

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BROAD OAK COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

St Helens

LEA area: St Helens

Unique reference number: 130259

Headteacher: Mrs H.G. Smith

Reporting inspector: Mrs Joan Boden  
12301

Dates of inspection: 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> September 2002

Inspection number: 248791

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 category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Brunswick Street Parr St Helens Merseyside
Postcode:	WA9 2JE
Telephone number:	01744 736090
Fax number:	01744 454898
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Cllr T Shields
Date of previous inspection:	21/11/2000

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
12301	Mrs J Boden	Registered inspector	Design and technology History	The school's results and achievements Teaching and learning Leadership and management Key issues for action
19365	Mr G Stockley	Lay inspector		Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
21020	Mrs T Galvin	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Music	
18059	Mrs R Harrison	Team inspector	English Religious education	
18498	Mrs D Morris	Team inspector	Special educational needs Geography Information and communication technology	
2911	Mr E Steed	Team inspector	Science Art and design	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Quality and range of opportunities for learning
22704	Mr G Williams	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education	

The inspection contractor was:

Evenlode Associates Ltd  
6 Abbey Close  
Alcester  
Warwickshire  
B49 5QW

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Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is bigger than most primary schools, with 445 boys and girls on roll. There is a nursery, which children attend on a part-time basis, from the September following their third birthday. However, at the time of the inspection, the new intake of nursery-age children had not started. The school is situated in an area of high social deprivation. More than half the children are entitled to free school meals. This is well above average. Pupil numbers have fallen steadily since 1997, largely as a result of people moving out of the area as local industries have closed. All the pupils are of white UK origin and they all speak English as their first language. An average percentage of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs. Most of these have difficulties with learning. However, an above average percentage have statements of special educational need because they have more serious and specific needs. Children have well below average levels of ability when they enter the nursery, particularly in language and communication skills. The school benefits from its involvement in several initiatives, such as 'Excellence in Cities', 'Neighbourhood Renewal' and 'Family Learning', which provide extra funding and support. They have also received substantial extra funding for information and communication technology through the 'Single Regeneration Budget'. The school is very much a community school with a separate community room, which is staffed by hard-working volunteers and provides the opportunity for local people to attend a range of events each week, including a parents' and tots' group and a pensioners' luncheon club.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is an effective and improving school, which despite difficult circumstances, provides well for its pupils and is a valuable asset to the community. Standards of attainment are generally below national averages and expectations, but given their poor language and communication skills on entry, most pupils achieve well. The unsatisfactory levels of attendance have a negative effect on standards. The teaching is satisfactory with many good features. The school is well led. The pupils have good attitudes and their behaviour is good. This is due to the very positive partnership that the school has created with the parents. All the adults in the school have the welfare of the children at heart. The school gives good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- The headteacher, supported effectively by the deputy and the governors, provides good leadership.
- Relationships between all members of the school community are very good. This supports pupils' learning well because they are ready to learn and they behave well.
- Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage because the provision is good.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and they make good progress.
- The school has a very good partnership with parents and most parents are interested and involved in their children's education.

#### **What could be improved**

- Standards in English, mathematics and religious education throughout the school, and in science in Key Stage 1 are not high enough. Pupils do not always learn effectively because the work is not always matched to their needs.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop their skills of speaking, reading and writing across all subjects of the curriculum.
- Standards in art, geography, history and music are not high enough because not enough time is given to them.
- Pupils are not prepared well enough for life in a multicultural society.
- Attendance is poor.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school had made satisfactory improvement since it was last inspected in November 2000. The main thing it had to do at that time was to continue to raise standards of attainment, particularly of the most able. Although the latest test results suggest a significant rise in the attainments of the most able, the

evidence from examining pupils' work indicates that there is still a long way to go. The satisfactory quality of teaching has been sustained. Although the senior management team has clearly defined responsibilities, the curriculum managers still do not have enough influence in raising standards in their subjects. The monitoring of the school development plan is now much more rigorous and this is helping the school to identify and modify its future priorities. Although assessment procedures have improved, the information is not always used well to match work to children's learning needs. Standards in information and communication technology have improved significantly as a result of much better provision of resources and the increased knowledge and expertise of teachers.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	E	E	D	B
mathematics	E	E	E	C
science	D	D	E	C

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Standards by the end of Key Stage 2 have been rising faster than in schools nationally. No national comparisons are available yet for the tests taken in 2002 when the pupils obtained a significantly improved set of results. In English, nine per cent more pupils reached the expected level, while the percentage reaching the higher level 5 leapt from 12 per cent to 40 per cent. In mathematics, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level rose by 12 per cent, while the percentage reaching the higher level doubled to 20 per cent. In science, the percentage reaching the expected level was about the same, but 25 per cent more pupils reached the higher level. The school exceeded its target for the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level in English and mathematics. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in English and mathematics of the pupils currently in Year 6 are below average. Speaking and writing skills are particularly weak. Most pupils cannot understand what they read well enough to select relevant information. This holds back their learning in other subjects. Nevertheless, given the low starting point for most pupils they achieve well. Pupils achieve very well in science. Standards are broadly in line with the national average and a small minority of pupils are on line to reach an above average standard by the end of the school year. In design and technology and information and communication technology (ICT), standards are as would be expected of children of this age. In art and design, geography, history, music and religious education, standards are below expectations.

Children join the school with poor levels of ability. They achieve well in the Foundation Stage, particularly in personal and social development, and physical development. By the time they reach the end of their reception year, they achieve the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) in these areas. The good provision in the Foundation Stage also leads to good achievement in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. However, their low starting point means that their attainment in these areas, by the end of their reception year is still below average. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 where their learning is often hampered by their poor language skills. By the time they reach Year 3, standards in English, mathematics, science, art and design, and religious education are below average. Standards in design and technology, geography, history, ICT and music are in line with expectations and standards in physical education are above average.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils throughout the school have positive attitudes and they usually try hard in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall. Behaviour in lessons and when pupils are supervised around the school is often very good. There are occasional lapses when adults are not present.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are very positive. Even the youngest pupils enjoy taking responsibility.
Attendance	In the last academic year, attendance was very low compared with other schools. Although there have been significant improvements in the last year, attendance is still well below average, and too many pupils are still arriving late.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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

The quality of teaching is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in the rest of the school. Teachers plan their work thoroughly and work well together in year group teams. In the reception classes, teachers keep a careful check on what children learn. They then plan further work that will move the children on. This means that they achieve well. This is not always the case in the rest of the school. Sometimes pupils do not achieve as well as they could because the work is not matched accurately enough to their needs. Higher attaining pupils are not challenged enough, while lower attainers find the work too difficult. Most lessons are lively and this keeps pupils interested and ready to learn.

Teachers are good at teaching reading. In the reception and infant classes, they are particularly good at teaching children to sound out words or break them down into syllables. This gives them a good start to reading. In the junior classes, teachers build well on this by introducing pupils to a good range of texts. Teachers do not pay enough attention to developing pupils' speaking and writing skills. They do not give pupils enough opportunities to practise speaking to an audience. Although they teach the rules of punctuation and grammar effectively in literacy lessons, when they mark work in other subjects they do not pick up on spelling and punctuation. This means that the pupils do not make the connection between set grammar exercises and other written work. In mathematics, pupils are not taught well enough how to do quick calculations in their heads. This slows their learning in other areas such as problem solving. In most subjects the marking of pupils' work does not point out to pupils how they could improve. In most cases the work is simply ticked or has an over-generous comment such as 'brilliant' or 'excellent'. This misleads pupils because they do not see any reason to improve.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in the rest of the school. In Key Stages 1 and 2, some subjects have too little time allocated to them. Pupils benefit from a very good range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. These pupils are supported well and, as a result, they make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is satisfactory provision for spiritual development and good provision for moral and social development. Provision for cultural development is unsatisfactory. There are too few opportunities for pupils to find out about the variety of cultures that make up modern Britain.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are satisfactory procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare. The school has satisfactory procedures for checking how well pupils have learnt, but this information is not always used effectively to plan the next stages of learning.

The school has a very good partnership with parents. The vast majority of parents have complete trust and confidence in the school. There is an appropriate racial integration policy.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The headteacher provides clear direction to improving the school. She leads the school well and has created a good team spirit. Members of the senior management team have clearly defined responsibilities that they carry out well. However, subject managers do not have enough influence on raising standards in their subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors are well informed and very committed to raising standards. They are closely involved in discussing how well the school is doing and in making decisions about its future.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school identifies what improvements are needed to raise standards in all subjects. However, it has not given sufficient attention to improving pupils' speaking skills or to developing their writing skills across the curriculum.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school makes the best possible use of all its resources. For example, good use is made of the deputy and the special needs co-ordinator in order to reduce class sizes in Year 6.

The school has a sufficient number of staff and is well resourced. The accommodation is spacious. The school has secured sufficient funding to brighten the playground and give pupils more opportunities for purposeful and enjoyable playtimes and lunchtimes. The school applies the principles of best value well.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• They get good information about how their children are getting on.</li> <li>• The staff are approachable.</li> <li>• The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<p>A very small minority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feel that behaviour is not good enough.</li> <li>• That their children do not get the right amount of homework.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with the positive points made by parents. They do not agree with the negative responses. Behaviour during the inspection was good overall and very good in most lessons. The school has a good homework policy that has been agreed with parents.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. Children enter the nursery with well below average levels of ability in all the areas of learning. Their language and communication skills are particularly poor. They achieve well in the Foundation Stage, although by the end of their reception year, standards in communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development are still below the levels expected. Standards in personal and social development and physical development are in line with what would be expected for their age.
2. In Key Stage 1, the results of national tests for seven-year-olds show that standards in reading, writing and mathematics have been consistently below or well below national averages since 1998. However, there has been an overall trend of improvement in all three subjects. Both boys and girls have improved at a faster rate than boys and girls nationally. Girls do better than boys in all three subjects. In 2001, compared to similar schools, standards in reading and writing were above average and standards in mathematics were average.
3. The evidence of the inspection is that the standards in reading, writing and mathematics of the pupils currently in Year 2 are below average. There is evidence that reading is improving as a result of the extra attention that is being given to teaching letter sounds.
4. In Key Stage 2, the results of the national tests show that standards in English and mathematics are improving faster than the national trend. In 2001, standards in English rose from well below average to below average compared with schools nationally, and above average when compared to similar schools. Girls do better than boys, but boys have shown more improvement. In mathematics and science, although standards remained well below the national average, they were average compared to similar schools. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. The latest set of test results show a very dramatic rise in test scores in all three subjects, with a marked increase in the percentages of pupils reaching the higher levels. The school far exceeded the targets set for the percentage of pupils reaching the expected levels in English and mathematics. As yet, however, the comparative data is not available.
5. The evidence of the inspection is that standards in English and mathematics of the pupils currently in Year 6 are below average. Pupils make steady progress as they move through the school, but this is accelerated in their last year through very effective 'booster classes' and an 'Easter School'. Standards in science are average overall, with a significant minority of pupils who reach above average. Pupils' enquiry skills are not good enough because they do not have enough opportunities to plan and carry out their own investigations.
6. While they can generally listen well, many pupils have difficulty in remembering what they have heard. Throughout the school, pupils' speaking skills are below average overall and well below average for a significant minority. Although reading is improving, current standards are below average and well below average for many pupils. Most pupils do not read with a sufficient depth of understanding to enable them to seek out relevant information for themselves. This holds back their learning in subjects such as geography, history and religious education where standards are below those expected. In mathematics, pupils' mental skills are weak. This slows their progress in other areas such as problem solving.
7. Standards in information and communication technology are in line with what would be expected of pupils of the same age. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils are now achieving well as a result of better teaching brought about by teachers' increased confidence and expertise. Standards in design and technology are also similar to those found in most primary

schools. Standards in art and design and music are below those expected. The reason for the low standards in music is that not enough time is spent teaching it. Pupils do not have the opportunity to achieve as well as they could.

8. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the good support they receive in lessons. Lower attaining pupils achieve satisfactorily when they are given appropriate support, but this is not always available. Higher attaining pupils, who have been identified by the school as gifted and talented, do not always achieve as well as they might because they are not always challenged sufficiently.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

9. Pupils' attitudes to the school are good; their values are sound and personal development satisfactory. This represents good progress and development as pupils move through the school.
10. In the main, children have good attitudes to their learning in the Foundation Stage. Staff set a very good example for children to follow of care and consideration for others. For example, they remind the children to hold doors open for their classmates and for adults. Therefore children's behaviour is very good; they are polite and courteous. They are beginning to value what others say by taking turns to speak and listening carefully. This was evident when they discussed the story 'This is the bear and the scary night'. Many of the children readily and politely raised their hands to answer the teacher's questions. Children show good levels of initiative and responsibility for this age, such as sharing equipment and tidying away resources at the end of lessons.
11. Inside the building, the ethos of the school, together with the orderly routines, offers a friendly, secure atmosphere that is enhanced by the unfailing friendly greetings from teachers and other adults in the school. The friendly atmosphere usually results in pupils being ready to learn. They settle quickly at the beginnings of lessons and this means that little learning time is lost. Pupils respond keenly to lessons that include very good teaching with interesting content; this was demonstrated very effectively during a design and technology lesson when a class in Year 5 showed excellent attitudes and behaviour.
12. A factor that much influences the pupils' good attitudes is the good relationships that exist in the school. This is in line with the findings of the last inspection. All members of the school community are valued; pupils are aware of this fact and in school they react accordingly.
13. Behaviour is very good in lessons and around the school where pupils are supervised. This is an improvement since the last report when behaviour in lessons was stated to be good. When pupils are in the playground there are occasional instances of over-boisterous play that on one day during the inspection ended in a fight. Instances were also noted where the less satisfactory behaviour of small groups of unsupervised boys resulted in pushing and shoving as they moved along corridors. However, the main body of the pupil population maintains good social skills and play well together, often in mixed gender groups, usually making playtimes and lunchtimes pleasant occasions. It is notable that during the inspection there were no recorded instances of tension between boys and girls when they were placed together for paired work. Displays throughout the school remain in pristine condition; there is no evidence of even minor vandalism to school or personal property. The scrutiny of pupils' books showed that these are overall treated with equal respect. There is very little litter within the buildings because pupils pick up dropped items and place them in the bins.
14. There is a well-known expectation that all pupils will look after one another and be courteous to adult members of staff and to visitors. These expectations are fulfilled; it was very difficult for a member of the inspection team to reach and open a door before a pupil had appeared to open it. These kind actions were generally accompanied by a smile and the response, "You are very welcome" to the thanks offered. Pupils offer their own thanks for small kindness, a trait that is

supported well by the good examples set by members of staff. As at the time of the earlier inspection, pupils are well mannered and friendly.

15. When appropriate, co-operative and collaborative working in lessons is expected and pupils respond accordingly. For example, in a science lesson in Year 4 when pupils willingly and effectively worked in pairs to undertake a series of investigations that required concentrated co-operation. They were required to pull together on a force meter, read off the breaking point of cotton and record the collected data; pupils co-operated well and carried out the task without fuss. Pupils who are appointed as class monitors take their responsibilities seriously and carry them out conscientiously. Very good examples of this, coupled with the social awareness of other pupils, were seen each day as monitors carried the class lunch boxes to the dining hall. They were on time, and it was a regular occurrence for passing pupils to stop and hold open doors in the corridor to enable ease of access.
16. Pupils with special educational needs display the same characteristics as other pupils. They receive good support from teachers and teaching assistants who are very sensitive to their individual needs. This aids their learning and enables them to make overall good progress.
17. Attendance last year was very low in comparison with other schools. The latest information shows that it is improving, although it is still well below the national average. While staff are pleased with the upward trend in attendance levels, they remain concerned about the number of pupils arriving late each morning.

#### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

18. The quality of teaching has been maintained since the last inspection. All except two lessons seen during the inspection were at least satisfactory, and a temporary supply teacher taught one of these. Just over half the lessons were good or better. The overall satisfactory quality of teaching over time enables most pupils to achieve satisfactorily. The most consistently good teaching is seen in the Foundation Stage, and this gets children off to a good start.
19. Teaching in the reception classes is good. Staff plan and work together very well as a team. They are very caring and give children lots of praise and encouragement. This raises children's self esteem and gives them increasing confidence to learn. A strong feature of the teaching is that staff plan carefully to extend children's everyday vocabulary. They do this through interesting and practical activities, for example when the children looked at caterpillars and a variety of fruit linked to the story about 'The hungry caterpillar'. They also develop very well children's speaking skills through the imaginative play areas, such as the playhouse and 'Garden Centre'. Although this kind of approach has a very positive effect on children's learning, they still have a narrow range of everyday vocabulary for describing clearly and confidently their ideas and experiences. Staff give less time to the teaching of handwriting, so the standard of handwriting is lower than expected. For example, the children place capital letters within words when writing independently.
20. The teaching of literacy is satisfactory overall. While there is some good teaching, work is not always matched to pupils' needs. In many cases, pupils are not given enough opportunities to develop the skills they have learnt in literacy lessons in other areas of the curriculum. When teachers mark work, they ignore spelling and punctuation mistakes, and often simply tick the work or add an over-generous comment, such as 'brilliant' or 'excellent'. They do not indicate to pupils how they could improve their work and they do not use the results of marking to plan further work. Pupils, therefore, do not see the connection between set English exercises and other written work. This is the reason why many pupils, notably the higher attainers, do not achieve as well as they could. Teachers do not pay enough attention to developing pupils' speaking skills. As a result, pupils frequently nod or shake their heads or give one-word answers.

21. The satisfactory teaching of numeracy means that achievement for most pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 is satisfactory. The lively approach to lessons keeps pupils interested. The school acknowledges that more emphasis needs to be put on helping pupils to work out sums in their heads because this affects their work in other areas.
22. In some lessons in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, teachers spend too long talking at the beginning of lessons. This causes the pupils to lose interest as many of them find it hard to concentrate for long periods. As a result, they stop listening and do not make enough progress in their learning. Some lessons start off well, but the pace slows when pupils are doing their individual recording tasks. Teachers are not always aware when pupils are not getting on with their work. In several lessons seen during the inspection, teachers praised pupils for working 'really hard' when, in reality, they had done little or no work.
23. Some good features of teaching are present in most lessons. Teachers generally adopt a lively approach that captures pupils' interest from the start. They are good at explaining clearly to pupils what they are going to learn, although in some cases they do not refer to this enough during the lesson to keep pupils' minds focused. Most teachers are good at using questions to check what pupils have learnt and to develop their understanding further. In a design and technology lesson in Year 5, the teacher used questioning well to make pupils think. For example, 'Why are chocolate biscuits and custard creams likely to be more expensive than a Rich Tea?' As a result, pupils came to an understanding that more ingredients and a more complicated production process would have an effect on the cost.
24. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school. Teachers make good use of teaching assistants and other adults when they are available. The teaching assistants know the pupils well and the good support they give pupils helps them to concentrate and contribute to class discussions, and to follow the targets in their education plans.
25. All the teachers have very good relationships with the pupils. They understand that many of the pupils have particular problems in their lives that affect their ability to concentrate on learning. The kindness and consideration that they show to the pupils creates a good atmosphere for learning because the pupils develop their self-esteem and confidence. Although most pupils do not generally volunteer answers, they are not afraid to 'have a go' when they are questioned directly even though they may not be sure of the answer. The pupils' very good behaviour in lessons is a reflection of the good examples that their teachers set for them in treating everybody with respect. Lessons are planned and organised well with resources prepared in advance, so no teaching time is lost.

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

26. The good curriculum in the Foundation Stage develops children's knowledge and understanding across all the recommended areas of learning. The work is practical and is based securely on the curriculum for children of this age, so children's learning is good, except in outdoor physical development. This provision is unsatisfactory because the main outdoor provision is playtime. Staff are not providing relevant experiences for children's development in these sessions.
27. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the curriculum is satisfactory overall with some significant strengths, and a few weaknesses. Statutory requirements in relation to the National Curriculum and religious education are met. This represents a similar picture to that at the time of the previous inspection.
28. The curriculum is broad, but there are some imbalances. For example, insufficient reading and speaking takes place in English. Literacy and ICT skills are not used well enough in other subjects. There is also sometimes a lack of relevance within the taught curriculum to meet the needs,

interests and abilities of all the pupils at the school. For example, lower attaining pupils and those identified as gifted or talented do not have enough planned opportunities to improve and develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in some lessons. Although lesson planning usually indicates different tasks for some of these pupils, the content of the taught lesson is not always appropriate for them. For example, in a mathematics lesson, pupils were learning about numbers to 1000, when almost half of the class lacked the confidence to work with numbers to 100.

