

# INSPECTION REPORT

## PLANTATION PRIMARY SCHOOL

Knowsley.

Unique reference number:104441

Inspection number: 181888

Headteacher: Mr M. J. Storey

Reporting inspector : Mr G.J. Yates

2465

Date of inspection: November 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>, 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 706714

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## Information about the school

Type of school : Junior and Infant

Type of control : Community

Age range of pupils : 3 - 11

Gender of pupils : Mixed

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Appropriate authority : Governing Body

Name of chair of governors : Mrs J. Clarkson

## Information about the inspection team

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
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M. Beale	Design and technology; Information technology.	Equal opportunities.
A.V. Calderbank	Art; Physical education; Religious education; Provision for pupils with special educational needs.	Attainment and progress; Attitudes, behaviour and personal development; Leadership and management.
S. Scull Lay inspector		Attendance; Support, guidance and pupils' welfare; Partnership with parents and the community; Staffing, accommodation and learning resources.
L. Spooner	Mathematics; History; Geography.	The curriculum and assessment.
J.M. Watkins	Under-fives; English.	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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## Main findings

### WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- ◆ The school makes everyone feel welcome. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are excellent.
- ◆ Teaching is at least good in almost 70% of lessons and never less than satisfactory.
- ◆ The school is very well led and managed.
- ◆ By the time pupils leave, standards in music, art and aspects of physical education are above average.
- ◆ Very good provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- ◆ Children are given a good start in the Nursery.
- ◆ Pupils' spoken language skills are developed to a high standard.
- ◆ The quality of the provision and support for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- ◆ Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. They are keen to learn.

### WHERE THE SCHOOL HAS WEAKNESSES

- ◆ Standards in writing for higher attaining pupils at Key Stage 1 are not high enough.
- ◆ In mathematics not all higher attaining pupils are sufficiently challenged
- ◆ Not all strands of information technology are satisfactorily developed.
- ◆ The school's playground is too small for the number of pupils on roll.

**The school has many more strengths than weaknesses.** Measures to address the few shortcomings will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

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

Good progress has been made since the last inspection. Overall standards have risen and pupils make satisfactory progress. The roles and responsibilities of the senior management team have been successfully reviewed. A clear structure for auditing, monitoring and evaluating the curriculum has been established. The members of staff have worked hard to develop a systematic and consistent approach to assessment in English, mathematics and science. Results are analysed and used effectively to set pupils. Great strides have been made in information technology provision by, for example, creating a computer suite. This has led to a much higher quality of work in some aspects of the subject, particularly word processing, but more work still needs to be done to improve standards in the control and modelling. Work in geography and history is much better and pupils achieve standards that are in line with those found in most schools. Strategic planning is very effective and the School Development Plan is a valuable tool for school improvement. The school has successfully addressed all the issues relating to health and safety highlighted in the last report. All statutory requirements relating to information in the school's prospectus are now met.

The headteacher and governors have made great efforts to extend and improve the school building. The school is a very attractive place in which to work.

The school is well placed to make further improvements. The headteacher and the senior management team considers very carefully the areas in which they feel the school can do better and ensure that plans for action are successfully completed.

## STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds in the 1999 National Curriculum tests:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	<b>Key</b> <i>well above average</i> A <i>above average</i> B <i>average</i> C <i>below average</i> D <i>well below average</i> E
English	C	C	
Mathematics	D	D	
Science	C	C	

The school's results in national tests in English and science in 1999 were in line with the national average but below the national average in mathematics. Compared with those in similar schools they are in line in English and science but below in mathematics. In mathematics, whilst the majority of pupils attain the expected Level 4, the percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 is low. Inspection evidence shows that standards in English, mathematics, and science are in line with the national average. Standards in religious education are in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Whilst overall standards in information technology are average, standards in the control and modelling aspects is unsatisfactory. In music and art pupils achieve high standards. In all other subjects standards are in line with those found in most schools. Standards in some aspects of physical education are above average.

Children enter school with a range of ability broadly typical for the age group. By the age of five most achieve the levels expected for their age in all the areas of learning. Children's writing skills are not as well developed as other aspects of language and literacy. Their personal and social development is higher than that normally found.

By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are attaining high standards in art and physical education and average standards in most other subjects inspected. However, standards in the control and modelling aspects of information technology are unsatisfactory. In English very few higher attaining pupils attain Level 3 in the writing aspect of the subject.

## QUALITY OF TEACHING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good overall and is a strength of the school. All the teaching seen was at least satisfactory and in almost seven out of ten lessons it was good or better. Approximately one in four lessons were very good or excellent. Strengths of the teaching include thorough planning and very good classroom management.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Very good. Pupils are very polite and courteous. All staff implement consistently the school's system of rewards and sanctions.
Attendance	Satisfactory. However, an increasing number of families are taking children out of school to go on holiday during term time.
Ethos	Very Good. Relationships throughout the school are excellent. There is a very caring and supportive atmosphere. The school strives to improve standards.
Leadership and management	Very good. The school benefits from highly effective leadership and a sense of shared purpose. The senior management team and the Governing Body provide very good support.
Curriculum	Broad and balanced. Work is well planned. Good assessment procedures are in place for English, mathematics and science. A very good range of extra-curricular activities is provided.
Pupils with special educational needs	Difficulties are identified early and the school provides good support.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Very good. Pupils are given a good insight into their own and other cultures.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Good. The school is well staffed. Arrangements for professional development are very good. Resources are good. The building has been extended and the learning environment is very attractive. The playground area is too small.
Value for money	Good.

