throughout the school. The use of assessment information to guide curricular planning is satisfactory, overall, with evidence of particularly good practice in science. Information from assessments is also used to good effect for target setting in English and mathematics. Pupils are involved in the setting of their own individual yearly targets in these subjects. Areas for improvement are identified during discussions with pupils, their parents and teachers. Pupils are also made aware of half-term targets linked to expectations at the end of each set of lessons. Teachers check what pupils have learned at the end of each lesson and use this information to plan the next work carefully to meet pupils' needs.
49. Teachers' marking of work also plays a significant role in the assessment of pupils' skills and understanding. Helpful comments make clear whether pupils have completed tasks well or explain what pupils can do to improve their performance. Assessment procedures are less well developed for subjects other than English, mathematics and science. Staff are working together to establish sensible methods of recording which are helpful and not too time consuming. Work has begun to assemble portfolios of pupils' work so that their progress can be followed more effectively. Whole-school recording of pupils' personal development is at an early stage, but the school has a range of evidence which is shared with parents at open evenings and in annual reports.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

50. The school has good links with parents, who are supportive of the school. The returned questionnaires show that parents are particularly pleased with the progress their children make and feel there is good teaching in the school. They think that the pupils behave well and that their children are encouraged to work hard. A significant number of parents expressed concerns about the amount of homework set and the variety of extra-curricular activities provided by the school. Inspectors shared the parents' positive views of the school but considered that the school provides a satisfactory range of out-of-school activities and appropriate amounts of homework are set.
51. The school holds regular parents' evenings and these are well attended. If parents cannot attend on the specified day, the school arranges a separate appointment for them. Teachers are available both before and after school to talk to parents should any concerns or problems arise. The school produces regular newsletters to keep parents aware of forthcoming events and staff news. At the beginning of each term a newsletter is sent to parents, outlining the work their children will be doing. Parents value this information and say that it helps them to support their children with learning at home. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Parents receive informative and helpful annual reports on their children's progress. The school is exploring ways to improve the information in these reports so that parents have an even clearer picture of how their children are getting on.
52. Parental support for the school makes a significant contribution to the pupils' learning. Parents regularly help in the classrooms and on educational visits and they are invited to attend special assemblies and class events. The school encourages parents to join 'Lifelong Learning' courses, such as a basic computer class, run in conjunction the local college of further education. Parents also come into school for specific activities, such as helping with the gardening club, art lessons and the after-school football club. There is an active Friends of the School Association which regularly organises social and fund-raising events. These are well supported by parents and school staff.

53. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to contact the school or visit whenever they wish to discuss their children's progress or personal development. In addition, there are regular school events and bulletins to keep staff and parents in touch. Most parents are very supportive of the school's provision for their children. Staff in the special classes for pupils with moderate learning difficulties hold regular meetings, coffee mornings and other social events. The pupils enjoy these occasions, which raise their self-esteem and provide opportunities for them to display their best work.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. The leadership and management of the headteacher and senior staff are good overall. The headteacher is new to her post this term and has quickly identified the main strengths and weaknesses in the school. She has a clear and shared vision for continuing improvement and is building on her previous experience to formulate strategies to move the school forward. She is well supported by a talented deputy headteacher and experienced senior teachers. The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is a particular strength. Pupils' needs and achievements are systematically monitored and individual education plans are well targeted.
55. The current deputy headteacher made an outstanding contribution as acting headteacher during the amalgamation of the two former schools. For a year, the school operated on two sites. Pupils and staff then underwent considerable disturbance as the infants moved to join the juniors. Decisive leadership set a clear path with well-defined, appropriate priorities which motivated staff and pupils alike. This positive, resolute approach continues to give the school the capacity for sustained improvement under leadership of the newly appointed headteacher. A clear statement of aims is included in the school's development plan but has not yet been shared fully with parents, for example through the prospectus. Overall, the aims and values adopted are satisfactorily reflected in the school's work. In order to bind the two schools together and provide appropriate support for the infant pupils who moved to a new environment, the staff and governors have focused on establishing an ethos of care and support. The school is aware of the need to move forward now, with a stronger focus on the raising of academic standards.
56. Teachers have taken on new roles positively to meet the needs of a primary school. The management team is gradually coming together as an effective unit which drives the school forward to meet its aims. All subject co-ordinators are effective. The co-ordinators for art and ICT contribute significantly to the current high standards in those subjects, as do those for science and literacy. The recently appointed headteacher has already identified the enhancement of the role of co-ordinators as a major feature for the development of the school and the raising of standards. At present, there are too few opportunities for co-ordinators to monitor teaching and learning in the classrooms.
57. The governing body is conscientious and well informed. Governors play an effective role in discussing and shaping the direction of the school's development. For example, each governor works with a co-ordinator in order to be more aware of the teaching and learning in the new school. This information is shared at meetings of the full governing body. Governors attend training sessions held by the local education authority in order to know more about their responsibilities and the legal aspects of school government. The procedures for the organisation of meetings and the management of business are good. In order to ensure that all aspects are dealt with effectively, the governors have set up an effective system of committees which refer back to the full governing body. As a result, governors are effective in fulfilling most of their statutory duties but there are some minor omissions in the school prospectus and their annual report to parents.
58. Arrangements for the monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance and taking effective action are satisfactory overall. The school makes good use of the robust analysis of pupils' performance in national tests. Strengths and weaknesses are clearly identified and targets are set and with a clear view to improving standards of pupils' attainment. Subject co-ordinators are appropriately involved in the establishment of appropriate priorities in the school's helpful development plan. This document provides a good basis for school improvement and the action taken to meet the school's targets is satisfactory. Co-ordinators are not yet sufficiently involved

in the next stage of the plan; that is, to monitor the effectiveness of developments and ascertain whether the pupils are benefiting sufficiently. At present the school's procedures for the monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching are not rigorous enough. The headteacher has clear plans to implement a carefully targeted and systematic programme of monitoring across the school so that subject co-ordinators are more involved.

59. The quality of financial planning is generally good, income and expenditure are well monitored and the use and deployment of resources are good, overall. Governors manage the school's budget effectively and take appropriate advice from officers of the local education authority. Expenditure closely matches the school's priorities and there is appropriate consideration for best value for money. Governors consider alternatives and consult with staff appropriately before making financial decisions but do not monitor and evaluate the effects of their spending with sufficient rigour. For example, provision for reception age children and pupils in Year 1 does not always meet their needs well enough. The two year-groups are at different stages of education and there is not enough adult support for pupils to gain maximum benefit from lessons. Day-to-day financial procedures are well established. The most recent auditor's report indicates that financial management is effective. Some adjustments to procedures were recommended and these are in hand. Specific grants are well targeted for pupils with special educational needs. However, pupils in Year 6 do not always benefit fully from the funding for separate 'booster' groups, set up to raise pupils' levels of attainment. Provision for these pupils, who are withdrawn to a separate room, does not always match the high quality of teaching in their own classrooms. The organisation of the school day is efficient and the school makes satisfactory use of new technology. Administrative staff deal very efficiently with day-to-day business so that teachers are not disturbed unnecessarily in lessons.
60. There are enough well-qualified teachers to meet the needs of the curriculum but too few support staff for pupils in the reception and infant classes. This is slowing down pupils' progress. Staffing provision is good in the two specialist classes for pupils with special educational needs. Staff training to meet the needs of the curriculum is organised effectively as part of the school's development plan. New arrangements for teachers' professional development, in line with national guidelines, are to be implemented this term.
61. The quality and range of learning resources are satisfactory overall. Strengths include provision for design and technology and for ICT. There is ample storage space which is used well so that equipment and resources are stored effectively and are accessible to staff and pupils. The school makes good use of the local library service to support English and other subjects.
62. The school's accommodation is spacious and well suited to the needs of most areas of the curriculum. There are ample playing fields and hard play areas but the latter are not marked out for any games or activities and there is a lack of appropriate outdoor provision for the reception class. Considerable work, undertaken prior to the amalgamation of the two schools, has resulted in a pleasant environment for the staff and pupils. The whole site is well maintained and kept scrupulously clean. The classrooms are bright, tidy and attractively decorated with beautiful, informative displays of pupils' work.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

63. The school governors, in conjunction with the headteacher and staff, should take the following actions to further raise standards in the school.