29. Not enough time is allocated to some subjects, particularly history, geography, music and religious education. This inhibits standards in these subjects.
30. The quality of learning opportunities provided for pupils with special educational needs is good. They benefit from good, clear individual plans, which are monitored regularly to ensure that they make good progress. The well organised special needs provision ensures that pupils are confident members of the community. There are times, however, particularly in literacy and numeracy lessons when not enough support staff are available to ensure that these pupils can access the full lesson. The organisation of the timetable means that almost all classes undertake these lessons at the same time, hence leading to an inefficiency in deployment of staff to support individual and small group needs.
31. The national numeracy strategy is having a beneficial impact on standards. However, while teachers use the literacy strategy to good effect in literacy lessons, not enough attention has been given to developing pupils' literacy skills across the curriculum.
32. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and to the additional experiences that are offered. The range of extra-curricular provision is a particular strength. A residential experience for older pupils is a valuable addition to pupils' school life, and all pupils in the oldest classes are able to attend. A good range of clubs for pupils of all ages enhances the provision, and these are well attended throughout the year.
33. The provision for the development of pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) is good and includes a good citizenship programme as well as provision for sex and drugs awareness education. Pupils' social skills are fostered effectively in all areas of the school and this leads to a well-ordered and friendly community.
34. In the previous report the procedures for the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was stated to have been satisfactory. Since that time provision for both moral and social development has improved and is now good; spiritual development has maintained its sound standard, while aspects of cultural development are now unsatisfactory.
35. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory overall. While the worship elements of assemblies meet statutory requirements they vary in quality. In cases where spiritual development is focused upon, pupils are actively involved in talking about their emotions and feelings, they are given time to reflect and comment about what they have heard, and they have their thoughts summarised cohesively. This approach was undertaken very successfully in an assembly in Year 3 when pupils explained their feelings on the collapse of the twin towers a year ago. Worship was led by a teacher who said a prayer for the families of the people killed in the tragedy that was, in context, very meaningful to the children. The school does not attempt to make the daily act of worship a special feature of assemblies, for example, by the lighting of a candle to show pupils that they have entered a special part of the day. There is little evidence that opportunities for developing spiritual awareness are planned into lessons. However, individual teachers do use aspects of their lessons effectively; as when a class in Year 2 considered how the children in a story might feel when 'Grandma' arrived with extra cookies. Pupils in Year 5 who attended the residential visit to Ambleside received plenty of stimulating experiences that caused them to ponder on the wonders of the natural world. In science there are opportunities to record the growth of plants from seeds; in discussion, pupils in Year 6 were quite obviously fascinated that

tall sunflowers start as small seeds. In Year 1 pupils who tasted a range of fruits expressed amazement when a bright red capsicum pepper did not have the taste that was expected.

36. Provision for moral development is good. Pupils are aware of the differences between right and wrong actions and also of the rewards and sanctions that are applied to their actions. The school's policies on behaviour and anti-bullying are applied consistently. Posters are displayed prominently along corridors to remind pupils of their obligations to each other and to the adults who care for them. Members of staff encourage good levels of behaviour and they foster shared values such as honesty, truth and fairness. Personal and social education programmes help pupils to understand the effect of their words and actions on others. The result of this good training is that pupils develop a good caring attitude and a solid sense of what is right and what is wrong. There is no evidence of vandalism to property and younger pupils feel that they are safe within the school. Pupils report that when bullying does occasionally occur the staff deal with it very quickly and it is not sustained. Through the use of areas around the school, for example the Sankey Valley, for fieldwork studies, pupils learn to value the local environment. They understand that there are people who are less fortunate than them and, when opportunities occur, they are willing to support charitable causes.
37. The provision for social development is also good. The members of the school community have a collective desire to encourage an ethos where growing up and learning is a happy experience. Parents have expressed their view that this is an effective aspect of school life. The school provides clear rules for community living, which pupils understand and with which they agree. Opportunities to acknowledge pupils' achievements are in place through assemblies that are planned to raise self-esteem. The school has produced a draft policy that is aimed to help pupils to understand the effects of oppressive behaviour and racism. The policy was written following consideration of the McPherson enquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence and will be presented to the governing body at their next meeting. School visits, especially the residential, are planned to enable pupils to interact socially with unknown adults within a safe environment. There are good arrangements for pupils to learn to co-operate and collaborate in lessons within a variety of pairings and groupings. All adults in the school set good examples to pupils, especially in demonstrating the benefits of courtesy and respect. Consequently, pupils of all ages are polite and courteous towards visitors and other adults.
38. The provision for cultural development is unsatisfactory because too little is done to present pupils with planned opportunities to understand and to celebrate the rich cultural diversity of modern British society. Through studies in geography and history pupils learn something of their own cultural background and of the culture of past civilisations. Through studies in art they learn of western European painting and look at the art of Islam, Australian aboriginals and native North Americans. In musical studies pupils have gained good knowledge of a range of instruments. During a study of the local area pupils learn of the background to life in St Helens in former times through primary sources and oral history. Studies of the cultures that now flourish in British society are insufficiently touched upon. Pupils in Year 6, who were interviewed, displayed very insecure knowledge of world faiths other than Christianity and could offer little about the beliefs, values and customs of other ethnic groups. Pupils do not receive opportunities to visit the places of worship of faiths other than Christianity, and visits by members of ethnic communities have not yet been arranged to enable pupils to gain first hand knowledge and understanding of these communities. This means that pupils are not being prepared for adult life in a multi-cultural society, and they are denied experiencing the personal enrichment that contact with ways of life other than their own can bring.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

39. The school has appropriate procedures for ensuring pupils' health and safety. The policy has recently been reviewed and follows the local authority guidelines. All the necessary safety checks are carried out regularly and the caretaker conducts regular inspections of the premises with the

member of staff responsible for health and safety. However, the governors are not currently involved in this exercise. There is a large number of trained first-aiders and relevant risk assessments have been carried out. There is an appropriate policy for handling pupils and incidents are logged and parents are informed.

40. Staff throughout the school are very caring, and know the children very well. They make very good use of praise to reward children's achievements and this promotes children's self-esteem and confidence. Child protection is taken seriously. The co-ordinator is trained and all staff have regular discussions about the procedures and signs of possible concern that might result in a child protection issue.
41. Very good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are having a positive effect. Attendance has risen by two per cent in the last year. The school works closely with the education welfare officer to monitor attendance trends regularly and takes action where there is a concern. Lateness, too, is monitored closely and the school works closely with pupils and their parents to try to improve the timekeeping of the more persistent latecomers. Targets are set for some children together with the opportunity to gain rewards, and this helps to raise the importance of attendance and punctuality. The school has the support of an attendance officer funded by the Education Action Zone who contacts parents on the first day of absence when no explanation has been received. This has helped towards the recent improvement in the attendance figures.
42. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good and a strength of the school. There is an effective behaviour policy, which is followed consistently by all staff. It is based on encouraging and rewarding good behaviour, for example, with stickers and certificates. These awards are not given readily and pupils value them and strive hard to achieve them. The school has a significant number of pupils who do not behave well as a matter of course and it is a credit to the procedures and the skills and dedication of all the staff that behaviour in school is so good. The way that pupils' behaviour is managed is one of the strengths of the teaching.
43. There are good procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour. The policy gives good guidance to staff on how to deal with incidents of bullying and stresses the need for urgent and consistent action by all staff. Pupils have confirmed that the school responds quickly and effectively to any reported bullying incidents.
44. There are good procedures to monitor and support pupils' personal development. This is done by a combination of formal and informal methods, well supported by teachers' good knowledge of their pupils and the care and concern that they show for them. These procedures are effective because most teachers are fully committed and are prepared to spend time and give support in order to help resolve any problems.
45. Staff in the Foundation Stage have good systems for assessing regularly children's achievement in lessons. They use this information well to plan the next step in children's learning, for example in mathematical development. There is a shortcoming in the detailed information that is transferred from the nursery to the reception classes. It is not in an easily accessible format for staff to make efficient use of it. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in the rest of the school are satisfactory overall. However, in English the procedures to assess attainment and progress in speaking and listening are unsatisfactory. Despite the fact that teachers spend a lot of time and effort in checking how well pupils have learnt, they do not always use the information when planning the next stage of learning. Procedures for assessing how well pupils do in the non-core subjects have been introduced recently. However, it is too early to evaluate their effectiveness. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and their progress is monitored effectively.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

46. Parents are very pleased with the school. Responses to the questionnaire sent to all parents before the inspection and discussions during the inspection show that parents are very satisfied with what the school does and they have no significant concerns. The school has forged very effective links with parents and this supports their children's education well. Parents receive a warm welcome whenever they contact the school and they feel comfortable in approaching teachers and the headteacher.
47. The school provides good quality information for parents about their children's progress and how they can help at home. These include a well-presented and informative prospectus and nursery brochure; regular newsletters and letters; a range of workshops for parents and, in some cases, for their children as well; a termly opportunity to meet their children's teacher and an annual written report. The reports are of good quality and show parents what their child has been doing and what they need to do next. Apart from at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, the reports do not show parents how well their child is doing in comparison with national expectations or the school average. Parents are invited to meet their child's teacher each term, but only just over half of parents take up the invitation, which is much less than in most schools. The school tries hard to encourage more parents to come into school, sometimes organising information-giving events in conjunction with a performance by their children.
48. Overall, parents make a good contribution to their children's education, both at home and at school. Parents support their children's work at home to the best of their ability. They are asked to oversee their children's homework and sign the homework book. Many parents are pleased with the way in which regular homework makes a good contribution to their children's education. A small but significant number of parents help in classes on a regular basis, providing valuable support to teachers in lessons such as science and design technology where assistance from an extra adult often makes such a difference to the success of the lesson. A larger number of parents are willing to help on an occasional basis, such as when pupils are going on a trip. There is a good response from parents to the workshops that the school arranges for them, some being so popular that they have to be run again to meet the demand. The partnership between the school and the parents of pupils with special educational needs is very good. This has a positive impact on the progress of these pupils.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

49. The school is well led and management is satisfactory. This is in line with the findings of the last inspection. The headteacher and the deputy have a very good working relationship. Improvement since the last inspection in 2000 has been satisfactory. The school is moving forward and standards in English, mathematics and science are rising. There is a strong commitment amongst all the staff to drive up standards and the school is well placed to improve further. It gives good value for money.
50. The headteacher provides good leadership. She has created a positive team spirit where all staff, including support and non-teaching staff, parents and pupils feel that they are valued and have an important part to play. Despite the improved standards reached in the latest tests, she is not complacent and is well aware of what the school needs to do to improve further. The whole staff has been involved effectively in devising clear action plans to bring about these improvements.
51. The monitoring of teaching is satisfactory. However, when the headteacher and her deputy observe lessons, they do not evaluate the impact that teaching has on pupils' learning. Although some points for development are given, there is a tendency to overemphasise the positive aspects. The headteacher recognises this as an area for development.
52. A weakness in the management is that while subject managers support other staff well by providing guidance about what they should teach and how they should do this, they do not have

enough influence on raising standards in their subjects. This was highlighted in the last report. The deputy has responsibility for analysing the results of national tests and he gives subject managers a statistical breakdown. Test papers are analysed to check how well pupils do in particular aspects of a subject, so that subject managers do have the information they need to plug gaps in what is taught in order to raise standards. There is too little attention paid to checking the outcomes of work and standards achieved in subjects other than English, mathematics and science and this has led to weaknesses in the school's provision. Subjects such as geography, history and religious education are not taught in sufficient depth in Year 6.