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

## THE PARENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Children like school.</li> <li>◆ The school makes parents feel welcome and encourages them to get involved in its work.</li> <li>◆ Pupils behave well.</li> <li>◆ The values and attitudes the school promotes have a very good effect on pupils' personal and social development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The amount of homework pupils are asked to do during school holidays is excessive.</li> <li>● Insufficient information is provided about the subjects of the curriculum.</li> </ul>

Inspection findings show that pupils do behave well and enjoy coming to school. Parents are encouraged to become involved in their children's work. The school's values have a positive effect upon children and there is a very wide range of extra-curricular activities that enhance provision. Homework is not excessive. The actual amount of homework pupils undertake during school holidays is left to the discretion of the individual. The work produced during the holidays was of a very high standard and made a valuable contribution towards the development of pupils' personal study skills. Some good information is provided to parents about literacy and numeracy and general topic areas. The school has already planned to provide more detailed information about individual subjects.



## Key issues for action

In order to improve the quality of education still further the school should:

a) provide more able pupils with greater opportunities in mathematics to work at a higher level;

[see paragraphs 12 and 117 in the report]

b) ensure that more opportunities are provided in Key Stage 1 for pupils to use and extend their writing skills;

[ see paragraphs 9 and 104 in the report ]

c) improve pupils' standards of attainment in the control and modelling aspect of information technology by:

- increasing teachers' knowledge and experience of this aspect of the subject;
- ensuring that skills are regularly taught in a systematic way and pupils are given opportunities to use them;

[see paragraphs 16 and 156-158 in the report]

d) when funds become available, increase the size of the school playground.

[see paragraph 82 in the report]

In addition to the key issues above the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. After each issue a reference is given to the main paragraph in the report.

- Provide opportunities for pupils to write their own ideas about what topics studied in religious education mean to them.

[ Paragraph 185]

- Ensure greater consistency across classes in the pace and challenge of mental arithmetic tasks.

[ Paragraph 117]

- Ensure that in all classes information technology is integrated into the curriculum.

[ Paragraph 160]

# Introduction

## Characteristics of the school

1. Plantation County Primary School is situated near to Halewood village. The building has been extended and more extensions are planned. Since the last inspection the school population has grown significantly and there are now 531 pupils [including 54 full-time equivalent pupils in the Nursery]. The school is popular and there is now a three-form entry intake into the Reception age group. It also has a two-class nursery.

2. There are currently 124 pupils under the age of five. Pupils are drawn from owner-occupied and local housing estates close by. The percentage of pupils from high social class households is below the national average and but the percentage who receive free school meals is in line with that found in most schools. A very small percentage of pupils are from homes where English is not the first language. Most pupils have attended the Nursery and their attainment on entry to the Reception age group, as rising fives, is broadly average. There are 85 pupils on the special educational needs register. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs. The admissions policy is in line with the local authority scheme.

3. The school's aims include:

- the provision of a high quality and effective education for all its pupils;
- to develop in pupils a sense of respect and consideration for others;
- to provide a friendly and stimulating environment.

4. The school's priorities for development during the current school year include:

- the successful introduction of the numeracy strategy;
- a review of child protection procedures;
- the production and implementation of a whole school policy for pupils' personal, social and health education;
- the evaluation of the Home/School partnership.

## Key indicators

### Attainment at Key Stage 1<sup>1</sup>

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998/9	37 (29)	29 (33)	66 (62)

<b>National Curriculum Test Results</b>		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	28 (24)	33 (26)	30 (25)
	Girls	28 (27)	29 (31)	26 (27)
	Total	56 (51)	62 (57)	56 (52)
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	85% (82%)	94% (92%)	85% (84%)
	National	82% (80%)	83% (81%)	87% (84%)
<b>Teacher Assessments</b>		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	30 (26)	26 (23)	33 (23)
	Girls	28 (29)	30 (26)	27 (27)
	Total	58 (55)	56 (49)	60 (50)
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	88% (89%)	85% (79%)	91% (81%)
	National	82% (81%)	86% (85%)	87% (86%)

### Attainment at Key Stage 2<sup>1</sup>

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998/9	28 (30)	38 (28)	66 (58)

<b>National Curriculum Test Results</b>		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	15 (20)	17 (22)	22 (24)
	Girls	32 (23)	31 (21)	35 (20)
	Total	47 (43)	48 (43)	57 (44)
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	71% (74%)	73% (74%)	86% (77%)
	National	70% (65%)	69% (59%)	78% (69%)
<b>Teacher Assessments</b>		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	20 (22)	20 (20)	22 (27)
	Girls	35 (24)	34 (21)	34 (23)
	Total	55 (46)	54 (41)	56 (50)
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	83% (79%)	82% (71%)	85% (86%)
	National	68% (65%)	69% (65%)	75% (71%)

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

### Attendance

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

		%
Authorised Absence	School 1996	5.3%
	National comparative data	6.2 %
Unauthorised Absence	School 1996	0.06%
	National comparative data	0.5%

### Exclusions

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

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

### Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	22%
Satisfactory or better	100%
Less than satisfactory	0%

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

### **Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school**

#### **Attainment and progress**

5. Children enter school with broadly average levels of attainment. In the Nursery and Reception classes they make good progress in all the areas of learning and most achieve the standards expected for the age group in respect of all the Desirable Learning Outcomes. On entry many have below average levels of self-help and communication skills and in these areas and in physical education they make very good progress.

6. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall in English during Key Stage 1 and standards of achievement are in line with those found in most schools. They continue to make satisfactory progress throughout Key Stage 2 and by the age of eleven achieve average standards. In the 1999 National Curriculum English tests for eleven-year-olds at the end of Key Stage 2 the proportions of pupils achieving Levels 4 and 5 were in line with the national average.