(1) *Raise standards in English and mathematics in the infants by:

- improving the organisation of the teaching of these subjects in Year 1;
- raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in all classes;
- setting challenging but realistic targets for all pupils and monitoring them rigorously.

(Paragraphs 2, 5, 6, 19, 21, 75, 77, 79, 82, 84, 86, 88, 90)

(2) *Further develop the role of co-ordinators by:

- Planning and implementing a programme of classroom monitoring so that co-ordinators are more able to have a positive influence on teaching and learning in their subjects.

(Paragraphs 58, 93, 103, 119, 144)

(3) *Improve provision for children in the Foundation Stage by:

- Improving the level of adult support for them in the classrooms;
- Providing appropriate outdoor play facilities.

(Paragraphs 62, 69, 72)

* The school has already identified these as areas for improvement.

Other areas which governors should consider for inclusion in the action plan:

These are:

- To rectify minor omissions in the governors' annual report to parents and in the school prospectus.

(Paragraph 57)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

74

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

42

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	24	30	34	5	1	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	327
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	56

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	18
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	86

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	20
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
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
		2000	19	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	8	13
	Girls	17	18	19
	Total	26	26	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	68 (84)	68 (84)	84 (79)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	12	10
	Girls	18	18	19
	Total	27	30	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	71 (79)	79 (79)	76 (84)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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
		2000	27	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	15	23
	Girls	20	22	25
	Total	35	37	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	59 (76)	64 (79)	83 (77)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	17	21
	Girls	21	21	26
	Total	35	38	47
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	60 (77)	68 (82)	81 (81)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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	290
Any other minority ethnic group	1

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 – Y7

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.3
Average class size	25.2

Education support staff: YR – Y7

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	159

Financial information

Financial year	1999
	£
Total income	700999
Total expenditure	689676
Expenditure per pupil	1954
Balance brought forward from previous year	22271
Balance carried forward to next year	33594

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	327
Number of questionnaires returned	139

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	55	36	7	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	46	44	5	4	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	39	14	1	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	43	17	7	3
The teaching is good.	51	43	4	1	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	42	18	6	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	30	12	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	36	7	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	30	44	21	3	1
The school is well led and managed.	35	46	8	2	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	46	7	2	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	36	22	10	10

Other issues raised by parents

A few parents were concerned about the school's provision for their children who had special educational needs and were in mainstream classes. These concerns were investigated and it was found that the school has dealt with the issues appropriately and communicated satisfactorily with parents.

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

64. Children under six years old are taught in three classes which include reception age children and pupils in Year 1. Children start school with a wide range of attainment but the majority achieve standards below those expected for their age in literacy and numeracy. Few children have experienced pre-school nursery education. The school has embraced the recently introduced curriculum for the Foundation Stage positively and all staff are aware of the 'stepping stones' of children's development between the ages of four and six. Children, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress and meet the nationally agreed early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development by the time they are six. However, they do not reach the expected standards for their age in communication, language and literacy or in mathematical development.

Personal, social and emotional development

65. Children enjoy coming to school and they soon follow routines and join in activities confidently. Their self-control strengthens and they gradually develop a knowledge of what is right and what is wrong. As they play together in the role-play areas, children become more aware of how to play co-operatively so that everyone is happy. Staff help all children to become valued members of the community and relationships in the classrooms are good. As they work well together in groups, children become increasingly independent, despite the lack of appropriate adult support in many lessons, when teachers are alone in classrooms with mixed-age classes. Teaching is satisfactory and children develop secure self-esteem and increasing levels of concentration which help them to acquire skills, knowledge and understanding at a satisfactory rate. Staff give children time to explain what they mean and encourage them to express their views, share their ideas and respect the views of other children. In discussions, staff ensure that children take turns fairly.

Communication, language and literacy

66. Children, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. The majority of children are keen to communicate with one another and with adults. Children gradually learn to settle down quietly and listen attentively in story and discussion periods. They enjoy saying rhymes and joining in the repetitive sections of stories. They begin to use appropriate language to express their ideas, particularly in mathematics and literacy sessions. Staff provide a wide range of opportunities for all children to talk, communicate and extend the range of their vocabulary in a widening range of situations. Children handle books and turn pages carefully and enjoy talking about the pictures. They gradually gain understanding of how print carries meaning and that it is read from left to right. By the time they are six years old, higher attaining children confidently read simple books with repetitive texts. There is a good range of attractive story and non-fiction books in all three classes and children develop a love of literature which makes them want to learn to read. Children join in the literacy hour with pupils from Year 1 and appropriate teaching of letter sounds and shapes begins as soon as children start school. Writing is not so well developed. Most children hold pencils correctly, write their names and copy the teachers' writing with increasing levels of skill. Teaching is satisfactory, with evidence of good teaching when teachers are able to concentrate on the learning of specific groups of children. When there is less adult support, a significant number of children are not able to write familiar words, captions and simple sentences in regular, well-formed characters. Higher attaining pupils write simple sentences confidently and show a clear sense of narrative as they write about their experiences.

Mathematical development

67. Children have a wide range of sorting and matching experiences and develop an appropriate vocabulary to express size, shape and colour. Children, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress from a low start and gradually acquire appropriate mathematical

language. A significant number of children have difficulty in expressing their ideas and understanding but in practical activities they show clear understanding of sharing fairly and matching objects. As they play purposefully with sand, children develop specific vocabulary such as 'more' and 'less'. Most children count to twenty and count objects to ten correctly but are not confident in combining two groups of objects or taking one away. Higher attaining children understand the idea of needing more or less to make a given number of objects and begin to develop an awareness of addition and subtraction. Teaching is satisfactory and staff develop children's mathematical language and ideas throughout the day, during stories and discussion times and in a range of practical activities. Children become increasingly aware of different shapes as they fix components together to make lorries and boats.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

68. Children develop their knowledge and understanding of the world effectively through well-structured activities in both classes. Teaching is satisfactory. Some good teaching was seen, about the environment and the jobs people do. Children build walls from bricks, send letters and learn about a park-keeper. They explore and find out about their own environment. They go for walks to local places of interest and enjoy visits from members of the local fire service. They consider what they eat and what their pets eat. Children gain a deeper understanding of the passage of time as they see changes in their own growth and experiences. The good provision of construction kits and building blocks helps children to gain appropriate levels of skill to build, construct and join materials together. Computer skills develop appropriately and teachers set up programs which enhance children's skills in areas such as literacy, numeracy and art. Children gain increasing understanding of places of worship when they join with pupils from Year 1 to visit a local church.

Physical development

69. Children move confidently, with normal co-ordination and control, when they join with older pupils at playtimes. They show increasing awareness of space as they move about the classrooms, go to assemblies and collect their meals in the dining hall. Only part of one physical education lesson was seen during the inspection, therefore no judgement can be made on teaching. As they danced, children skipped and clapped, following the teacher's example well. They 'froze' as a tree and crept nimbly around the 'forest'. In stories, science lessons and discussions, children learn about parts of the body, healthy foods and the importance of exercise. They increase their levels of manipulative control as they play with malleable materials such as clay and dough. Most children develop appropriate manipulative control necessary for writing, drawing and painting and they fix components together effectively to make models from construction kits. Opportunities for imaginative and robust outdoor play are restricted by the lack of a secure fenced area with equipment such as climbing frames or pedalled toys for these young children, who spend most of the daylight hours at school during the winter.