53. Management of the curriculum needs more attention. There is a need to compare with other schools' performance and time allocations in subjects other than English and mathematics. Currently, the school is not giving enough time to some subjects, such as music to give pupils a worthwhile experience. In most subjects, higher attaining pupils could do better.
54. There are good procedures for staff development. Performance management is in place, with objectives linked to the targets in the school development plan. Staff new to the school are supported well and there is a very informative staff handbook.
55. The management of provision in the Foundation Stage is good, and as a result, children settle into school well and get a good start to their education. The management of special needs provision is also good. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and supports teachers well. Targets in individual learning plans are precise and manageable and regular reviews take place to measure pupils' learning. As a result, these pupils achieve well.
56. The school development plan is a well-considered working document that identifies clearly what the school needs to do next. However, it does not identify the need to develop pupils' speaking skills despite the low standards.
57. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities well. The headteacher keeps them fully informed about how the school is doing and what needs to be improved. The governors are very committed to the school and its continued improvement. While they are very supportive, they ask challenging questions and hold the school to account. They are fully involved in performance management and have set appropriate targets for the headteacher. The budget is managed well, including funding for specific purposes, for example, special educational needs. The school seeks to obtain best value in all its work.
58. There is a sufficient number of staff and these are used efficiently. For example, the two classes in Years 4 and 6 two additional groups are taught by the special needs co-ordinator and the deputy. This has a positive impact on learning. The job share in Year 5 works well because the two teachers meet regularly and plan the work together.
59. The accommodation is good and allows the curriculum to be taught effectively. Most classrooms are of an adequate size and a spacious hall provides good accommodation for whole-school assemblies and physical education. The school has additional classrooms that are used when additional groups are formed, for example in Year 6 Pupils' learning also benefits from the community base that is accommodated in the school, for example through the family learning project. The library, together with new shelving and an updated book stock, is being moved into a new room this term. Displays in the classrooms and around the school do not promote sufficiently pupils' literacy and numeracy skills or include enough of pupils' own work, except in the Foundation Stage. Access into the school building, and between the different areas within the school, is good for pupils with disabilities. This ensures that all pupils participate fully in the curriculum.
60. There is a large outside area, including a playing field. The school has gained additional funds from 'neighbourhood renewal' to resurface the bleak playground and provide a stimulating area for the

pupils. The reception classes do not have their own outdoor play area. This will be rectified in the spring term when the nursery moves into the new accommodation within the main school building. The Foundation Stage children will then have their own safe and stimulating outdoor area. The school is well resourced.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to improve the quality of education for all pupils, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

1. Raise standards in English throughout the school by:
  - Pinpointing more accurately what pupils already know and can do;
  - Using this information to plan for the next stages of their learning;
  - Ensuring that appropriate time is given to pupils who need additional support in developing reading skills, and providing opportunities for all pupils to read for a range of purposes including information gathering from reference materials to support their learning across other subjects;
  - Improving the quality of marking, so that pupils know what they have to do to improve their work.  
(Paragraph Nos. 45, 70, 72, 74, 75, 76, 78)
2. Raise standards in mathematics throughout the school, and in science in Key Stage 1 by:
  - Adopting a more rigorous approach to developing pupils' mental skills;
  - Providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their own ideas through experimentation, investigation and problem solving activities;
  - Matching work more accurately to pupils' needs.  
(Paragraph Nos. 86, 89, 94, 96, 97)
3. Raise standards in speaking, reading and writing by:
  - Paying more attention to developing these skills, by giving pupils more planned and structured opportunities to develop and practise them through other subjects.  
(Paragraph Nos. 71, 72, 75, 111, 113, 115, 116, 138)
4. Raise standards in religious education by:
  - Developing teachers' subject knowledge through appropriate training that will enable them to support pupils' thinking and reflection skills;
  - Giving pupils more opportunities to talk about their work and reflect on what they have learnt;
  - Ensuring that sufficient teaching time is devoted to it.  
(Paragraph Nos. 29, 134, 135, 138)
5. Raise standards in art, geography, history and music by:
  - Ensuring that an appropriate amount of time is spent on these subjects;
  - Providing more balance within these subjects, with more emphasis on developing and practising skills.  
(Paragraph Nos. 29, 101, 109, 111, 112, 128)
6. Ensure that pupils have a greater awareness of other cultures and are prepared effectively for life in a multicultural society by:
  - Planning across the curriculum to teach pupils about the customs, traditions and beliefs of different ethnic minorities, and inculcating in them feelings of respect for other cultures.  
(Paragraph Nos. 38, 134, 135)
7. Continue to use the very good procedures in place already to improve attendance.  
(Paragraph No. 17)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### *Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection*

Number of lessons observed	73
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	53

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	9	32	30	2	0	0
Percentage	0	12	44	41	3	0	0

*The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.*

### *Information about the school's pupils*

#### **Pupils on the school's roll**

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	419
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	228

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Special educational needs**

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	12
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	103

#### **English as an additional language**

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

#### **Pupil mobility in the last school year**

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	23
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	25

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	8.4
National comparative data	5.6

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	1.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

**Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)**

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	38	21	59

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	29	29	32
	Girls	19	19	20
	Total	48	48	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (79)	81 (82)	88 (84)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	33	30
	Girls	17	19	18
	Total	40	52	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	68 (72)	88 (85)	81 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

**Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)**

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	31	22	53

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	24	19	26
	Girls	16	15	18
	Total	40	34	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (61)	64 (61)	83 (79)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	22	22	24
	Girls	14	17	13
	Total	36	39	37
Percentage of pupils	School	68 (38)	74 (52)	70 (66)

at NC level 4 or above	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)
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*Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.*

***Ethnic background of pupils*****Exclusions in the last school year**

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>	<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
White – British	357	0	0
White – Irish		0	0
White – any other White background		0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean		0	0
Mixed – White and Black African		0	0
Mixed – White and Asian		0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background		0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian		0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani		0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi		0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background		0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean		0	0
Black or Black British – African		0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background		0	0
Chinese		0	0
Any other ethnic group		0	0
No ethnic group recorded	88	0	0

*The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	21
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.1
Average class size	28

**Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	302.5

**Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Financial information**

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	1,129,796
Total expenditure	1,086,146
Expenditure per pupil	2,463
Balance brought forward from previous year	71,442
Balance carried forward to next year	115,092

***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out

445

Number of questionnaires returned

68

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	28	1	0	3
My child is making good progress in school.	76	22	0	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	31	9	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	57	29	9	0	4
The teaching is good.	84	12	0	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	71	28	0	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	87	12	0	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	82	16	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	62	29	1	0	7
The school is well led and managed.	78	18	1	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	69	28	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	51	21	1	4	22

## **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**

61. The quality of education provided for children in the reception class is good. Improvement since the time of the previous inspection is good. From a well below average start, children's achievement is good so that, by the time they reach Year 1, most of them reach the Early Learning Goals<sup>1</sup> in personal social and emotional development and physical development. Their attainment in communication language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development is still below the expected level. This is mainly because a significant minority of children have a narrow range of everyday vocabulary for describing clearly and confidently their ideas and experiences.
62. The provision for children with special educational needs is very good. This is because the staff quickly identify the children's needs, give them the additional support that they need and lots of praise and encouragement. This was very evident when the special support assistant gave a child with a physical disability unobtrusive help at drinks time. His specific needs were met fully and he took part in this activity like his classmates. The needs of the most able children (gifted and talented) are identified and met so that they also make good progress.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

63. Staff promote children's personal, social and emotional development very successfully. They are very caring, supportive and sensitive to children's needs and they listen with courtesy and genuine interest to what children have to say. This makes children feel secure and leads to trusting relationships. Children's behaviour is very good. This was very apparent when the teacher asked the children to stop and listen to her when they were working on a variety of activities. They stopped instantly, you could have heard a pin drop. The children followed her instructions quickly and moved sensibly to the carpet for story time. Children show good levels of concentration and responsibility, for example, they share equipment with each other and tidy away resources at the end of lessons. Teachers give children time to reflect upon their actions and work. This helps children to understand other people's points of view. This was very evident when a teacher had noticed that one or two children were playing alone at playtime. She discussed this with the whole group and encouraged them to play together as friends. As a result, children are developing a sound awareness that some actions are right and some are wrong.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

64. Staff give considerable time to developing children's everyday vocabulary, for example they discuss their work individually or in pairs. They question children effectively and this encourages children to talk about their ideas and experiences. When a teacher was reading 'This is the bear and the scary night', she asked 'What do you think the bear might be feeling?' 'Does anyone think something different?' Through praise and sensitive support she encouraged the children to express their ideas to the rest of the group. A child said, 'I think he's a happy bear,' and another, 'He's thinking, looking up at the sky – rain dropping down.' However, a significant minority of the children have a narrow range of everyday vocabulary for describing clearly and confidently their thoughts and experiences. Staff also encourage children to use technical words, so children begin to use words such as 'title' and 'speech bubble'.
65. Staff give children many activities that encourage them to attempt their own writing, for example to write lists, stories and accounts of their experiences. They also give children lots of praise and encourage them to use their knowledge of letter sounds to read and to write the unfamiliar words

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<sup>1</sup> The Early Learning Goals are the curriculum goals children are expected to attain when they enter Year 1.

that they meet. Therefore, children of all abilities have the confidence to 'have a go' at their own writing. They write simple sentences, such as 'The rainbow fish would not share'. Higher attaining and some average attaining children recognise letter sounds and a range of words in the reading scheme books. However, few of them use this knowledge to read with sufficient independence the familiar words that they meet in a wider range of texts. Although staff teach letter formation they give less time and emphasis to this than to the children's own attempts at writing. As a result, the competency in handwriting is lower than expected for a significant minority of children of all abilities. For example they place capital letters within words when they write independently.