7. Good progress is made in the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills throughout both key stages and standards are above average. By the age of seven they listen attentively to their teachers and to each other. They respond appropriately to questions and speak confidently. In Key Stage 2 pupils are provided with good opportunities to express their ideas fully and to listen to the opinions of others during lessons.

8. Standards in reading are broadly average. In the latest end of Key Stage 1 tests in reading the proportion of pupils attaining Level 2 and above was in line with the national average. The percentage achieving the higher Level 3 showed an increase over the previous year. Pupils make good progress as a result of the direct teaching methods used during the literacy hour and by the age of seven read fluently. Satisfactory progress is made during Key Stage 2 and by the age of eleven the majority of pupils are confident readers. However, they are not as competent in using their referencing skills.

9. Pupils of below average and average ability make satisfactory progress in writing during Key Stage 1 and attain standards similar to those found in most schools. In the latest national writing tests for seven-year-olds the percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 and above was above the national average. However, higher attaining pupils do not make sufficient progress in working at a higher level and, as a result, fewer pupils succeed in reaching the higher Level 3 than in other schools. By the age of seven most can produce writing that is correctly sequenced and shows some awareness of punctuation and spelling. During Key Stage 2 pupils make sound progress in their writing and by the age of eleven they achieve a satisfactory standard. They write for a good range of purposes and audiences using a variety of stimuli. Information technology is sometimes used well in the drafting and redrafting of work.

10. Over the past three years the performance of boys in reading and writing has been close to the national average in Key Stage 1, whilst that for girls was below the national average in reading and above in writing. By the end of Key Stage 2 there is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.

11. Satisfactory progress is made in mathematics during Key Stage 1 and standards of attainment are similar to found in most schools. In the 1999 mathematics tests for seven-year-olds the percentage achieving Level 2 and above was broadly in line with the national average. However, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 was low when compared to the national average. By the end of Key Stage 1 the majority of pupils can add and subtract to 20, are beginning to understand place value, and can represent data on block graphs. A significant minority of pupils is not confident with mental work. Pupils make good use of their data handling skills in science, geography and information technology.

12. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in mathematics during Key Stage 2 and by the age of eleven attainment is broadly in line with that found in most schools. The proportion achieving the expected Level 4 in the National Curriculum tests in mathematics for eleven-year-olds in 1999 was slightly higher than the national average and in line with the average for similar schools. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 was well below the national average and the average for similar schools. By the age of eleven pupils have a satisfactory understanding of probability and how decision-trees work. They can use their knowledge of number operations to solve problems but take too long to work out their answers. There is no difference between the results of boys and girls.

13. Standards of attainment in science are average at the end of Key Stage 1 and pupils make satisfactory progress. The proportion of pupils attaining Level 2 and above in the 1999 national assessments in science was higher than the previous year and slightly above the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving Level 3 improved significantly. By the age of seven pupils have a good understanding of how the five senses can help us, how plants grow and what they need to help them grow. They can observe carefully and describe what they see accurately.

14. Progress in science is satisfactory during Key Stage 2. By the age of eleven pupils' attainment is in line with the national expectation. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds in science the percentages of pupils reaching Level 4 and the higher Level 5 were in line with the national averages. When compared with those obtained in similar schools, the results are average. By the end of the key stage pupils know what a fair test is and can make and test predictions. They can record and report scientific information in a variety of ways.

15. The previous inspection report recorded that not enough opportunities were provided for pupils to undertake independent investigations. This issue has been successfully addressed.

16. Information technology was judged to be an area of weakness in the school at the time of the last inspection. Standards have improved significantly since the 1996 inspection and the school has kept pace with national developments. Attainment overall in information technology for the majority of pupils at the end of both key stages is similar to that found in most schools. Progress in most aspects of the subject is now satisfactory throughout the school. However, progress and standards of achievement in the strands of controlling and modelling are unsatisfactory.

17. Pupils make good progress in developing skills and techniques in art during both key stages and by the age of seven and eleven achieve standards above those expected for their age group. Standards have improved in Key Stage 1 since the last inspection when they were judged to be satisfactory. By the age of seven pupils are able to record their ideas with confidence. Some of their drawings show a good eye for detail. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have developed a good understanding of a range of work by famous artists. The subject makes a valuable contribution towards pupils' cultural development and the quality of the learning environment.

18. In both key stages pupils make satisfactory progress in design and technology and achieve standards in line with the expectations for the age groups. By the age of seven they can select suitable materials and try out different techniques for joining them together. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils can cut and shape materials and apply an appropriate finish. Since the last inspection an appropriate scheme of work has been put in place.

19. The school has made significant improvements in the provision for history and geography since the last inspection when standards were judged to be below national expectations. Pupils now make satisfactory progress throughout the school in both key stages and achieve standards similar to those found nationally. In history they develop a good understanding of different social groups in Victorian times and in geography they learn that places have characteristics that are both similar to, and different from, each other.

20. The school offers a broad and balanced physical educational programme and overall standards have improved since the previous inspection. In games and gymnastics progress is good and attainment at the end of each key stage is above average. Standards in dance are above average by age seven. Records show that standards in swimming are good. Very good opportunities are provided for pupils to take part in competitive sport.

21. Attainment in music was judged to be high during the previous inspection. Inspection evidence shows that music continues to be a strength and, by the time pupils leave, standards are higher than those found in most schools. Standards in singing and instrumental playing are of a particularly high quality. Progress in Key Stage 2 is good. It was not possible to make a judgement about standards or progress in Key Stage 1.