Creative development

70. Children use a wide variety of media, including paint, crayons and collage, to make pictures with a range of textures. They create bright patterns as they print with a range of objects. They share their ideas through simple drawings of people and events in their own lives and their paintings are bold and colourful. Art work is used well to enhance other subjects. Children create colourful and bold pictures of the characters from the story of 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff' and illustrate their written work in all subjects with lively drawings. Children know a good range of songs from memory. They sing tunefully and listen well when they join in assemblies with older pupils. In the role-play areas, children create situations and imagine themselves as adults such as builders. Staff organise activities well and teaching is satisfactory. Children with special educational needs benefit greatly from this aspect of the curriculum.

Teaching and provision

71. The quality of teaching for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Teachers and classroom assistants prepare first-hand experiences which encourage children to explore and discuss the world around them. There is appropriate emphasis on the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Most of the morning is spent on these. Relationships between staff and children are good and the good management of children produces a positive atmosphere so that children enjoy coming to school. Staff take care to ensure that children with special educational needs are supported appropriately. The recently appointed co-ordinator for Key Stage 1 and the Foundation Stage is gradually establishing consistent ways of teaching in the three classes which include reception-age children. The team of teachers and classroom assistants plan series of lessons together, use similar learning resources and organise lessons in the same way. This has been particularly effective in the school's drive to raise standards of children's writing. The stepping stones of children's development are provided for satisfactorily in the classrooms and teachers provide a satisfactory balance of directed activities and others which children can choose for themselves. There is insufficient adult support for children under six to benefit fully from activities.
72. Good schemes of work closely follow national guidance and the co-ordinator monitors teachers' lesson plans to ensure that learning objectives are clear and resources are appropriately identified. The school's current development plan includes plans to further improve the quality of teaching and provision. Assessment procedures are good and staff make appropriate use of findings to plan increasingly effective programmes of teaching in keeping with children's needs. Appropriate statutory assessments take place soon after children start school. The school builds good links with parents, who help children with simple homework such as reading. Learning resources are adequate but outdoor provision is unsatisfactory.

ENGLISH

73. In the year 2000 National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds, the school's results were well below the national average and very low when compared with schools where pupils have similar backgrounds. These results were lower than in 1999. The drop was mainly due to the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs who took the tests in 2000, many of whom were in the special classes. This also was a contributing factor on the school's not reaching its target for English that year. Boys' achievement was slightly better than girls' in 2000.
74. Results for seven-year-olds were well below the average for all schools nationally for both reading and writing in 2000. This was mainly because there was a lower percentage of pupils achieving level 2, the expected National Curriculum level for seven-year-olds, and very few reached a higher level. When compared with schools where pupils have comparable backgrounds, pupils achieved results well below average in reading and results were very low in writing.
75. Evidence from inspection indicates that the majority of pupils in the current Year 6 are likely to attain the expected standards by the end of the year. Eleven-year-olds in the special class, although achieving well below the national standards for their age group, are achieving very well in relation to their prior attainment. Although most pupils in Year 2 have speaking and listening skills which match those of seven-year-olds nationally, most of them are unlikely to achieve the expected standards of this age group in reading and writing by the end of the year. In classes of reception children and pupils from Year 1, the higher attaining pupils do not always make the progress and achieve as well as they should because the work set for them is often too easy. From a low start, pupils make good progress and achieve well by the time they are eleven years old. Progress and achievement are satisfactory in the infants and they improve in the juniors, mainly because of the good quality of the teaching. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. They are usually supported appropriately in lessons with work matched to their particular needs. This is particularly so for the pupils in the special classes, where their progress was often observed to be very good.
76. Most pupils have speaking and listening skills which are at least in line with those of seven and eleven-year-olds nationally and listening skills are often better. Most pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to each other and throughout the school the majority of pupils express their ideas well. For example, during a science lesson, pupils in Years 3 and 4 confidently discussed

a display of stuffed animals, identifying them and suggesting similarities. During a class assembly, pupils in Years 5 and 6 were confident as they discussed their strengths and weaknesses and expressed some very sensible and reflective ideas and thoughts about the things they valued. Teachers encourage good speech and teachers of the younger pupils often repeat words to ensure correct pronunciation. They also encourage pupils who are more reluctant to speak to contribute to discussions. During their time in school, pupils have opportunities to speak to wider audiences - for example, in assemblies and concerts.

77. In general, the reading skills of pupils in Year 2 are below those of seven-year-olds nationally. All pupils benefit from reading together from enlarged texts in the literacy hour. Most pupils recognise simple, commonly used words and acquire an increasing range of strategies to decipher unfamiliar words. They build words from letter sounds, get clues from illustrations, try words which make sense and break words into syllables. Pupils who learn more slowly have difficulty in blending sounds together but they try hard and most are keen readers who enjoy books and want to find out what's in them. The majority of pupils read well-chosen books accurately but they lack fluency. Able pupils show clear understanding of simple text, talk about the characters in the stories they have read and discuss other stories they have heard. They use the contents and index pages of books confidently. They like to visit the school library to read for information. This supports their learning in other subjects very effectively.
78. Pupils make good progress in their reading and achieve well by the time they are eleven years old, when the majority read at the level expected for their age. In the literacy hour, pupils benefit from the guided study of texts matched appropriately to their attainment levels. Because they have become more familiar with patterns of words and have developed more pace, pupils read with increasing accuracy and understanding. Some of the quicker learning pupils read fluently, with good expression. Most of these pupils retell the story so far and remember with enthusiasm the plots of stories they have read before. Able pupils draw reasons and conclusions from their reading and look for meaning beyond the literal. Most pupils read for their own interest and pleasure and often give considered reasons why they choose a book to read. They have favourite authors, choose books because of the 'blurb' on the cover or make their choice because of their hobbies or interests. Increasingly, pupils use their reading to support other subjects as they refer to books in the school library or search for information on the Internet or in CD-ROMs.
79. In the infants, the writing skills of the seven-year-olds are below average. Most pupils in Year 1 are beginning, with help, to write short sentences, when, for example, they write captions spoken by storybook characters, but they are often unsure of the spelling of simple, frequently used words. However, able pupils express their ideas well and organise their writing effectively, when, for example, they write simple book reviews. In Year 2, higher attaining pupils use capital letters and full stops to punctuate their sentences independently but most pupils need to be reminded to do this. Most pupils print their work neatly and the best examples are displayed to encourage good practice. By the time they are seven, most pupils write for a wide range of purposes but they need a great deal of support to produce work of an appropriate quality for their age. The youngest pupils write simple lists. Pupils in Year 2 record their observations of plant growth in science. In history, pupils list the differences between old and new teddy bears. They rewrite fairy stories such as 'Jack and the Beanstalk' and add their own ideas by changing the characters and other features. They write diaries describing a day in the life of Cinderella. However, very few pupils produce work of significant quality and length and few using interesting words to bring life to their work.
80. Standards of spelling, punctuation and grammar are satisfactory by the time pupils are eleven years old. Most pupils in Year 6 plan, draft and revise their work and are beginning to use paragraphs successfully in their writing. The presentation of work and handwriting are generally satisfactory and, by the end of the juniors, most pupils write in a neat cursive style. Pupils gain valuable skills and knowledge in the use of English grammar, punctuation and vocabulary through regular practice in lessons. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 discussed and explored the use of homophones and then wrote sentences to demonstrate their understanding. Pupils wrote imaginative poems using, for example, idioms and others modelled on the work of well known poets. In Years 3 and 4, pupils listened to well-known fables and then wrote interesting character studies and stories of their own. Other work on display shows simple book reviews and play scripts written in the conventional style. In all classes, pupils use their writing skills well to support other subjects. Throughout the juniors, pupils use their writing to express their ideas,

create stories and poems and record their work in other subjects. After their residential trip to Delamere, pupils in Years 3 and 4 wrote poetry, letters and persuasive and personal writing. As part of their geographical studies, pupils had also written newspaper reports about the floods in Northwich. During their study of World War II, pupils in Years 5 and 6 wrote sensitive and imaginative poetry and after a visit to the local chapel they wrote interesting reports, thoughtful prayers and searching questions. Following their extensive scientific and geographical research into the Brazilian rainforest, pupils in Years 5 and 6 produced some well written accounts using correct scientific vocabulary. Throughout the juniors, pupils use dictionaries effectively to help with their spellings and by the time they are eleven, most pupils use thesauruses confidently.