### **Mathematical development**

66. Staff assess carefully children's achievements in lessons and they use this information effectively to plan the next step in children's learning. The teaching of basic skills, such as number work, is good. Staff also ensure that children have a variety of mathematical experiences so children make good progress. Children sing rhymes such as 'Five little monkeys'; they talk about shapes, such as a circle, and the length of objects. Most children count accurately to ten. Higher-attaining and average-attaining children count with increasing confidence in twos to ten and beyond. Occasionally they record their work, such as the addition of objects to ten. Teachers use homework well to support children's learning in the classroom, for example the counting and matching of objects or coins.

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

67. Staff plan and work together very well as a team. They also use successfully the good quality resources to gain children's interest and motivate them to learn. This was very apparent in the work based upon 'The hungry caterpillar'. A group of children worked with a teaching assistant using magnifying glasses to observe closely, and draw, some caterpillars. Another group worked with a teacher discussing the similarities and differences of a variety of fruits, such as strawberries and grapefruit. Children's learning was good in both groups. Staff support the children effectively when they use the computer. Therefore children use the mouse with developing confidence, skill and independence when they use a range of programmes. Visitors to the classroom, and visits out, for instance to a garden centre, make children's learning better.

### **Physical development**

68. On balance, the provision is good. Staff teach successfully the skills to help children gain safe control of finer movements, such as using glue spatulas, paintbrushes and cutting with scissors. The provision for outdoor physical development is unsatisfactory. Groups of reception children use the nursery outdoor play area each week because they do not have their own area. However, they only use this area once a week and the main outdoor provision is playtime. This takes place with the whole school in the morning and with Years 1 to 2 in the afternoon. Staff are not providing sufficient relevant experiences for children's physical development and this restricts the progress they make. This is partially compensated for by good quality physical education lessons that take place in the school hall. In one of these lessons the children responded promptly and enthusiastically to the teacher's careful instructions. They walked and ran with a developing awareness of space and of each other. Staff gave very good, unobtrusive support to a child with a physical disability so that he took part fully in the work and made the same good progress as his classmates. The school has plans to move the nursery into the main school building in the spring term. The plans include a secure, stimulating play area for the nursery and reception children.

### **Creative development**

69. Teaching is good because staff have high expectations of what children should achieve so children make good progress. Their attainment in music is in line with expectations for this age. Children

name instruments, such as the triangle and wood block. Their accurate hand movements for loud or soft sounds show that they listened very carefully. Children use paints, crayon and pencil with increasing skill. Staff develop effectively children's imagination, and speaking skills, when they work with the children in the imaginative play areas, such as the playhouse or the 'vets'.

## ENGLISH

70. Standards have improved since the last inspection at a faster rate than national trends. However, by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, the observed overall standards in English remain below the national average. Pupils' progress is satisfactory and standards are improving. Standards are better than those found in similar schools and the school has made effective use of the national literacy strategy to raise the quality of the written work pupils achieve in literacy lessons. Because children arrive in the nursery with well below average communication, language and literacy skills, teachers throughout the school work hard to support pupils' learning in order to help them achieve these standards. In the last year there has been marked improvement in the achievement of higher attaining pupils. This is particularly evident in pupils' writing, which has been the key area of focus. Additional literacy support and a greater emphasis on target setting have helped pupils make sound progress. Pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs make good progress. Suitably challenging work and close monitoring of their achievements ensures learning is closely linked to their individual education plans. They are generally supported well in the classroom where additional adults are available, but sometimes struggle to make satisfactory progress when left to work independently. For example, lower attaining pupils in a lesson in Year 6 found the written task too difficult to interpret and therefore did not produce accurate responses.
71. Standards in speaking are below average overall, and well below average for a significant minority of pupils throughout the school. Pupils generally listen well, especially when teaching captivates their interest, and standards are broadly satisfactory. However, for a good number of pupils, the ability to retain information and sustain concentration, especially for example, when listening to overlong introductions to lessons, is limited. Teachers consistently target the development of listening skills, re-iterating information and linking this to prior learning. This results in an improvement in pupils' confidence and competence by the time they leave the school. However, the range of planned, structured opportunities for speaking is not as rigorously pursued in all classes. In many situations, teachers accept too readily only one word or short phrases in answer to questions. Although this allows pupils to communicate and be understood, it does not challenge them to consider their responses at greater depth or with more detailed reasoning. For example, pupils in a PHSE lesson in Year 2 were asked to talk about where different organs in their body were located and what purpose these organs served. Most experienced difficulty in making themselves understood despite having visual prompts to help them. In another example, pupils in a history lesson in Year 6 gathering evidence from text and photographs depicting Victorian life had difficulty in making relevant observations. The range of vocabulary for many pupils is narrow, indicating limited reading and speaking experiences. Where the best teaching occurs and where teachers have particularly good relationships with pupils, as seen in a literacy lesson in Year 3, a few pupils demonstrate a real security in presenting their ideas and answer without any real fear or reservation. As a result, others in the class are prepared to 'have a go'.
72. By the end of Year 6, standards in reading are below average overall, and well below average for a significant minority. However, there is evidence that reading is improving as a result of the intensive teaching of word building skills in the infant classes. The teachers are good at helping the pupils to tackle unknown word by sounding them out or breaking them into syllables. Pupils do not read as fluently as would be expected, and the majority of average and higher attaining pupils in the infant classes only begin to gain confidence in their word building and contextual reading strategies towards the end of Year 2. The school recognises that reading development is a priority and time is regularly provided for pupils to explore books and read both for interest and for extending their skills. Pupils especially enjoy being read to and try hard to follow shared texts. When the reading material is too hard for some pupils to access, for example, 'The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe', in a literacy lesson in Year 6, they continue to listen well but do not engage with the reading. In another lesson in Year 6, some pupils were not able to read 'awkward' or 'stern'. The contextual clues did not help them to explain the correct meaning and their reading lacked expression and enthusiasm, despite the teacher's best efforts to make the session lively. This lack of engagement, especially for a significant number of average and lower

attaining pupils in the upper end of the junior school has a detrimental impact on the progress pupils make with fluency in reading, acquiring new vocabulary, and learning to use these skills creatively in their independent writing. A significant number of pupils have limited enthusiasm for reading independently, but recognise the value of reading, especially when they connect with particular topics that interest them. For example, 'Harry Potter' remains a strong favourite with pupils in Years 5 and 6, but when discussing characters and story lines, only the most articulate readers are able to talk about the books confidently.

73. Pupils' comprehension skills and the ability to predict outcomes in stories, for example, are limited. This was seen in a literacy lesson in Year 5, when pupils could not explain the expression 'His eyes lit up', although they could read it, and one pupil read the phrase 'on the crest of a wave' but had no idea what this meant. The introduction of information technology has been valuable in engaging pupils' interest to read on screen, and skim reference materials to support their work in subjects such as history and geography. The new library offers an even richer wealth of written material to explore, but for many pupils reading remains hard work. Higher order reading skills, for example, discussing characters, developing prediction and inference skills, and formulating ideas and opinions are limited for all but the highest attaining readers. This lack of expertise to interpret and reflect on written material, limits the progress a good number of pupils make in other subjects, for example, problem solving in mathematics, or voicing views and opinions in religious education and history.
74. Standards in writing are generally below average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils make an early start in copying letters and simple words accurately. They are helped to underwrite, for example, stories they relate, and continue to construct their own sentences. In an extended writing lesson in Year 3, pupils were encouraged to think about feelings, smells and sounds as they looked at pictures of a school playground and a fairground. The teacher's enthusiastic presentation held the pupils' interest well and they were generally eager to practise their composition skills. There were many inaccuracies in spelling, sentence structure and punctuation, but the quality of writing from the most able pupils was good. One child reflected on 'I felt the breeze on my face' and another wrote, 'the helter skelter went whizzing around'. However, all the pupils were given the same level of support. Whereas the higher attaining pupils were clearly confident in working on the task independently, the lower attaining pupils who needed greater support to express themselves in sentences of more than two or three words were not supported sufficiently.
75. The quantity and quality of work expected is not always sufficiently high or challenging and pupils sometimes produce work that does not reflect satisfactory progress. Vocabulary is generally narrow in its quality and range, and by the end of Key Stage 2, the majority of pupils confuse upper and lower case letters, use simple punctuation incorrectly, and lack confidence when writing for a range of purposes. Spelling is also hesitant, with a number failing to spell familiar words accurately, even as late as Year 5. For example, pupils write 'liket' for 'liked', 'I wud ov' for 'I would have', and 'past' instead of 'passed'. In these examples it is clear pupils' pronunciation and insufficient reading experience are impacting on the quality of their written work. Creative writing practice is not always extended effectively in other subjects, although there has been some progress in history where the use of literacy has been a focus. Although pupils are taught to use speech marks and other punctuation appropriately from the end of Key Stage 1, many still have difficulty using it correctly by the end of Year 6. Particularly noticeable is the frequent inaccurate use of the 'apostrophe' both to indicate plural words and abbreviations. Some teachers demonstrate a lack of expertise in teaching these aspects confidently, and written notices around the school contain spelling and punctuation errors. This sets a poor example to pupils and does not help their learning. Pupils regularly use computers to improve their drafting and re-drafting skills, and the quality of presentation produced in this way is generally satisfactory. However, in a significant number of books, work is inaccurate, untidy and sometimes little has been completed in the time given. This is not always picked up in teachers' marking.