22. By the end of both key stages standards of attainment in religious education are in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Satisfactory progress is made throughout the school. Pupils' knowledge of major religions of the world has improved since the school was last inspected but they are still provided with too few opportunities to undertake reflective writing.

23. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Their difficulties are identified at an early stage and their individual education plans identify appropriate learning targets. In class teachers usually provide tasks for them which are well matched to their prior attainment. The school's arrangements for the teaching of pupils with special educational needs in small withdrawal groups are well managed so that pupils do not always miss parts of the same lesson. The few who come from homes where English is a second language are provided for well and they make good progress.

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

24. Standards of pupils' behaviour, attitudes and personal development are very good. The quality of relationships is excellent. This has a beneficial effect on pupils' personal and academic progress. The school has maintained the high level of behaviour and attitudes to learning reported in the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs work hard and respond well to the additional support provided.

25. The personal and social development of children under five is very good. The children in the Nursery have settled well into the routines expected of them. They are eager to explore new learning and make good progress in developing their self-confidence and independence. Children work with enjoyment and enthusiasm and are eager to please. They respond well to the expectations of adults and play well together in small groups. Most children share equipment fairly and tidy up after their activities. They quickly develop a sense of right and wrong and enjoy celebrations such as birthdays. By the time children enter the Reception classes the majority can make independent choices and complete an activity without direct adult supervision.

26. Pupils' attitudes to learning throughout the school are very good. They settle quickly at the start of lessons and apply themselves conscientiously to all tasks. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers and they concentrate well. They display a keen interest in their work. This is very evident in practical activities such as art and games lessons. Pupils are very eager to learn new things and willingly take part in class discussions. Older pupils voluntarily attend a homework club because they wish to improve their work. They respond positively to the opportunities provided for working in pairs, for example when using the computer, in groups as part of a physical education lesson, and by participating as team members in sporting activities. Many pupils show good levels of perseverance in learning to play musical instruments and progress to playing together in the school orchestra.

27. Standards of behaviour throughout the school are very good. This was confirmed by parents in questionnaire responses and at the meeting held with the registered inspector prior to the inspection. Pupils are very polite and greet visitors cheerfully. They hold doors open for adults and move about the building in a quiet and orderly manner. In the dining hall there is a friendly and relaxed atmosphere and pupils of all ages play together well at break and lunch times. In lessons pupils work together very effectively and co-operate well in group work. The rewards system is popular with pupils and provides them with incentives to improve work, behaviour and courtesy. Assemblies create some opportunities for reflection and are effective in bringing the whole community together to celebrate achievement. Instances of inappropriate behaviour are uncommon and the school works closely with parents to resolve any concerns. There have been no recent exclusions from the school.

28. The excellent quality of relationships is a strength of the school and contributes to the welcoming atmosphere, positive learning environment and supportive ethos. This is very evident in the treatment of pupils with learning or physical difficulties who are very effectively integrated into the life of the school. Pupils who come from homes where English is not the first language are made to feel totally welcome. Pupils show respect for each other and for staff and visitors. Mixed gender groupings in lessons, for example in investigative work in science, are successful in encouraging boys and girls to collaborate well.

29. Pupils' personal development is very good and all children enjoy taking an active part in the smooth running of the school. In Year 6 pupils take it in turns to act as monitors and house captains and they carry out their duties sensibly and maturely. In all classes pupils willingly tidy away books and equipment and collect registers. Pupils look after school property and conscientiously carry out their duties as "environmental rangers" when picking up litter. A wide range of extra-curricular activities contributes very positively to pupils' personal development. Pupils take part in music and sporting activities and there is very good support for charity fund-raising.

### **Attendance**

30. Attendance rates are satisfactory and there is a very low level of unauthorised absence. Since the time of the last inspection, authorised absence rates have risen and an increasing number of families are taking children out of school in term time to go on holiday. This interrupts pupils' learning and affects their attainment and progress.

31. Pupils are punctual arriving at school. They are allowed into school 10 minutes early and supervised well. This system alleviates congestion problems around the school's entrances. A prompt start is made to sessions. Children return into the building quickly after break and lunch times and no time is lost in lessons. Registers are marked efficiently in accordance with legal requirements. Parents are notified of individual attendance rates in pupils' end of year reports.



## Quality of education provided

### Teaching

32. The quality of teaching is good. In almost seven out of ten lessons seen during the week of the inspection teaching was good or better and no teaching was unsatisfactory. In almost one in four lessons teaching was very good or excellent. The overall quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. There is no longer a reliance on published schemes and resources are used well in history. In the information technology lessons seen during the inspection teaching was never less than satisfactory and sometimes better. However, the teaching of the control and modelling strands of the subject remains a weakness and some teachers lack confidence in integrating the computer into their topic work. Very good use is made of a music specialist in Key Stage 2 and this has a direct impact on the good standards that pupils achieve.

33. The quality of teaching of the under-fives is good and, in one in three lessons seen, very good. There is a high level of teacher expertise in planning and delivering the curriculum. Very good use is made of time and Nursery and Reception classes are very well organised. Teachers have high expectations and use imaginative methods to ensure that all children make progress. Key strengths of teaching in the early years include the very good use made of nursery nurses and the high quality of teamwork that exists.

34. The quality of teaching in both key stages is good overall and sometimes very good. Features of very good teaching include questioning techniques that really challenge pupils' understanding and very well managed activities. All teachers have introduced the literacy strategy very well and the numeracy strategy is gradually being introduced.