81. Most pupils are enthusiastic about their work and are keen to learn. The majority of pupils enjoy reading for a range of purposes in school and read for pleasure at home. Pupils usually respond enthusiastically to their teachers, make constructive contributions to lessons and answer questions appropriately. Pupils want to communicate. They talk confidently to visitors and enjoy writing letters. Younger pupils wrote to a witch who was character in a story they has read together. Older pupils write to thank people who have helped them during visits to places of interest.
82. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. It is good in the juniors but variable in the infants. Nearly all the teaching observed was satisfactory or better, two-thirds was good or better and a quarter was very good. As a result, pupils learn at a good rate. Teaching in the special classes is very good overall; an excellent lesson was observed there. In general, teachers plan their lessons well in line with the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy. In the best lessons, teachers use skilful questioning to elicit pupils' understanding and extend their learning. They value the contributions made by pupils and probe to ensure that there is clear understanding of work done in previous lessons. This ensures that pupils build in a systematic way on what they already know and teachers are able match work accurately to the differing needs of pupils. In activities which follow the initial discussions, teachers give clear instructions and explanations so that pupils know exactly what to do and can get on with their work confidently. Most teachers monitor pupils' reading carefully in the guided reading sessions in the literacy hour. Monitoring also extends to the reading which pupils do at home. Many pupils, even the oldest, share their reading books with their parents, who contribute effectively to their children's reading record book and maintain useful dialogue with class teachers.
83. The school has set challenging but realistic targets for the eleven-year-olds in the National Curriculum tests for 2001. The co-ordinator has worked very hard to promote literacy throughout the school and improve standards, particularly in writing, and she monitors teachers' planning regularly. Pupils use their writing skills for an increasingly broad range of imaginative and relevant purposes, in subjects other than English. Monitoring of teaching and learning in lessons is a developing feature in the school's drive to raise standards and governors play an increasing role in the school's commitment to improvement. A named governor meets the school co-ordinator regularly and feeds back information on developments to the full governing body. The school has a clear and appropriate policy statement for English and the schemes of work closely follow those recommended in the National Literacy Strategy. Resources are adequate and the school is enhancing its supply of books to ensure that there is a growing variety of material to stimulate pupils' interests and meet their needs in all subjects' demands of the curriculum. Extra books are borrowed from the local schools' library service to extend the provision of interesting reading material and special information for class topics.

MATHEMATICS

84. The school's results in the National Curriculum tests for seven and eleven-year-olds in 2000 were well below average compared with all schools nationally and in comparison with similar schools. The results, which were lower than in 1999, were affected in the juniors by the inclusion of a number of pupils with significant levels of special educational needs. Analysis of the year 2000 results for eleven-year-olds, excluding the results of pupils with statements of special educational needs, indicates that the majority of pupils attained standards close to the national expectation. However, the percentage of pupils attaining level 5, the higher level, was well below average. Results for seven-year-olds show that almost seven out of ten pupils attained level 2, the nationally expected level for the age group. However, few pupils attained level 3, the higher level.

85. The judgement of the current inspection is that standards of attainment are broadly in line with national expectations at the end of the juniors. The majority of pupils achieve well and attain satisfactory standards because they experience a wide range of mathematical activities which are taught well. Progress is at least satisfactory and is good where skilled teaching ensures a brisk pace to lessons. The rate at which pupils learn in the juniors is improving because of the high quality of teaching in many lessons. Pupils also achieve well in the juniors because of the school's successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, the increasing use of information from the school's results in national tests and the setting of targets for individual pupils.
86. Overall, current seven-year-olds achieve standards which are below average. This judgement is broadly in line with the standards indicated by the most recent National Curriculum test results. Many pupils begin from a low starting point but progress is too slow in the infants. Able pupils do not achieve as well as they should because teachers' expectations are not always high enough across all aspects of the subject. The majority of pupils performed satisfactorily in the lessons seen, but the teaching was not always well focused and practical work was often not sufficiently challenging. When pupils are well motivated - for example, in the mental arithmetic sessions at the beginning of lessons when teachers keep pupils 'on their toes' - the rate of learning improves. This enables pupils to think mathematically and to explain their methods of calculation. With brisker, more challenging teaching, this ability to 'play with numbers' should give the majority of pupils the capacity to reach the expected levels for seven-year-olds by the end of the academic year. Currently, most pupils are not sufficiently confident in using their mathematical knowledge to solve everyday problems. The co-ordinator has identified this as an issue to resolve and the staff are exploring ways to improve pupils' attainment in this aspect of the subject.
87. At the end of the juniors, pupils gain confidence in solving mathematical problems and developing suitable recording systems. Pupils have a sound knowledge of number and are able to identify the value of particular digits (for example, in 385, as three hundreds, eight tens and five units.) Pupils identify patterns and relationships in series of numbers. Most use appropriate methods of calculation with fractions, decimals and percentages. They can represent information in a variety of ways, such as in pie, bar and line graphs and are gaining increasing confidence in interpreting information. Most pupils correctly name and know the properties of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. Many confidently estimate and measure length, calculate areas, draw angles accurately and can name different types of angle.
88. By the end of the infants, most pupils can read, write and count numbers to 100. They use signs such as +, - and = with confidence. Able pupils show a growing understanding of place value as they partition numbers into tens and units. Higher attaining pupils can add and subtract two digit numbers and use suitable methods of recording. In mental arithmetic sessions, most pupils count on and back in twos and tens from different numbers. Most know the names and properties of common two-dimensional shapes. More able pupils have some knowledge of three-dimensional shapes but they are not well able to describe their properties. Most pupils are beginning to use appropriate mathematical language when discussing their work but a significant number need adult support to sort out their ideas and organise the recording of their work. Pupils recognise most coins but are less adept in adding amounts. Pupils have a developing knowledge of a range of units of measurement and, after early practice with non-standard units, able pupils become increasingly confident with standard measures such as centimetres.
89. Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject and behave well. The majority sustain interest and concentration in lessons. Levels of involvement are particularly high where pupils are set challenging and interesting work, such as determining the calculations required to reach a target number. When given the opportunity, pupils collaborate well. Older pupils, for example, enthusiastically share their ideas and discuss their methods of recording their mathematical investigations.
90. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, but it was better in the juniors than in the infants. In the juniors, more than a third of the teaching seen was very good, but there was evidence of a small amount of teaching which was less than satisfactory. In the infants, only one good lesson was seen and a third of the teaching was unsatisfactory because teachers' expectations were not

high enough for all pupils and lessons were poorly paced. Overall, teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory and the effective whole-school plan supports teachers' planning of lessons well. The teaching of basic number skills is satisfactory, overall, with some good practice taking place in mental arithmetic sessions.

91. Where teachers use a good range of methods to promote learning and pupils are managed well, their levels of interest and concentration are maintained well. Simple resources, such as a large grid marked with numbers to a hundred, help infant pupils to understand patterns and sequences of numbers. Teachers encourage all pupils to participate fully in lessons by providing them with cards which they hold up to show the answers to questions. The pace of working slows where tasks require only a limited effort and pupils are not sufficiently motivated. When teachers choose relevant topics which spark pupils' interest, the levels of learning rise and pupils are enthusiastic. This was clearly demonstrated when pupils in Years 5 and 6 were asked to investigate the possible combinations of items of clothing. Most pupils quickly determined logical methods of working and more able pupils worked out the patterns mentally. However, where lessons are not organised so well, pupils lose interest and the quality of learning is reduced. For example, progress was slow when pupils in Years 5 and 6 were asked to calculate the cost of meals in different currencies. The task was not made clear and too little guidance was given to help pupils organise their calculations. In general, teachers set homework effectively to support and extend pupils' learning.
92. Leadership and management of the subject is satisfactory overall. The co-ordinator is particularly well supported by the deputy headteacher in ensuring a clear educational direction in introducing the National Numeracy Strategy. Since the new primary school was formed, a well considered and helpful whole-school plan for the curriculum has been implemented.
93. There are good arrangements to monitor pupils' progress. In the junior classes, day-to-day assessments are used well to promote progress in lessons and to adapt planning to ensure the next stage of learning is relevant. The school makes good use of the analysis of pupils' performance in national and school-based tests to group pupils and set individual targets which are shared with pupils and parents. The co-ordinator has identified the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and the school has established appropriate priorities for development. However, regular, rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning is at an early stage. The strategy to accelerate the rate of learning of a group of pupils in Year 6 loses its intended impact when teaching is not always sufficiently well focused. Overall, resources for the subject are satisfactory and good use is made of ICT to reinforce and extend pupils' learning.