76. By the end of Year 6, while standards in writing are below average, improvement is particularly good in Years 5 and 6 where teaching is generally more challenging and where teachers' expectations are generally higher. In lessons where work provided is often uninspiring and does not sufficiently challenge or interest or engage the pupils of all abilities, then progress is slow. These lessons are generally broadly satisfactory, but lack imagination, focusing more on completing a task, but not always evaluating how well pupils have grasped any new learning. The work produced is often lacking in quantity and breadth, and many pupils are not supported well enough for them to make satisfactory progress. Lower attaining pupils especially rely on a great deal of guidance and support and sometimes disengage because they are not confident and are reluctant to put pen to paper. By the end of Year 6, pupils have broadened and extended their skills noticeably, but again there is evidence that they continue to rely heavily on prompts and ideas from adults in order to work independently. The small numbers of higher attaining pupils in each class write confidently and sometimes pursue their writing independently or in small groups when the opportunities are provided. By the end of Year 6, they write with expression and use a range of age appropriate vocabulary. However, skills in writing play scripts and reports, while developed appropriately, remain below expected standards for the majority of pupils. Where teaching is good or better, time is devoted to helping pupils to consider improvements to their work. Good work is often shared with the rest of the class and pupils are encouraged to use each other's ideas to improve their own writing.
77. Although handwriting is formally introduced in the infants, standards throughout the school are only just satisfactory. Pupils make errors in letter formation and sometimes use upper and lower case letters interchangeably. A significant number, even up to Year 6, join letters incorrectly, and often this is coupled with a number of inaccuracies in spelling and punctuation. However, most pupils generally take a pride in their work and try hard to improve in ways suggested to them in their targets.
78. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, as was found at the time of the previous inspection. Teaching during the inspection varied from unsatisfactory in one lesson observed, to broadly satisfactory, good or in a few lessons very good. The lesson judged to be unsatisfactory reflected the teacher's ineffective use of time to allow pupils to practise and consolidate the skills they were learning. The overlong time given to the presentation, which provided few opportunities for pupils to contribute, resulted in pupils becoming restless and distracted. In this lesson, effective support from teaching assistants enabled the lower attaining and special needs pupils to make better progress than the rest. Where teaching is broadly satisfactory, lessons sometimes lack sufficient pace and challenge and work is not always suitably matched to pupils' needs. In these lessons teachers' expectations are not high enough and, in a few lessons, inadequate provision is made for extension work to challenge the higher attaining pupils. For example in a literacy lesson in Year 2, the teacher spent too much time teaching the whole class. Higher attaining pupils were not clear about what they were expected to produce and progress overall was barely satisfactory. Similarly, in another lesson in Year 2, the worksheets pupils were asked to complete did not relate to the shared text, and a significant number of lower attaining pupils were unable to follow the instructions because they could not read the material presented. Similarly, where teachers spend too long on introductions to lessons, and expect children to listen for too long, those pupils who are below average attainment, sometimes find it difficult to sustain concentration. In these lessons, while behaviour still remains good, some pupils make barely satisfactory progress.
79. The best teaching observed showed very good understanding of what pupils should be learning, and skilful questioning and a lively pace to help pupils achieve well. For example, a literacy lesson observed in Year 5 on the use of direct and indirect speech, engaged the pupils' interest well and activities were enthusiastically presented to ensure all pupils remained fully on task throughout. While the overall attainment was below that normally expected for pupils at this age, learning was very good. At the upper end of the junior classes, teachers encourage pupils to think carefully about their work and the skills of reflection and personal opinion are strongly cultivated. However, because a significant number of pupils are reluctant to take up this self-directed challenge,

individuality in their work is inhibited. A sensitive approach helps some pupils to become more confident to work independently, but there is not always enough time, or teaching assistants, to meet the individual needs of all pupils effectively.

80. Pupils are introduced to a good range of media, including newspapers, poetry, fiction and non-fiction literature. This helps them to experience the richness and diversity of the language. Where teaching is good, links with learning in other subjects are skilfully woven into the literacy lessons. For example, some lovely creative writing was seen in Year 6 linked to people's feelings and their fates in Victorian times. Homework is a helpful aid to supporting pupils' progress and pupils regularly take home reading books, spelling and other tasks.
81. Pupils' attitudes in lessons are generally good, and sometimes very good. To a large extent their attitudes reflect the quality of the teaching they experience. They generally settle to work quickly, are attentive when suitably involved in the lessons, and try hard to do what is required.
82. The overall management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator, assisted by senior staff and external advisers, has monitored planning, teaching and pupils' work to identify areas for curriculum development and this is leading to further improvement. There is a clear emphasis on raising standards and where additional support is targeted appropriately, the progress pupils make is good. The subject is suitably resourced, and includes a good range of books and information technology software. Performers and outside speakers enrich curriculum provision and the subject makes satisfactory contribution to pupils' cultural development.

## **MATHEMATICS**

83. Standards have improved since the last inspection, although they are still below average at the end of both key stages. In the latest national tests for 11 year olds the percentage of pupils reaching the higher level doubled. However, the information is not yet available to compare these results with those of other schools.
84. Boys and girls of all abilities make satisfactory progress overall as they move through the school. In Year 1, pupils can compare two numbers and say which is larger and which is smaller and carry out simple investigations such as how many different number combinations make a given number. By Year 2, pupils identify strategies for easy counting, such as adding the least number to the highest number and the more able explain why it is easier to use this approach.
85. Teachers are using the techniques of the national numeracy strategy effectively. In most cases they adapt the work to match the needs of the pupils. In a lesson in Year 4, for example, higher attaining pupils worked out how to make 1,000 by counting in 100's while the average pupils worked in 100's and the lower ability pupils in 10's. By Year 6, most pupils understand that multiplication and division are inverse operations.
86. Pupils throughout the school have great difficulty doing mental calculations. They do not have secure enough knowledge of number facts. Teachers deliver oral and mental sessions with enthusiasm, making learning interesting for pupils and the vast majority respond very well. However, many have difficulty remembering what they have learnt. This slows their learning in other aspects of the subject, such as problem solving and work on shape and space. Although they are generally confident in solving problems involving one operation, when more than one is introduced, their ability to interpret and translate word problems into number operations is often hampered by their limited reading comprehension skills. Teachers explain clearly to pupils what they are going to learn and pupils listen carefully. Teachers provide suitable opportunities for pupils to develop and practise their mathematical skills in other subjects, such as science and information technology.

87. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was at least satisfactory and mostly good. Evidence from examining pupils' books is that it is satisfactory over time and pupils achieve at a satisfactory rate. Teachers mostly have high expectations of their pupils, build effectively on previous learning and provide a wide range of challenging and interesting activities. In the better lessons the pace is brisk and questioning probing, encouraging pupils to concentrate well. Throughout the school the pupils are not afraid to make mistakes. Individual pupils' achievements in lessons are celebrated and this boosts their confidence and raises their self-esteem. Pupils' work in books is marked regularly. However, although it is encouraging, it does not always identify clearly the next steps or the ways in which pupils could improve.
88. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning because of the sensitive way that teachers treat them. This is particularly so when they are set tasks. There are never any gender issues and overall boys and girls listen, respond and enjoy lessons equally. They listen carefully to what is being said and pay attention when other pupils are speaking. They work together well when required and take care of their equipment. This contributes significantly to the progress they make.
89. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is confident, committed and well informed. The monitoring of planning is effective, but there is a need to further improve the monitoring of the teaching and learning. Resources are of good quality and are used well to help raise standards. Assessment overall is satisfactory. The procedures are good, but the information gathered is not always used effectively.

## SCIENCE

90. Standards of attainment at the age of seven are below the national average; at the age of eleven years standards are broadly average. The progress made by pupils is satisfactory overall in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. Pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs make good progress. Those identified as gifted and talented in last year's Year 6 class made very good progress and all attained the higher Level 5. This was in part due to the Easter booster classes that helped to raise standards near the end of the year.
91. Standards attained in the 2001 national tests for pupils aged eleven showed that pupils were below the national average for the expected Level 4 and above, and well below average for the higher Level 5. However, when compared with the results of pupils in similar schools, pupils were above average for Level 4 and above. Although as yet unvalidated, the results of the 2002 tests show that while the percentage of pupils gaining Level 4 and above has slightly decreased, the percentage attaining the higher Level 5 increased from 15 per cent to 40 per cent.
92. In Year 1 pupils have satisfactory knowledge of the five senses and can use sight, taste and smell to differentiate between a range of substances. They can use their sense of taste to say what a substance might be, for example, coffee or tomato sauce. Owing to their lower than average speaking skills and limited vocabulary, they have difficulty in talking about and describing some substances. Pupils in Year 2, who were beginning a study of habitats, showed a wide range of knowledge. The majority could not offer the names of some common British wild animals, and fewer had secure knowledge of birds and plants. Only a small number had average knowledge of British wild life. However, most pupils could name more exotic animals, such as elephants, polar bears and camels, and with help, could match them to coloured pictures of their natural habitats. During an English lesson, pupils played a game of 'Simon Says', which showed that they have sound knowledge of the external parts of the human body.
93. Pupils in a Year 3 class were able to recall the names and functions of human teeth. Pupils in Year 4 co-operated in pairs to collect data in order to find the average force required to break a length of cotton. By the end of the session pupils could say why several pieces of data were needed to work out an average. They used the results of their investigation to make suitable

predictions. In Year 5, pupils knew that a balanced diet was important in order to stay healthy, but their weak oral and writing skills inhibited discussion and recording of what they knew. Pupils in Year 6, who were preparing samples of foods in petri dishes, in order to observe the action of micro-organisms, understood the need to make and record accurate observations and why a fair test was important. Higher attaining pupils could say how temperature and atmosphere might influence how quickly the effects of the micro-organisms on the foods might occur.