35. A strength of teaching throughout the school is the thorough planning. Plans detail the learning targets in each subject by year group for each half term. This provides a good structure within which class teachers work as year group teams on lesson planning. There is usually a good balance and sequence of activities but in mathematics there are occasions when higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged. Also in religious education lessons in Key Stage 2 not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to write their own ideas about what the topic under study means to them. Good planning in science ensures an appropriate balance between practical and knowledge based activities.

36. The support provided for pupils with special educational needs reflects the targets in their individual educational plans. The school provides additional help by way of a withdrawal system. It attempts to ensure that pupils who are withdrawn do not miss the same lessons throughout the year. The small number of pupils who come from homes where English is a second language are well supported.

37. The excellent relationships within the school make a significant contribution to the positive working atmosphere in lessons. Pupils are encouraged to express their ideas and to speak and listen well. Teachers show that they value pupils' answers and where necessary they allow time for pupils to think more deeply before expressing their views.

38. Classroom management is very good throughout the school. Good use is made of the time available. The morning session is longer than that normally found for Key Stage 2 pupils but the system works well because lessons are taught at good pace and interesting and stimulating tasks are set. In both key stages good use is made of setting arrangements and these have a positive impact on the overall standards that pupils achieve.

39. Teachers' subject knowledge is good in most subjects but some teachers lack confidence in teaching some aspects of information technology. Also, despite the support of the co-ordinator in providing lead lessons, some Key Stage 1 teachers lack confidence in teaching music.

40. Work is conscientiously marked. In most subjects written comments are provided that give useful pointers to pupils about how they might improve their work. Teachers assess work well and use the information gathered in most subjects to plan future work.

41. Most parents are satisfied with the amount of homework their children have, although a few think that too much is expected during the holidays. Homework contributes significantly to the standards that pupils achieve and homework projects are of a particularly high standard.

42. Teachers organise a very good range of extra-curricular activities and these have a positive impact on standards. For example, pupils benefit from singing in the choir, taking part in the technology club, playing in the school orchestra and participating in sporting activities.

### **The curriculum and assessment**

43. The curriculum is broad and balanced. Curriculum planning in both the long- and medium-term for the under-fives in the Nursery and Reception classes is good. It covers the six areas of learning and through a detailed and imaginative programme makes good provision for most children to achieve the nationally agreed Desirable Learning Outcomes for children of this age.

44. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education have appropriate policies. In addition, there is a recently reviewed special educational needs policy. The curriculum for Key Stages 1 and 2 is broad and balanced and meets the requirements for all subjects of the National Curriculum. The school follows the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. There are no specific sex education, drugs awareness or personal and social education programmes. However, these aspects are appropriately taught through science as part of the National Curriculum. In addition, the school provides opportunities, in liaison with the local secondary school, for pupils in Years 5 and 6 to learn French. This prepares pupils well for this aspect of the next stage in their education.

45. The school's literacy teaching takes full account of the guidelines of the National Literacy Strategy and provision in both key stages is very good overall. However, whilst opportunities for writing for a range of purposes and audiences are provided the standards that pupils achieve in Key Stage 1 are rarely higher than Level 2. In Key Stage 2 pupils are not given enough opportunities in religious education to write their own ideas about what the topics being studied means to them. The National Numeracy Strategy was introduced at the beginning of the school year and is having a positive effect upon standards in most aspects of the subject. However, the school has yet to fully establish a consistent approach to the planning and delivery of mental mathematics. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to use their mathematics skills in science, geography and information technology. The school has established a programme for integrating the most recent national guidelines into their planning for a range of subjects, including science, information technology, design technology, history and geography. This is already having a positive effect upon standards, especially in the development of skills.

46. Medium-term and weekly planning provide clear learning objectives with activities generally well matched to the full ability range. However, in mathematics, in both key stages, planning for the needs of all higher ability pupils does not provide sufficient challenge to enable them to make sound progress.

47. The school provides a satisfactory level of equality of access to the curriculum and of opportunities for all pupils to make progress. Both boys and girls take part in all aspects of school life including the full range of extra-curricular provision. The small number of pupils who come from homes where English is second language are provided for well.

48. Homework is used effectively in all classes and has a positive effect on the standards pupils achieve. During school holidays pupils are asked to produce a holiday project. Pupils decide the actual amount of work to be done. Samples of holiday homework seen during the week of the inspection were of a very high quality and make a very good contribution to the development of pupils' independent learning skills.

49. The provision for pupils with special educational needs, including those under five, is good. Such pupils are identified early. The curriculum meets the need of all pupils on the special needs register and good account is taken of targets in individual education plans. Pupils are mainly withdrawn from lessons for more focussed support but are also provided with appropriate support in the classroom. This approach has a positive effect upon the good progress they make. Setting in literacy and numeracy provides good opportunities for teachers to focus on individual needs. No pupil is disapplied from the National Curriculum.

50. A very good range of extra-curricular activities is provided and many pupils take part. Provision includes competitive sport and music. The provision for music is of a very high standard and this is evident in the quality of instrumental work by a significant number of pupils. The mathematics and language homework clubs, in liaison with the local high school, are used very effectively to target pupils whose current attainment is just below national expectations. Educational visits are well thought out and closely linked to planned topic work. These include history and geography field trips to places such as Chester and Barmouth in North Wales.

51. In the previous inspection assessment procedures and the use of assessment information were identified as a weakness. Since then the school has made significant improvements and both assessment procedures and the use of assessment are now of a good quality overall. However, mathematics assessments are not always used to set challenging work for higher attainers. The school uses a range of tests in English and mathematics, including commercial standardised tests, end of key stage statutory tests and non-statutory testing. In science and all other subjects, individual pupils are assessed as part of teachers' regular lesson evaluations. Key objectives and attainment at the end of learning units in some subjects are also assessed each half term. A portfolio of samples of work in English assessed in line with National Curriculum levels of attainment is in place. This provides teachers with a framework for assessment. Similar collections in mathematics and science are currently being developed.