SCIENCE

94. The school's results in the 2000 National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds were average in comparison with all schools nationally and below average in comparison with similar schools. The percentage who achieved the expected level 4 was slightly below the national average and the percentage achieving level 5 (the higher level) was broadly in line with the national average. Taking into account the significant number of pupils with special educational needs who took the tests, these are good results. Over the past two years, boys have performed better than girls.
95. In the teacher assessments in science in 2000, the results of seven-year-olds at Barnton were well below average in comparison with all schools nationally and with similar schools. The percentages who achieved the expected level 2 and the higher level (level 3) were well below average nationally. Over the last two years, girls have performed slightly better than boys.
96. The trend in the school's results in the 2000 national tests for eleven-year-olds was sharply upwards from 1999 and 2000. There was a downward trend in the results for seven-year-olds. Current inspection evidence indicates that the school's rigorous analysis of results and the increasing use of investigative work to increase pupils' knowledge and understanding of science has had a significant positive effect on standards. Most pupils' attainment is now above expectations for eleven-year-olds and it is in line with expectations at the end of the infants, when pupils are seven. Pupils achieve well by the time they leave the school because they enjoy science and are taught well in the juniors.

97. By the time they are eleven years old, pupils extend their scientific understanding effectively and develop a growing scientific vocabulary which they use with increasing confidence. In class discussions, pupils make simple predictions before they investigate the effect of combustion on a piece of paper. They draw on well-organised experiences which add relevance to their learning. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 remembered the recent visit from the local fire service when they learned about the 'triangle' of fuel, heat and oxygen, which is necessary to cause burning. As they investigated 'food chains', pupils in Years 3 and 4 used words such as 'habitat' and demonstrated awareness of the links between plants and animals. They know that the chain begins with a plant eaten by an animal. Their understanding was enhanced by a recent visit to a nearby forest where they carried out fieldwork. Pupils in the special unit benefit greatly from this relevant approach and they progress well. As they explore how materials change when they are heated, pupils melt chocolate, melt ice and cook an egg. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 explore how solids are held in suspension. They dissolve a range of materials such as salt and sugar and use a variety of ways to separate the mixtures. Throughout the school, teachers provide simple, helpful recording frameworks to help lower attaining pupils to record their findings. Other pupils are sometimes not given enough opportunities to organise their recordings in their own way. Many have secure skills in ICT which could be used more effectively for such work.
98. Pupils make sound progress in the infants and, by the time they are seven years old, the attainment of most pupils is broadly in line with national expectations. They acquire simple scientific knowledge and skills through class discussions and simple investigations. In Year 1, pupils quickly name a number of domestic appliances and sort them into electrical and non-electrical groups. In Year 2, pupils explore the connections necessary to make a small bulb light up and offer ideas as to why this should happen. Most pupils make sensible predictions before they carry out investigations but many are not able to transfer these ideas in simple written work without help. Higher attaining pupils record their work systematically. Pupils gain increasing knowledge and understanding of life processes and living things. They recognise that living things grow, reproduce and live in various habitats. In their study of plants, most pupils demonstrate secure knowledge of the different parts of a flower as they label their drawings correctly.
99. Most pupils have positive attitudes to science. The majority of pupils listen well to the teachers and are keen to get involved in investigations. Good relationships are evident when teachers ask searching questions to elicit pupils' understanding and extend their learning. As they work on experiments, pupils listen well to one another and share equipment fairly. They are aware of the importance of care and safety during investigations.
100. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Throughout the school, teachers engage well in detailed discussion in order to raise the levels of pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally good and this enables them to tease out pupils' thoughts and help them to gain a deeper understanding of scientific ideas. In an excellent lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6, the teacher's practical demonstration caught the attention of pupils and promoted excellent levels of learning. Teachers promote literacy well in the subject, particularly in the development of appropriate scientific vocabulary. This is evident in teachers' well-written and clear lesson plans for most lessons. Clear learning objectives are shared with the pupils at the beginning of lessons so that pupils understand what they are about to learn. When objectives are not made clear to pupils, lessons lose pace and pupils do not achieve as well as they could. In the best lessons, there is a good pace to the work and an appropriate balance between discussion, investigation and reflection on what has been learned.
101. Occasionally, the rate of learning slackens when lessons are too long and pupils lose interest but pupils work hard and achieve well in most lessons. Teachers emphasise the learning of key words so that pupils acquire specific scientific vocabulary systematically; for example, when pupils in Year 2 learn the appropriate words to express their knowledge of conductors and insulators. In the special education unit, pupils benefit from teaching of high quality. Staff have high expectations and manage pupils very well so that small incidences of inattention are dealt with promptly and pupils are quickly re-integrated into activities. Throughout the school, teachers' planning includes tasks at appropriate levels for all groups of pupils. As a result, pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make progress in line with other pupils.

102. Support staff are usually deployed well to ensure that pupils maintain their interest and involvement in investigations. Mathematics is developed satisfactorily as pupils measure differences and count occurrences but ICT is not used and developed sufficiently. This is partly due to the school's lack of appropriate equipment, such as thermal sensors. Teachers organise informative and attractive displays which raise pupils' self-esteem and celebrate their good work. Staff make good use of the local environment and local organisations and firms to enrich the curriculum and bring relevance to pupils' learning. Good links are made between science and other subjects, particularly English, art, history and design and technology. In physical education, the benefits of exercise are stressed and in personal, social and health education, teachers emphasise the importance of eating healthily.
103. The school has done well to combine the curriculum effectively for the infants and juniors since amalgamation. Teachers have recently introduced a system of recording pupils' achievement in all areas of science. This is enabling them to target particular areas of the scheme of work which need attention. The co-ordinator has monitored teaching and learning in the infants but the programme of monitoring does not yet cover the whole school. In order to help teachers to compare standards and become more aware of what each year group should achieve, the co-ordinator is collecting samples of pupils' annotated work. This, too, is at an early stage and the school is aware of the importance of developing a helpful portfolio of work as soon as possible. The school's commitment to raising standards has contributed significantly to the rising trend in pupils' levels of attainment.