94. In order to judge standards at the end of Key Stage 2 a group of pupils was interviewed. The group included pupils that had been identified as being gifted and talented. The interviews revealed that pupils' knowledge and understanding was at least average for their age, with some aspects of their understanding being above this level. The higher attaining pupils had a good understanding of the requirements to conduct a fair test, but had not yet been given opportunities to design and test their own solutions to a given problem. When offered a problem to solve the group members collaborated effectively and quickly arrived at a possible solution that was sensible and firmly based on scientific knowledge and practical understanding. It was notable that within this group the ability to express themselves clearly and confidently was available to only two pupils, one of whom had an above average science vocabulary.
95. Teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. In the lessons seen during the inspection the quality of teaching and learning was never less than satisfactory, with 70 per cent of lessons being good or very good. The best teaching was in Key Stage 2. The pupils that were interviewed declared their interest in science and were very eager to tell and discuss what they knew. This enthusiasm was reflected in other classes where observations in 90 per cent of lessons recorded pupils' attitudes and behaviour to be good or very good. Teachers generally plan interesting subject matter and teach it effectively. Teaching is supported well by good classroom relationships.
96. A weakness in the teaching in Key Stage 1 is that all the pupils copy the same work into their books. This means that work does not always match the ability of the pupils. Higher attainers in particular are not making the progress they should. They are also missing important opportunities to develop their thinking and literacy skills. By the age of eleven, while pupils are writing and recording in their own words their literacy skills are below the average levels expected. The marking of their work is often too extravagant. The words 'excellent' and 'super' are applied to work of, at best, average standard. This shows low expectations on the part of teachers and does not indicate accurately to pupils how well they are doing.
97. Overall, the co-ordinator leads and manages the subject well. She is enthusiastic and has good subject knowledge that has been accumulated by focused reading and attendance at relevant courses. She uses her timetabled time set aside for science to good effect by working alongside her colleagues. The assessment procedures to record data on individual pupils are good. However, the use of the assessment information to inform planning, is in need of development if pupils of all abilities are to get work that matches their needs.
98. The school undertakes a satisfactory range of visits and uses the local environment effectively for fieldwork. The co-ordinator manages the resources well and ensures that equipment and materials are available and in working order. She is sensibly gathering together a good selection of good quality video films that enable pupils to see aspects of science that would otherwise be unavailable to them. She is aware that more use could be made of other forms of information and communication technology; for this reason she is sensibly reviewing computer programs before making purchases.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

99. Standards in art and design by the ages of seven and eleven years are below average. The standard of two-dimensional art is better than three-dimensional art across the school.
100. Adults heavily influence much of the work displayed for Year 1 pupils. The use of cut out shapes to be decorated does not allow pupils to initiate or develop their own ideas. Where printing has occurred, using vegetables and other shapes, application is random and of mixed quality. Pupils have used balloons and plaster-of-Paris satisfactorily to produce three-dimensional shapes to turn into under-water creatures. In Year 2, although adult influence is still apparent in some large, textured animal heads, some pupils' work shows good individuality. For example, pastel flower drawings that show sound observational skills coupled with the use of colour, line and texture. Interesting drawn textural qualities are also evident in the African wall hangings, while a few pupils have used colour, tone and shade mixing in their figure drawings to good effect.
101. In the lessons seen in Years 4 and 6 the standard of drawing was below, and sometimes well below average. It is evident that there has been insufficient attention paid to drawing skills as pupils move through the school. Work on display shows the same non-developed features, but there are pockets of work where basic principles have been introduced, although not developed in later work. For example, in Year 4, pupils' pastel drawings of 'Dreams' evoke an uneasy atmosphere. These drawings were successfully undertaken following the study of paintings by Edward Munch and Joan Miro. Similarly, depictions of 'Medusa's mirror' demonstrate pupils' abilities to produce lively artefacts that contain the thoughtful use of colour, textures and shape. The application of watercolours is insufficiently understood by the age of eleven years, as may be seen in pupils' landscape paintings. Resources are limited and do not provide for the full range of the art and design curriculum. Teachers do not always make good use of the resources the school has. For example, grades of pencil, which would help pupils to gain greater understanding of line quality through investigation were not used in a drawing lesson. However, pupils are beginning to use sketchbooks effectively to try out colour mixing and some recording.
102. The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory, and as a result pupils do not reach the expected standards. In the two lessons seen, however, it was good in one and satisfactory in the other, with the pupils' attitude to art being good. Pupils spoken to outside lessons also had good attitudes to the subject, clearly stating their liking for their lessons. In general, teacher' subject knowledge is weak. The examples of art displayed show that their knowledge of art media and application would benefit from development if the standard of pupils' work is to rise.
103. The co-ordinator manages the subject to the best of her ability. However, she does not have the expertise to lead her colleagues effectively in order to raise standards. The works of western European painters, together with aspects of the art of Islam, Australian aboriginals and native North Americans, are studied satisfactorily. However, insufficient work of artists other than painters has been planned into pupils' studies.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

104. Standards at ages seven and 11 are as would be expected. No reference was made to standards in this subject in the last report. Pupils achieve steadily and make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. This includes pupils with special educational needs, who make satisfactory progress because of the extra help they receive. This raises their self-esteem as they enjoy their success in making things. This in turn has a positive impact on their behaviour because they feel valued.
105. The curriculum is well planned and pupils have suitable opportunities to work with a broad range of materials. They are introduced appropriately to the design process at an early stage. Pupils in the infant classes are supported well by adults, including parents. While the adults are very enthusiastic and keen to help the children to produce pleasing products, the finished work shows

that the children have not had enough opportunities to select their own materials and explore different ways of using them.

106. The work is built upon effectively in the junior classes. Pupils learn to improve their designs and refine their skills. For example, pupils in Year 2 and Year 5 make wheeled vehicles. Whereas in Year 2 the designs are simple, usually using a cardboard box for the main body, pupils in Year 5 produce much more sophisticated designs. These involve making chassis from wood strips. In doing this, pupils have good opportunities to practise measuring accurately. Their finished products show that they have worked carefully to make sure that all the pieces fit together well.
107. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with good features. Teachers provide interesting and relevant contexts for the work and make good links with other subjects, notably science and history. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 5, pupils were evaluating biscuits and describing their ingredients. The teacher took the opportunity to check what the pupils had remembered about fat and sugar, for example, from their science lesson on healthy eating. He used questions well to reinforce their understanding of how the five senses could be used to make decisions on similarities and differences.
108. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership because his very good subject knowledge enables him to support colleagues effectively. This gives teachers confidence in delivering the subject. Although he monitors teaching through looking at examples of pupils' work, there is no evidence that these have been evaluated effectively and sound advice given to pupils about how they could improve their work.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

109. Standards in geography are in line with those expected at the end of Year 2, but are below expected levels by the end of Year 6. This is because not enough time is allocated to enable pupils to develop their skills in the full range of the subject. Although this represents a similar picture to that at the time of the previous inspection, some progress has been made. There is a new curriculum in place and a range of good new resources. The co-ordinator has implemented an appropriate action plan and assessment opportunities are developing well.
110. Younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 are developing a good awareness of places in the local area and further afield. They follow 'Barnaby Bear' on his travels and learn about the places he visits. They have used a world map to identify places that some pupils have been to on their holidays. In one lesson, many pupils in Year 2 were able to say their own address and talk about the importance of knowing where they lived. They used good geographical vocabulary as they described features of their own area. A few higher attaining pupils were able to offer alternative words for a road, giving examples such as 'street', 'avenue', 'grove' and 'lane'. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have learnt about the different jobs that people do around the school. They show good understanding of differences and can explain what each person does in their job and why it is important.
111. Older pupils make appropriate observations about geographical localities and different environments. For example in Year 5, pupils have undertaken a local traffic survey, using their information and communication technology skills to display results. In Year 6, pupils have undertaken a residential experience in the Lake District where they learnt about life in the area and explored the local countryside. However, there is too little evidence in pupils' books, and around the school, of past work. The planned time for geography in Years 3 to 6 is too little and does not enable sufficient study to take place to enable standards to rise. Too little use is made of literacy and information and communication technology in support of geography, and this limits standards in those areas of learning also.
112. The quality of teaching and learning in geography is good in Key Stage 1, where teachers make the best use of resources and time to help pupils develop their skills. As a result, pupils make good progress from a low starting point. In one lesson, the teacher explained carefully to pupils what they were going to learn and provided good examples of what she expected them to achieve. Good planning and effective support from learning assistants ensured that all pupils were able to write their own address and understand what each line represented. In Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. It is constrained by the limited time spent on the subject and this affects pupils' learning. By the time pupils reach Year 6, their geographical knowledge and skills are weak. They do not have sufficient geographical vocabulary to explain themselves. For example, in one lesson, pupils had difficulty in explaining what a 'mountain' was. Only a few attempted to do this, and used their arms to show what a mountain was like, rather than using words and explaining it appropriately as a sentence. Similarly, many pupils in Year 6 had difficulty finding Great Britain and France on a map of Europe, and were not aware of what a 'mountain range' was. Despite good use of resources by the teacher, learning was only just satisfactory because of limited prior knowledge.
113. The co-ordinator does not have sufficient influence in raising standards throughout the school. She is aware of the lack of opportunity to develop literacy and information and communication technology skills through geography, or to use them to support the subject. Monitoring is emerging and there is an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses within the subject and the need to raise standards in Key Stage 2.

## **HISTORY**

114. Standards are broadly similar to those expected at age seven. As a result of sound teaching, boys and girls of all abilities make satisfactory progress in the infant classes. They get off to a good start in the subject by learning about significant events and famous people in the past. For example, by the end of Year 2, most pupils can describe some aspects of the Great Fire of London, and they know why people such as Florence Nightingale are remembered. Through their study of objects from the past, such as toys and household objects, they can distinguish between some aspects of life in the past and life now. In discussion, pupils said how much they enjoyed their learning.
115. In Key Stage 2, pupils learn about the past through the study of topics such as the Romans, the Ancient Greeks, the Tudors and the Victorians. By the age of 11 higher attaining pupils can recall aspects of different periods, such as the influence the Romans had on life today. However, the majority of pupils do not reach the standards expected for their age. Their weak speaking skills prevent them from taking a full part in discussion and they cannot seek out information for themselves. Both these factors affect their learning. They rely on teachers to give them information and they have difficulty in retaining facts. An examination of pupils' books shows that in many cases pupils complete very little recording work.
116. Although the quality of teaching in the one lesson seen was good, the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. The teacher in a Year 6 class gave a lively introduction to life in Victorian times, and provided useful sources of information for the pupils to use. However, because they were not used to finding things out for themselves, the pupils showed little willingness to complete the written tasks and learning during the lesson was only just satisfactory. In general, despite satisfactory teaching, the standards pupils achieve are inhibited by their weak literacy skills.
117. The co-ordinator does not have enough influence in raising standards throughout the school. As a Key Stage 2 teacher, she does not have opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in the infant classes. She is aware that in Year 6, the pupils do not receive their full entitlement because they are being prepared for the National Curriculum tests. She recognises that weak literacy skills are holding pupils back and has identified the need to develop literacy skills through history.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

118. Standards are in line with those expected of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils are making good progress and achieving well. This represents significant improvement since the previous inspection. The use of ICT in other subjects is weak, however, because too few opportunities are planned to enable pupils to practise and develop their skills in real situations.
119. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 know how to give simple instructions to cause something to happen. They can create simple text and use many word-processing functions accurately. They are confident users of the computers in the suite and show high levels of pride in their achievements. They are eager to talk about their work and explain what they are doing.
120. Older pupils develop appropriate skills as they undertake specific modules of work in the suite. In Year 4, pupils have created colourful calligrams by manipulating text. In Year 5, pupils have used the Internet to search for information about their work. For example, they have found information about the artist Henri Matisse. There is good evidence of using information and communication technology skills to collate and present the results of a local traffic survey undertaken as part of pupils' geography studies. Good understanding is evident of the need for accurate and reliable information when creating graphs.
121. Pupils in Year 6 are able to make and use spreadsheets. They use formulae to calculate totals and create graphs to display their results. In one lesson, they achieved well as they entered information, corrected mistakes and made predictions about the consequences of their decisions. They were able to work safely and confidently as they developed their skills. Many have good

word-processing skills and are beginning to use these to support their work in other subjects. Additional support for pupils with special educational needs is good.