52. Pupils' progress in English and mathematics is recorded and passed on to the next teacher. Teachers also meet formally at the end of each summer term to discuss individual pupil's attainment in all subjects with the next teacher. Results from tests, both statutory and non-statutory, are meticulously recorded and analysed to identify strengths and weaknesses in curriculum provision and in individual and year group attainment. This information is used effectively to assign pupils to particular teaching groups in English and mathematics. The school, in liaison with the Local Education Authority, has set targets for year groups. Teachers use assessment and the evaluation of lessons well to inform future planning.

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

53. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual moral social and cultural development, including that for the under-fives, is very good. Most parents agree that the values and attitudes promoted have a very good effect on their children's personal and social development and this was confirmed during the inspection.

54. Provision for spiritual development is very good. The high quality of collective worship, that meets fully legal requirements, is a major contributory factor. Key stage assemblies are an effective means of ensuring that subject matter is at an appropriate level for pupils' interest and understanding. For example, Nursery and Reception children were given the opportunity to link their own feelings of wonder when asked to choose beautiful objects from the 'Shiny Box' with God's creation of the sun, moon and stars. In one assembly children were asked to consider how they can 'colour' the lives of others through their own helpful actions. In addition, throughout the school teachers value pupils' ideas and provide them with many opportunities to reflect on passages from stories, poems and plays, pieces of music and works of art as well as their own literary and creative efforts.

55. Provision for moral development is very good. A home/school agreement is in place. There are high expectations of pupils' behaviour by all adults. School and dining room rules are prominently displayed and individual classes formulate their own 'promises' and 'rules'. Collective worship and religious education link pupils' personal response to moral issues effectively. Frequent positive reinforcement of pupils' attitudes is a feature of teaching in every class. There is recognition of their achievements, for example, in their individual Record of Achievement and publicly during assemblies. In the inspection week an act of worship led by a Year 6 class focussed on the theme of 'achievement' and was an excellent reflection of the school's commitment to high standards and the need to keep trying to do one's best. It was attended by parents and friends

56. Provision for social development is very good. The high quality of relationships is central to the success with which the school fosters the very good attitudes, social behaviour and self-discipline of the vast majority of pupils. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to play an active part in the smooth running of the school. These include expecting the youngest children in the Nursery to tidy up after themselves, giving responsibilities to classroom monitors and helpers throughout the school, and creating additional roles which are undertaken by Year 6 pupils such as Nursery helpers, librarians and house captains. Throughout the school pupils are expected to show initiative with regard to their own learning, for example the amount of homework undertaken during the school holidays is left to the discretion of the individual. The development of independence is successfully fostered in the wide range of residential activities that are offered to Key Stage 2 pupils. Care for others is promoted by the school's involvement in fund-raising for charities such as Comic Relief.

57. Cultural development is very good. The previous inspection report referred to the need for more opportunities for pupils to appreciate the beliefs and life-styles of others and this issue has been well addressed. Pupils encounter cultures other than their own through music, literature and religious education. Year 5 pupils' involvement in the Heartstone Project raises multi-cultural as well as other moral and social issues. Nursery children answer the register in Spanish and pupils in Years 5 and 6 are given an insight into French culture and language through good links with the local high school. Visits, such as to Wigan Pier, Croxteth Hall and North Wales, visitors (including music groups) and technological resources, such as Wonderworlds Poem Library, are used effectively to enrich pupils' experiences about their own culture and environment. There are excellent opportunities to learn to play a wide range of musical instruments and to participate in ensemble, orchestral, choral and dramatic activities.

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

58. The school provides a welcoming and caring environment and staff place a high priority on pupils' welfare, as they did at the time of the last inspection. Staff know the pupils well and relationships are excellent. Parents report that their children are happy and they enjoy coming to school. This has a beneficial effect on pupils' attitudes to their work and helps to develop their self-esteem and to support their progress.

59. Arrangements for monitoring pupils' progress and personal development are good. Work is marked regularly and teachers' written comments provide good guidance for improvement. Detailed records of children's progress are kept and older pupils are involved in setting and reviewing work targets. Pupils with special educational needs, or with English as an additional language, are well supported and they make good progress.

60. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes receive a high level of care. There are opportunities for parents and children to visit the school before entry and there is a staggered intake into the Nursery class. Several activities take place within the main school and the children are very well prepared for their transfer to the Reception classes. There is very good liaison with the local secondary school, including several useful curriculum links. Secondary staff take after-school homework clubs and pupils in Years 5 and 6 have weekly French lessons. There are opportunities for pupils to visit their chosen schools before entry and there is a good exchange of information between staffs.

61. There are very effective systems in place for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour. Pupils are fully aware of teachers' high expectations and the school operates as a calm and orderly community. Much emphasis is placed upon rewarding positive behaviour and parents and pupils' value this system. Instances of bullying are infrequent but members of staff are always alert to pupils' concerns.

62. Arrangements for monitoring and promoting pupils' attendance are good. Records are checked regularly and parents are contacted about unexplained absences. Certificates are awarded for full attendance and a weekly award is made for the best form attendance. Child protection procedures are very good and staff is aware and report any concerns.

63. The school successfully promotes pupils' health and safety and all issues identified by the previous inspection have been resolved. The Governing Body takes an active role in health and safety matters and the school is fortunate to have the services of a professional fire officer. First aid arrangements are very good and several staff hold qualifications. The school's nurse visits to conduct medical screening. Pupils are well supervised at lunchtimes and welfare staff organise songs and games to occupy children constructively. Safety talks are organised for pupils and suitable checks are completed before visits away from school.