ART AND DESIGN

104. Standards are well above those normally seen for eleven-year-olds and above those normally seen for seven-year-olds. Pupils, including those who have special educational needs and who speak English as an additional language, make good progress throughout the school and achieve very well.
105. By the end of the infants, pupils become increasingly skilled in using a wide range of techniques and materials, including pencils, crayons, charcoal, paints and fabrics. Their observational drawings and work on pattern become more detailed as they grow older. Younger pupils are encouraged to observe carefully before they do bright and bold paintings of faces, with detailed features. In Year 2, pupils create pictures of owls, with well-drawn features such as wings and feathers. ICT is used well as pupils create designs for homes and gardens. Pupils study the work of significant artists such as Van Gogh and Lowry. They draw 'matchstick' figures and sketch gaunt buildings which reflect the Lancashire mill towns. Pupils illustrate their written work in a variety of subjects with lively drawings. In history, pupils draw detailed pictures of household utensils used in the past. Skills in three-dimensional work are developed well as pupils weave with paper and incorporate a range of papers and fabrics into collages.
106. By the time they are eleven, pupils experience a rich range of experiences which help them to express themselves very well artistically in two and three dimensions. A feast of pupils' very good work is displayed in corridors and rooms. In the school entrance, there are detailed pictures of a variety of school activities such as physical education, musical activities and swimming. In Years 3 and 4, pupils create large pictures of dolphins which evoke a sense of the creatures moving through the water. As they make pictures of beautifully coloured fish, pupils plan their work to fill the surface of the paper. These pupils also used their knowledge of great artists to paint a large work in the style of Degas. It is beautifully executed and enhanced with net tutus on the dancers and fabric foliage on the border. Pupils use their skills in art very effectively in other subjects. They sketch features of their visit to Delamere Forest and use ink and pale colours to transfer their drawings to fabric. Older pupils create delicate patterns and work effectively with fabric as they learn to screen-print. As they study autumn leaves, pupils create beautiful circular patterns. They then photograph their pictures to make high quality pieces of work. Older pupils make interesting photo-montages – pictures made from photographs. Pupils work with local artists to make models, for example of teapots, which are painted in bold colours in the style of Clariss Cliffe.
107. Pupils enjoy their artistic experiences in lessons, clubs and outings. Throughout the school, pupils gain good artistic habits as they collect ideas and practise new skills in sketchbooks. This

gives them the confidence to work on a larger scale. Success in art raises pupils' self-esteem and adds significantly to the positive ethos of the school. Pupils with special educational needs gain confidence in a subject in which they are free of the constraints of language.

108. Teaching is of good quality overall. It is good in the infants and very good indeed in the juniors. The range of pupils' experiences show that teachers have secure levels of subject knowledge. Teachers' plans include the systematic development of pupils' artistic skills and the use of interesting materials. The regular use of sketchbooks adds significantly to pupils' achievement. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are high and work is displayed in a highly professional way throughout the school. Classroom support assistants play a significant role in the school's high standards in art. In the lessons seen, they enhanced pupils' learning by sharing their own skills and supporting pupils who were exploring new techniques.
109. The co-ordinator manages the subject very well. She is ably supported by other artistic members of staff so that new ideas are embraced positively and pupils benefit from a greater variety of experiences than pupils in most primary schools. The school follows a good scheme of work which includes national guidance and a range of other ideas which are helpful to teachers. Teaching and learning resources are good. Materials are varied, interesting and of good quality. The school has a kiln and classrooms and work areas are well-lit and large enough for pupils to spread their work and stand back to look at it. Visits and visitors enrich the curriculum. Pupils work alongside gifted artists and are given opportunities to develop their imagination and reflect on the beauty of nature and the man-made world.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

110. No lessons in design and technology were observed during the inspection, however the evidence of pupils' previous work, discussions with pupils and teachers and the scrutiny of curricular plans indicate that most pupils achieve well and attain standards in line with those expected nationally for pupils in this age range.
111. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 gather information independently and use it to help generate a number of design ideas. For example, they develop ideas for the design and manufacture of slippers and are beginning to recognise that customers have views and preferences. Their drawings reflect careful consideration of the method of construction and the choice of materials. In this and other projects, such as investigating the construction of shelters, pupils carefully plan what they are going to make and how they are going to make it. They select from a range of materials and use appropriate tools and equipment. Pupils pay good attention to the finish of their products, they evaluate the process of making and are beginning to modify their designs in the light of experience. With suitable guidance younger pupils in Years 3 and 4 develop their ideas for a Christmas card design using felt and hessian. They discuss their choice of materials and the methods used to cut, shape and join the components. Pupils further develop their skills by pulling apart a range of packaging to find the most effective way of designing a package for a gift. They make patterns using construction materials, prepare templates and discover the need for tabs to join the edges. Their products are well finished and resemble their original design. Some pupils can say why changes were needed to improve their design.
112. Pupils in Year 2 prepare detailed designs, based on their observations, for projects such as making a vehicle or preparing a sandwich. They list what is required, record a set of instructions and use pictures and words to convey what they want to do. The pupils investigate methods of weaving using paper and textiles. They extend their skills by designing and making a range of puppets, such as 'finger' and 'spoon' puppets. Pupils use simple tools safely and choose suitable methods for joining components together. The majority talk about what they like or dislike about what they have made. Younger pupils in Year 1 follow a recipe to make biscuits and prepare colourful designs to decorate them. They assemble and rearrange a variety of construction materials with appropriate skill, use simple tools appropriately in preparing the parts for a Christmas card and make a moving part by joining the components with a 'split pin'.
113. While no teaching and learning were observed during the inspection, the quality of the finished products and the knowledgeable response of pupils in describing their learning indicates that the impact of teaching is at least satisfactory, and often good. Pupils are enthusiastic in talking

about their work and have very positive attitudes to the subject. The older pupils clearly explained how they compared shelters and developed their designs and methods of construction for a durable shelter. The quality of activities provided for pupils is greatly enhanced by good cross-curricular links. This ensures a relevant context for projects such as designing and making Viking boats. Effective leadership of the subject has made an important contribution to planning for the subject and the curriculum provides well for the progressive development of pupils' skills. Pupils across the school make satisfactory use of their skills in literacy and numeracy but there is little evidence of the consistent use of ICT to aid designing. The good quality and range of tools and resources available effectively enhance pupils' learning.

GEOGRAPHY

114. Pupils' attainment at the end of the infants and juniors is in line with expectations for seven and eleven-year-old pupils. From a low starting point, this represents good achievement and pupils make sound progress. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language achieve well. Geography is taught in units of work at different times of the school year. Evidence was gained from observation of lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' plans and discussions with pupils and staff.
115. In the infants, pupils become more aware of the area around the school. They draw pictures of Barnton and write about their likes and dislikes of features of the village. They identify specific characteristics which demonstrate their knowledge of the area and know the location of the church, the library, the pub and the canal. As they look at photographs, pupils recognise natural and man-made features near the school. Pupils become increasingly aware of the services which are necessary to sustain urban life, such as transport. A significant number of pupils need support to share their ideas and express their views. They sustain their interest in lessons, show a positive attitude and ask for help when they need it. Pupils' map-reading skills develop appropriately so that they follow a path, know that roads are identified on maps and become more aware of world geography as they look at globes. Higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged.
116. In the juniors, pupils develop a deeper understanding of the physical and human features of different localities and begin to explain how these relate to one another. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 make good and often very good progress in the lessons following their field trip to Delamere Forest. They develop their skills in reading maps and increase their knowledge and understanding of compass readings. Staff who accompanied them on their trip to the forest are also working with them in current lessons. This reinforces their enthusiasm and brings geography alive. Pupils benefit from well prepared recording sheets of good quality and maps which are adapted and modified to ensure that pupils are able to record their work successfully. Because of this good support, pupils in the special needs unit achieved success and made good gains in their learning as they plotted the direction of various features using compass points. By the end of the lesson, most pupils were able to point to various parts of the room by using a compass.
117. Pupils enjoy geography and love the field trips. They like to talk about their trips to Delamere Forest and other sites. There was an air of excitement and pleasure as pupils talked about their three days away from school. The practical work stirs their imagination and gets them thinking about the world around them; about climate, the uses of land and how areas have developed and changed to meet the needs of society. In most lessons, pupils behave well and work effectively in pairs and groups.
118. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in the infants and at least good in the juniors. This is because of the teachers' secure subject knowledge and the way teachers are working together with increasing levels of co-operation. Teachers plan together in groups so that pupils have access to the same learning materials. Pupils' geographical skills are developed in a systematic way and there is a good balance of direct teaching, classroom activities, fieldwork and recording of work. This approach is a strength in the subject. Literacy and numeracy are used and developed effectively during lessons as pupils explain their findings in spoken and written form. Teachers manage pupils skilfully and expect them to behave well. Most pupils respond appropriately, concentrate and work hard. At the beginning of each lesson, teachers tell the pupils about what they are to learn and what they should know or do. At the end of lessons,

pupils are encouraged to reflect on what they have learned and share their knowledge and understanding with the rest of the class. There is insufficient use of ICT to collect and analyse data but pupils throughout the school gain information from programs which include atlases and maps.