122. Teaching and learning are good overall. As a result of recent training, teachers have good subject knowledge, and this enables them to teach with confidence. Good quality resources have positively influenced the quality of learning. In a lesson in Year 6, for example, a good brisk introduction, and effective use of an interactive board to demonstrate the use of spreadsheets, led to successful completion of the task by almost all pupils in the allotted time. Because of the good teaching, pupils were encouraged to identify patterns and relationships and discuss their outcomes with enthusiasm.
123. The recently appointed co-ordinator is well informed and has already produced a good action plan to further improve the provision. The school has rightly identified the need to develop the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum as a priority. The introduction of a computer club several times weekly, is also helping to make the best use of these resources and helps pupils who do not have computers at home to develop their skills and enjoy the experience.

## MUSIC

124. There was no judgement in the previous inspection so judgements on progress since that time cannot be made. Pupils reach standards that are below national expectations by Year 6. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils' achievement is mainly satisfactory. No lessons were seen in Key Stage 1, but other evidence shows that standards are average. Pupils sing with gusto in assemblies and they use simple percussion instruments appropriately. Teachers plan carefully to ensure that pupils receive their full entitlement.
125. Standards are rising in Key Stage 2 because of the action taken by the school in the last year. Good quality resources have been purchased and a new subject co-ordinator appointed. She has the ability, commitment and support to improve the subject further. This was evident in a Year 4 lesson when she taught successfully alongside the class teacher, encouraging pupils to quickly create a score. Pupils enthusiastically and effectively built up the different layers of sounds by tapping out a rhythm or using their voices.
126. From Years 3 to 6 pupils make satisfactory progress on the whole. Year 3 pupils sing songs, such as 'Koulilengay' with suitable awareness of the melody. In Years 4 and 5 pupils build well upon these skills because teachers with subject expertise are working effectively with the class teachers. The teachers have high expectations of what pupils should achieve in singing. This is shown in the challenging work that they give the pupils so pupils' learning is good. This was evident in a Year 5 lesson when pupils sang confidently songs in two or more parts, such as 'Sleeping Beauty'. They maintained well their own part while showing a good awareness of the parts sung by the other groups. They sang with good expression and control of the dynamics of their voices, pitch and rhythm.
127. Teaching and learning in Key Stage 2 are satisfactory. In one lesson teaching was good and in one lesson it was very good. Most pupils' behaviour is very good because teachers, supported effectively by classroom staff, manage them very well. This management is underpinned by the very good relationship that staff have with the pupils. Staff praise and encourage the pupils for their efforts and achievements. This raises pupils' self esteem and motivates them to strive to do their best. Most pupils have good attitudes to the subject. They are enthusiastic, keen to learn, and genuinely enjoy their music making activities. They work together well as friends, for example when Year 6 created their own lyrics for the verse of a song. Teachers ensure that all groups of pupils are included fully in the activities, for example classroom support staff give effective additional help to pupils with special educational needs. As a result these pupils make the same progress as their classmates.

128. Pupils are now making satisfactory progress in Year 6 but they have gaps in their previous learning. Their knowledge of different kinds of music, exploring and creating music as part of a group, and of the correct subject vocabulary are below that expected for their age. Pupils sing tunefully but lack confidence when performing their work to other pupils in the classroom. This is because of the weaknesses in the school's provision for music in the past, such as a lack of subject guidelines and the teaching of the composing element of music. The school provides thirty minutes for music lessons. This is not long enough for pupils to explore, create, practise and perform confidently their own music. This was evident in the lessons in Years 3 and 6 when pupils had insufficient time to practise and improve the performance of the song or tune that they had written. Also some teachers lack the confidence and expertise to teach these skills.
129. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. Staff encourage pupils to show respect for the performance of others so pupils listen carefully to their classmates, for example in a Year 5 lesson when pupils took turns to lead the tapping of a rhythm. Last year, the visit to the school of a group of musicians contributed positively to pupils' enjoyment and learning and to their cultural development. However, staff provide few opportunities for pupils' spiritual and cultural development in music lessons and in assemblies. For example, too little time is given to pupils to reflect upon their work, discuss music or play instruments from a variety of cultures. Teachers promote satisfactorily pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, for example through the teaching of technical words, such as 'lyrics' or 'metronome', and through work on rhythm. They do not use sufficiently information and communication technology to support pupils' learning in music.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

130. Standards in physical education are above those expected at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. There was no judgement in the previous inspection so judgements on progress since that time cannot be made.
131. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 have developed good gymnastic skills. They use space effectively and display good control of movements. Pupils clearly understand the need for warming up before they exert themselves and the need to cool down at the end of strong exercise.
132. In Key Stage 2, pupils continue to build on previously acquired skills, developing energy, enthusiasm and enjoyment. Pupils display good control, which was a particularly evident in a gymnastic lesson in Year 5. Pupils demonstrate good games skills and these skills are developed and used well in competitive sport. Gymnastics and dance are covered in the winter months, seasonal games and swimming throughout the year and athletics in the summer months. The school enters local competitions in athletics and generally does well. Extra-curricular activities of good quality enhance the physical education programme; both boys and girls attend these. Opportunity is provided for the pupils to experience a residential course in Years 5 and 6, where they are introduced to other sports, such as canoeing, hill walking, abseiling and rock climbing. Almost all pupils attend the residential experience. Approximately 70 per cent of pupils reach the expected standard of swimming 25-metres. Although pupils in Year 5 have the opportunity to attend the residential course to the Lake District, they do not receive swimming lessons. This is a weakness acknowledged by the school.
133. Teaching is good overall and, as a result pupils, including those with special educational needs generally make good progress. Teachers expect pupils to work hard and behave well. Planning is good and pupils enjoy crisp, energetically challenging lessons. The lessons help to develop and promote confidence and self-esteem. Pupils accept responsibility for collecting and returning equipment. Both boys and girls respond with equal enthusiasm to the physical education programme and respond positively when reminded by their teachers of the rules of safety.

134. Leadership and management of the subject by the co-ordinators are satisfactory, and resources are good overall.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

135. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. Standards are below the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Teaching is unsatisfactory throughout the school, and pupils of all levels of prior attainment and from all groups make unsatisfactory progress in their learning. Since the previous inspection, the school has begun to make effective use of the good range of artefacts to engage pupils' interest and extend their learning experiences. However, the school agrees standards are below those expected. Pupils' literacy and communication skills limit their ability to interpret and reflect on what they are taught. It is evident that some teachers are insecure in their subject knowledge and work in pupils' books is at a fairly simplistic and factual level. In discussion with some higher attaining Year 6 pupils, it was clear pupils have retained some information about Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. However, their knowledge is very patchy and sometimes incorrect. For example, they struggle to make sound links about the common features that underpin all faiths.
136. In the infant classes, teachers provide pupils with suitable opportunities to learn about Jesus and his birth and life, using references from the New Testament. They not only learn about Christianity, but also Judaism and pupils enjoy listening to stories. Pupils in a lesson in Year 1, were taught about the Jewish Torah but missed the point that all sacred writings are special and people of the Jewish faith use a 'yad' to spoil the 'Book'. Many pupils in this lesson did not know what a Bible was and the making of the 'yad' became the focus of learning. The teacher's presentation was too long and pitched at too high a level for many pupils to learn and retain information effectively. Pupils understand Jesus is the Son of God, but a good number do not know some of the more familiar stories from the Bible. For example, pupils have made Easter books, but recalled only vaguely the Easter story. For a good number of pupils in Year 1 the connection between celebrating Christmas and the birth of Jesus is not evident. Pupils generally do understand that going to church to pray is special and they are familiar with key features of churches and the role of vicars.
137. In the junior classes, pupils reflect upon the good things in their lives and write their own prayers to say thank-you. They continue to learn, for example, about Islam, but pupils in Year 6 have very limited awareness of the 'Pillars of Faith' in Islam and why these are fundamental principles for Moslems. Pupils are confident in talking about the moral teachings the Bible reflects and that, Jesus told parables. They know parables are stories with morals. However, many did not know who Mohammed was nor his importance in Islam, and some confused features in Islam with those of Hinduism. Higher attaining pupils, for example, know what a temple is but struggle to remember 'mosque' or explain what a 'shrine' represents, or why incense is used in Hindu worship.
138. Pupils generally have positive attitudes to their religious studies and are keen to listen, especially when teaching is supported well with visual materials. This helps them to consolidate information. Teachers' planning indicates a range of suitable provision but the greater emphasis is on coverage of the syllabus rather than ensuring pupils have suitable opportunities to think about and express their own ideas and views, especially in their writing. Teaching does not always match the needs of pupils of different levels of attainment. Work is sometimes too challenging for the lower attaining pupils, because their reading and speaking skills are limited. Written work shows that pupils are frequently all given the same written information, and the lower attaining pupils are unable to read this back. This approach restricts the progress of higher attaining pupils who have limited opportunities to compose their own version of the information they receive. Pupils have opportunities to acquire subject specific vocabulary, but frequently understanding and accurate application of this learning is restricted because a good number of pupils are reluctant to speak in front of others. Pupils' limited experiences of learning in this area, outside school, also restrict the

progress they make. Pupils do use their ICT skills to seek information to support their learning, but often the material they gather is of a higher order than their reading skills.

139. The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. There is an appropriate policy, and work covered follows the recommendations of the Agreed Syllabus. Although teaching is monitored, little attention is given to evaluate learning. The school has recently introduced formal assessment procedures to track pupils' attainment and progress as they move through the school. However, their effectiveness cannot be judged at this early stage. The time given to teaching religious education is minimal and insufficient attention has been given to apply literacy skills effectively. There are satisfactory links with the local church and the vicar is a regular visitor to the school. This has a positive impact on pupils' personal and social development. As yet, there have been no visits to places of worship other than those of the Christian faith and the school has not explored bringing visitors from other faiths to work with pupils. Pupils' spiritual development through learning in religious education is minimal. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' awareness of other faiths, but their view of the multicultural nature of this country's population remains limited.