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

64. Parents are very supportive and make a positive contribution to the life of the school. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection. Staff appreciate the assistance given by several parents in classrooms and with visits away from school. A number of parents have completed classroom assistants' courses and attended training on literacy and information technology. Members of the local community also attend a range of courses that are hosted by the school. The Friends' Association holds regular fund-raising activities that are well supported by parents. Special assemblies and school productions are also well attended. Parents report that they are made to feel welcome and find it easy to approach staff.

65. Information for parents is good. The prospectus and annual governors' report to parents are well presented and contain all the legally required information. New parents receive a good information pack that gives them useful details about helping children with early reading skills. Weekly newsletters keep parents well informed about school activities and events. Although a small number of parents are unhappy with the level of information provided about the curriculum, the school does provide clear details about literacy, numeracy and general topic areas. However, the home/school curriculum partnership has been identified as an area for development. End-of-year reports provide detailed comments in all subject areas about work covered and the progress which children have made.

66. Parents are involved very effectively in their children's education. They support homework tasks and the shared reading scheme. Parents' evenings are well attended and parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved in regular progress reviews. There is usually good support for meetings about the curriculum and parents appreciated the literacy presentation given by the school. Meetings are arranged for parents before children begin in Nursery and Reception classes and before transfer to Key Stage 2.

67. Community links are very good and used well to enhance the curriculum and pupils' personal development. A local vicar takes weekly assemblies and pupils collect tinned food at harvest time to distribute to elderly residents in the community. The choir performs at local venues and festivals and the orchestra plays for the graduation ceremony at the local university. A wide range of educational visits is made within the locality and good use is made of nearby areas for contrasting studies in geography.

68. Business and industry links have been developed well since the last inspection. Pupils take part in mini-enterprise schemes and gain direct experience of running a business. In partnership with local motor companies, the school is taking part in a project to promote pupils' moral and cultural awareness within society. Funding has been received recently from local trusts and companies to develop the playground areas.

## **The management and efficiency of the school**

### **Leadership and management**

69. The quality of management in the school is very good and has made a significant contribution to the good progress made since the last inspection. Most of the key issues identified in the 1996 report have been successfully addressed. Overall standards have risen and pupils make satisfactory progress. However, more work still remains to be done to improve standards in the control and modelling strands of information technology. The school complies with all the regulations concerning health and safety. The statutory requirements relating to information in the school's prospectus are also now met.

70. The headteacher provides very effective leadership. He gives the school a good sense of direction. His positive approach and the involvement of all staff in decisions have helped to build up a good team spirit amongst all staff. The headteacher's ability to delegate, the trust he places in staff and the encouragement he gives them have all been key factors in the improvements the school has made.

71. Since the previous inspection the roles and responsibilities of the Senior Management Team have been successfully reviewed. A clear structure for auditing, monitoring and evaluating the curriculum has been established. The headteacher encourages a shared approach to decision-making and curriculum development. Senior staff and co-ordinators ensure that agreed teaching and learning policies are being implemented. Monitoring of classroom practice takes place and includes observations of teaching and a scrutiny of planning. The results of these observations are recorded in a co-ordinators diary and the information used to improve standards.

72. The deputy headteachers and other members of the senior management team carry out their duties very effectively and provide good support to their colleagues. The school has grown from a one and a half entry to a designated three-form entry school. As a result almost every year, for the past three years, there have been building activities constantly taking place at the school in order to accommodate the increase in pupil numbers. The effectiveness of the senior management team is such that disruption has been kept to a minimum.

73. The ethos of the school is very good and the school successfully meets its aims. All staff conscientiously put into practice the agreed behaviour policy and reward pupils' achievements. This helps to maintain the positive and encouraging atmosphere that exists within the school. Pupils are valued as individuals and have equality of opportunity.

74. The quality of the School Development Plan has improved since the previous inspection. It provides a useful framework for action over a one-year period and forms part of a longer-term plan covering three years. All staff and governors have the opportunity to contribute ideas. Those responsible for taking the necessary action are named and costs identified.

75. The governors provide good support to the school. They are fully involved in all policy making and give careful consideration to the implications of their decisions. For example, they have decided to manage their own provision for special educational needs. This was decided after a long period of deliberation. As a result special needs provision is effective throughout the school. An appropriate system of committees has been set which enables governors to carry out their responsibilities effectively and all statutory requirements are met.

76. The management of arrangements for assessing attainment of the under-fives is good. The children are provided with suitable activities to enable them to develop their skills well across the areas of learning.

77. The provision for pupils with special educational is very effectively managed throughout the school and follows the directives of the Code of Practice. When appropriate, pupils are provided with carefully prepared individual educational plans that identify realistic learning targets. These are reviewed at regular intervals. Specialist support teaching is well organised. The carefully considered timetable is reviewed every half term to ensure that pupils withdrawn from class for specialist tuition do not miss the same lesson or parts of the same lesson throughout the whole year. All records are carefully kept up to date. The few pupils from ethnic minorities are very well integrated.

78. The high quality of the management and the good team spirit ensure that the school is in a good position to make further improvements.