119. The school acknowledges that the subject requires further development and that classroom practice is not monitored sufficiently. The co-ordinator for the subject has made a positive start on devising ways of sharing good practice. The schemes of work follow national guidance and are currently being reviewed. The school has set targets for improvement and there is a shared commitment by staff to raise the attainment of pupils and improve the use of ICT in the subject.

HISTORY

120. Evidence gained from discussions and observation of pupils' work and teachers' plans indicates that, by the time they are seven and eleven years old, pupils attain standards in line with national expectations for their ages, with some good attainment in certain areas of learning in the juniors. Pupils, including those with special educational needs or those who speak English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress and achieve well. One lesson was seen in each key stage and no overall judgement can be given on the quality of teaching.
121. In the infants, pupils become increasingly aware of the passage of time as they explore their own lives and the lives of their families. They investigate how everyday items such as toys and household appliances have changed over time. They develop skills of historical enquiry as they question their parents and grandparents about their childhood. Pupils in Year 2 compared old and new toys and shared their ideas with other members of the class. Their observational skills developed well as they considered what the toys were made of, how they worked and how old they might be. Pupils enhanced their artistic skills as they sketched toys and labelled their drawings and there were good links with other subjects such as English and science. Good use was made of homework when pupils were encouraged to bring in artefacts from home.
122. Good displays throughout the school and especially in the juniors reflected the breadth and quality of historical study for this age group. Good links are made with other subjects, especially art, and literacy and numeracy are developed and used well. In the unit for pupils with special educational needs, pupils learn at a good rate because the teaching is exciting and stimulating. Pupils dress up as characters from past eras, for example as Greeks, Victorians or Vikings, and act out scenes from life in those times. This brings relevance to their learning and extends their knowledge and skills in English, art and drama. Pupils throughout the key stage develop a deeper understanding of changes in recent times. They look at photographs, documents and videos to see how life in Britain has changed since 1945. They are aware of the effects of World War II on families, housing and jobs. Pupils become historians as they delve for information, make assumptions and search further to find information.
123. Pupils enjoy the subject, especially when they see the relevance to their own lives. They gradually understand that societies change over time but there are similarities which remain, such as family life, children's games and the lasting heritage of their village.
124. Teachers' plans indicate that work is organised effectively so that pupils gain appropriate skills which help them to gain a deeper understanding of the past. Lessons are enhanced by visits, for example to historical sites and museums, and teachers encourage pupils to use their families and the locality to gain first hand information. Work in pupils' books and on display shows that teachers expect pupils to present their work well. Teachers use role models such as Anne Frank to raise pupils' awareness of the courage of people in history.
125. The school follows recent national guidance for the teaching and learning of history and the effective co-ordination of the subject has ensured that the curriculum is relevant for pupils. There are no regular arrangements for the monitoring of history lessons in order to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is of a consistently high standard. Resources for history are good and local residents kindly lend photographs and memorabilia which are used effectively to support teaching and learning. Imaginative use of a visiting theatre group enriched study units on World War II and the Victorians. Pupils' literary and mathematical skills are developed appropriately as

they use books and CD-ROMs for research. Good use has been made of the environment near the school during studies of the local canal system and industrial development in the locality.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

126. By both seven and eleven years of age, pupils' overall attainment is in line with national expectations. By the end of the juniors, pupils' levels of skill in word-processing are above those normally seen for eleven-year-olds. Standards in ICT are rising rapidly throughout the school and pupils' achieve well.
127. By the end of the juniors, pupils word-process confidently to edit their writing and create simple newspapers which include digital photographs and pictures imported from a data bank. A strong, positive feature of learning in ICT is the school's emphasis on planning and review away from the computers. Pupils keep notebooks in which they record processes such as how to log on and off and how to use a spreadsheet program. They record specific and useful vocabulary, such as 'font', 'symbol' and 'cut-and-paste'. Pupils also plan their next pieces of work so that they make best use of their time on the machines. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 create attractively organised web pages to tell other people about their hobbies and interests, such as the school gardening club. In art, pupils create attractive repeated patterns and colourful, detailed pictures. In design and technology, pupils include photographs in designs for T-shirts. Pupils' skills in monitoring and control are not so well developed but they control the printer effectively from the computer and practise plotting the movement of a point on the screen. Pupils use CD-ROMs confidently to support learning throughout the curriculum.
128. By the time they are seven, in the infants, pupils operate the computer mouse confidently. They write simple text to the screen and save and print their work. They follow instructions, move images effectively and recognise the importance of giving precise instructions. Pupils' skills in drawing and painting on the screen are good. They select appropriate tools from a simple graphics program to create pictures and fill in shapes with bright colours. They support their learning in other subjects with attractive text and imported illustrations. Lively programs stimulate pupils' interest so that they learn at a good rate. In geography, pupils design a town by placing buildings and road features in different ways. Pupils gain increasing skill with the control of programmable toys. This links well with work on direction and distance in mathematics and geography. Pupils practise their spelling and play number games to improve their skills in addition and subtraction.
129. Pupils love the subject. They enjoy their time on the computers and like to share their experiences with visitors. Younger pupils love to follow stories and move images around the screen. Older pupils like to sit with friends to create stories, as, for example, when pupils in Years 3 and 4 wrote their own 'parables' in a religious education lesson. They are confident and recognise the importance of computer skills in the modern world. Pupils take pride in their work and want to improve their efforts. They are prepared to 'have a go' and try the next stage of difficulty in programs, for example in creating web sites.
130. Little direct teaching of ICT was observed. Because ICT is increasingly integrated into the life of the school, children develop and use skills throughout the day and are advised by teachers in a range of circumstances in the computer suite and the classrooms. In these activities, teaching is satisfactory in the infants and good in the juniors, with very good teaching in Years 5 and 6. Planning of lessons in the suite is good, as pupils are introduced to new ideas and then given time to practise what they have learned. In the classrooms, pupils benefit from the teachers' increasing inclusion of ICT as a tool for learning in many subjects. Pupils with special educational needs, in both the unit and the mainstream classes, benefit from well-chosen programs to accelerate their learning in literacy and numeracy. In all classes, teachers choose interesting programs which engage pupils' interest and extend their expertise. Pupils' work is recorded and displayed so that they gain self-esteem and build very well on what they already know and can do. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they advise, support and encourage pupils so that the subject holds no fear for them.

131. The management of ICT is excellent. The co-ordinator has a sure grasp of the subject and how it should be developed in the school. She shares her expertise very well with teachers and support staff and monitors the effects of planned development very well. Staff confidence and enthusiasm is largely due to her commitment and support. Resources are adequate and the school is gradually acquiring more equipment, such as sensors for use in science. Plans for such new developments are well in hand and the capacity for further improvements in the subject is secure because of the high level of expertise in the school.

MUSIC

132. Evidence from assemblies, two lessons observed, clubs and discussions with pupils and staff indicate that pupils' attainment is broadly in line with the expected level for their age by the time they are seven years old. It is above the expected level by the time they are eleven. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to other pupils. Achievement is good in the infants and very good in the juniors.
133. In the juniors, pupils gain confidence and play a wide range of tuned and untuned instruments rhythmically to accompany songs and create their own pieces. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from lively musical experiences and all the pupils are challenged and motivated. Pupils develop a sense of pulse and rhythm as they sing well-known songs and play well-organised rhythmic patterns. They learn about ostinato rhythm and then create lively sequences which they perform in groups. The pace and organisation in the lesson observed allowed well for the individual creativity and imagination of pupils. Pupils develop very good levels of understanding in musical interpretation and composition. The formation of a band, which includes woodwind and stringed instruments, has greatly enhanced musical performance in the school. There is a very high level of individual competence within the band. Pupils in the well-attended, dedicated and enthusiastic school choir gain valuable experiences in singing with pupils from other schools and in performing to larger audiences outside the school.
134. Pupils in the infants sing tunefully and rhythmically and they have a satisfactory repertoire of songs which they sing from memory. In assemblies, pupils listen attentively and follow the mood of songs as they join with older pupils. In part of a lesson observed, pupils played untuned percussion instruments appropriately and echoed the teacher's simple musical phrases. This helped them to improve their skills in musical interpretation and enhance their awareness of performance. There is little evidence of pupils composing their own simple pieces. They develop a sense of audience when they take part in performances for the school and for their parents.
135. Pupils are enthusiastic musicians. They enjoy singing and playing instruments and, especially in the juniors, they value the opportunity to join with others in performing for their friends and families. In discussions, older pupils say that they gain self-confidence and a sense of achievement by taking part in both school and extra-curricular musical activities. They feel that their contribution to school life is valued as their efforts are rewarded and appreciated by other pupils and members of staff.
136. No overall judgement can be given on teaching because only two lessons were seen, in the juniors. However, the teaching in these lessons was very good. From scrutiny of lesson plans, it is evident that pupils are introduced to an increasingly wide range of musical experiences as they move through the school. There is a good balance of knowledge, practical activities and self-expression in lessons so that pupils develop a rounded appreciation of the subject by the time they leave the school. The enthusiastic and well-qualified co-ordinator teaches all the junior classes. A good number of specialist teachers visit the school to teach a range of instruments including the keyboard, violin, flute, guitar, piano, clarinet and saxophone. There is also a pianist on the infant staff, who leads an after-school recorder club, which is well attended. Pupils show enthusiasm and enjoyment and their performance is of a very good standard.
137. The subject is managed very well. The co-ordinator collaborates effectively with other staff to ensure appropriate planning of lessons and assessment of pupils' progress. The school is aware that although her experience and specialist knowledge have had a significant influence on the teaching and learning of music in the juniors, there is still some way to go in the infants. There is a revised policy for the teaching and learning of music and the schemes of work follow national

guidance supplemented by a range of supportive materials. Pupils' musical experiences are enhanced when they participate in school productions with themes which include the Vikings, aliens or Noah's Ark. Christmas concerts, including words, music and poetry readings are also documented in an impressive display of pupils' work.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

138. As only one lesson was observed in the infants, there was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on the attainment of seven-year-olds. By the time they are eleven years old, most pupils attain standards in line those expected for their age. A small number of pupils exceed the expected level. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress and their achievement is at least satisfactory by the end of the juniors.
139. In their dance lesson, pupils in Year 2 moved and used their bodies very well in response to the music. They built effectively on skills which they had developed in previous lessons. Pupils responded well to the teacher, listening attentively to instructions and following them carefully. They obviously enjoyed their lesson. The teacher ensured that the pupils prepared appropriately for the lesson and slowed down at the end by carrying out warming up and cooling down activities. Pupils were assured and confident as they performed for the rest of the class. The teacher used these pupils effectively to demonstrate good practice and encouraged other pupils to improve what they could do.
140. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 showed a good awareness of space as they moved around the hall in a gymnastics lesson. In their energetic warm up activities, the pupils moved well as they walked and ran, stopping and starting in response to the teacher's commands and signals. Most pupils were well co-ordinated as they developed individual sequences by successfully linking rolls, stretches and other movements. In their dance lesson, pupils in Years 5 and 6 moved imaginatively, both individually and in groups. They followed the beat of the tambourine to build up sequences of movements to portray a story. They depicted characters by performing appropriate actions and making a variety of patterns from different movements. Pupils understand the importance of the warm up and cool down sessions and the effects they have on their bodies.
141. All pupils in the juniors have the opportunity to learn to swim. A very good swimming lesson was observed. Most pupils can swim 25 metres by the time they leave school, and some can swim much farther. The school provides a good range of outdoor, adventurous activities during the residential field trips organised for the older pupils.
142. In all of the lessons seen, the pupils were well behaved, worked hard and enjoyed their work. They were keen and confident to demonstrate what they could do and generally worked hard in practising and refining their movements.
143. The quality of the teaching observed was good overall. Teachers build effectively on what pupils can already do and encourage them to improve their skills. Relationships are very good. Pupils gain confidence and become increasingly imaginative in dance lessons because teachers value their efforts. Teachers give clear instructions and explanations and ensure that pupils use safe practices, especially when moving equipment. Pupils behave well and learn at a good rate because of the teachers' good planning and effective management of lessons. In the best lessons, the teachers use pupils' demonstrations effectively to illustrate good performances and to make teaching points. However, teachers do not always give pupils the opportunity to appraise their own and one another's performances. Teachers promote good social skills during swimming sessions. As pupils travel by coach to and from the swimming pool and manage their own clothes-changing arrangements at the pool, they become increasingly independent and responsible. In science and personal, social and health education lessons, teachers promote the importance of exercise as part of a healthy life.
144. The subject is managed effectively but there is little monitoring of teaching and learning. The school has an appropriate policy for physical education and a nationally recommended scheme of work helps teachers plan their lessons and ensure pupils build effectively on earlier skills as they move through the school. Pupils from the special educational needs unit are integrated effectively so that they benefit from mainstream lessons. There is an adequate range of equipment for

physical education and spacious hall accommodation, hard outdoor surfaces and extensive grassed areas for gymnastics, games and sports. Throughout the year, after-school sports clubs are run on a seasonal basis by staff and parents and the school is fortunate in having professional coaches to run some of the activities. These enhance the provision for physical education.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

145. Standards of attainment at both key stages are in line with those expected for pupils aged seven and eleven. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, make sound progress throughout the school and pupils achieve well by the end of the juniors.
146. By the end of the infants, pupils gain knowledge and understanding of a range of faiths, principally Christianity. They visit the local church and learn about religious artefacts and significant milestones in Christian life, such as baptism and marriage. They know that there are similar significant features in other faiths. Pupils become familiar with well-known stories from the Bible and they begin to understand the relevance to their own lives. They gain understanding of a variety of religious festivals, including Christmas and Easter.
147. By the end of the juniors, pupils become more aware of symbolism in religions and they gain a deeper understanding of the importance of religion in a range of cultures. They know about important religious scriptures, such as the Bible and the Qur'an. In Years 3 and 4, pupils know that parables hold messages which help us to reflect on how we live our lives and relate to other people. Pupils are aware of the important part which religion has played in the lives of many people and of the commitment some people make to particular faiths. Their understanding of care grows wider as they learn more about world issues. In assemblies, pupils reflect on virtues such as bravery and courage. They become increasingly aware that everyone needs support during critical times in their lives and that many people turn to their own God for this.
148. Pupils behave well in religious education lessons. In the infants, pupils become increasingly interested in the subject as they learn about their own heritage and the lives of their families in the village. They talk with candour about their visit to a local church and express wonder at the beauty of the stained glass windows. Pupils enjoy religious stories and remember the vicar's telling of St Paul's stormy sea journey. In the juniors, pupils display a mature attitude to relationships when they write about people who mean a lot to them. The atmosphere in lessons is thoughtful and sensitive and pupils listen to one another considerately. At both key stages, pupils become increasingly aware of the wide range of religious beliefs in our society.
149. Few religious education lessons were seen but from scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' plans, teaching is never less than satisfactory. Part of a lesson was seen in the infants, a very good lesson was observed in the juniors and excellent teaching was seen in a class for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Teachers had high expectations of the pupils and these lessons were well prepared. Good displays of pupils' work show that teachers value pupils' achievement. Displays also remind pupils of the importance of the subject in the life of the school.
150. Planning follows the local syllabus for religious education and the school's cycle of themes gives structure to teaching and learning. Assessment procedures are adequate. Teachers keep records of the topics taught and share information with parents in annual reports. Resources are adequate. The school ensures that pupils see and handle an interesting range of artefacts from a variety of faiths to support their learning. Nearby places of worship are used very effectively to bring relevance to learning and local clergy visit the school to enhance the curriculum and provide evidence of the religious life of the village.