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

79. There is a good number of teaching and support staff to meet the demands of the National Curriculum. Teachers are suitably qualified and there is a wide range of experience amongst staff. Since the time of the last inspection, the roles of the senior management team have been reviewed appropriately and subject co-ordinators now have detailed job descriptions. There is a good level of experience amongst staff teaching children under five and they are well supported by hard working nursery nurses and classroom assistants. A member of staff with specialist music experience teaches the subject throughout Key Stage 2 and pupils achieve high standards. Pupils with special educational needs receive good, additional support from experienced staff. Since the time of the last inspection staff have received appropriate training in information technology and the school has arranged further courses to improve staff confidence and expertise.

80. The arrangements for staff training and professional development are very good. These are well linked to priorities identified in the School Development Plan and to individual training needs. An annual residential training weekend is organised for staff, as well as shorter courses and sessions throughout the year. Recent whole-school training has focused on literacy and numeracy and non-teaching staff is also included in the programme. The training needs of the welfare staff are also reviewed regularly and several have attended courses on behaviour management and first aid. The school follows the required programme of staff appraisal and there are very good arrangements for the induction of new staff. Teachers new to the profession follow clear training programmes and colleagues support them well.

81. The school premises have been developed extensively since the last inspection and the standard of the accommodation is good. The buildings are clean and tidy and the site manager works hard to maintain the premises to a high standard. New classrooms have been built for Nursery and Reception classes and there is a secure outdoor play area. Classrooms are adequate in size for the numbers of pupils and there are separate music and pupil withdrawal rooms. An area is used for community courses. The library has been re-sited since the last inspection and this is combined with a very good information technology suite. Pupils' work is well displayed in classrooms and corridors and promotes and reflects children's learning.

82. The main hall can not accommodate all pupils for assemblies, but this is to be extended in the next building programme. A carpet in the infant hall is frayed and needs replacing. The school has developed an attractive and welcoming reception area. The school has been successful in obtaining external funding to re-design outdoor areas and a pathway through the grounds has now been repaired. The school's playground is too small for the number of pupils on roll.

83. Resources in most subject areas are good and overall provision has improved since the last inspection. There is easy access to a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books within classrooms and good use is made of library loan services. Resources for information communication technology are good and the Friends' Association has recently funded the purchase of audio-visual equipment. There are well organised, good quality resources for mathematics and appropriate artefacts and equipment to support work in history and geography. Resources for the under-fives are good but there are insufficient musical instruments for the Reception classes. Visits to places of interest and the many visiting speakers are used very effectively to provide a wider range of experiences for pupils.



## **The efficiency of the school**

84. The previous inspection found that governors were insufficiently involved in the running of the school. Inspection evidence shows that this is not now the case. Governors are fully involved in all aspects of school life. They are aware of how standards in the school compare to national expectations and of trends in performance. The school's development plan, criticised at the time of the last inspection, now contains useful information about how objectives will be met and is a valuable management tool for school improvement.

85. The school's financial planning is very good. Governors have approved this year's budget. One of the school's deputy headteachers is very experienced in managing the school's finance and is ably assisted by the school secretary. There is a well-organised system in place. The deputy head is aware of the need to keep a watchful eye on the school's small budget to ensure that it stays at a manageable level. The school successfully links its spending plans to the school's development plan in providing financial support for the school's key priorities. The school is very aware of the need to monitor its spending decisions. Parental financial contributions are used well to provide additional resources.

86. The Governing Body is well led. Governors are fully involved in budget making decisions and have committees to cover all areas of school life. These committees ensure that the Governing Body discharges its duties well. The day-to-day control of finances and school administration is very good. The school secretary is very efficient in supporting the general running of the school.

87. The governors have made the decision to manage their own special educational needs budget rather than allow the Local Education Authority to send in support teachers. This money is well spent and results in special educational needs pupils making satisfactory progress. Literacy hour funding has been efficiently spent. Staff development funding has enabled teachers to attend relevant courses. Money has been well used in improving both the school's resources and the quality of the accommodation.

88. Members of staff are well deployed. Very good use is made of a music specialist in Key Stage 2. Very efficient use is made of non-teaching staff who provide very good support across the school.

89. The school receives funding per pupil that is in line with that found in similar schools. Pupils behave very well. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. The school provides good value for money.

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

### **Areas of learning for children under five**

90. Children make good progress in all the areas of learning and most achieve the standards expected for the age group in respect of all the Desirable Learning Outcomes. Many enter Nursery with below average levels of self-help and communication skills and in these areas and in physical education they make very good progress.

91. Personal and social development is very successfully promoted in both Nursery and the Reception classes. Children settle quickly into their new routines and are eager to explore new learning. The good foundations laid in the Nursery are successfully built on. In Reception classes relationships are of a very high quality and the high expectations of all the adults evoke a good response from the children. They learn to work and play together, understanding that sometimes it is necessary to wait for a turn. They quickly learn to distinguish between right and wrong and they develop a sense of responsibility appropriate for their age in the way they choose activities, tidy up after themselves and help to care for school equipment. They enjoy celebrations such as birthdays and end of term fun days. Special occasions, such as the weekly joint assembly for Reception and Nursery and Harvest, are very successful in developing feelings of joy and wonder in the participants.

92. The provision for language and literacy is good. Speaking and listening skills are central to most activities. By the age of five attainment levels in language and literacy are those expected for the age group overall and higher than average for many in speaking and listening. This represents good progress overall and very good progress for a substantial number in speaking and listening. In both the Nursery and Reception classes children acquire a repertoire of songs and rhymes. They enjoy listening to stories and are willing to express an opinion about them. They handle books carefully. By the age of five most are acquiring phonic skills, can recognise words and use picture clues to understand what a book is about. A few are beginning to read familiar words and phrases. Most are able to write their own names and a minority writes single sentences independently. Inspection evidence suggests that few children go beyond this to write more extensively during the Reception year.

93. An emphasis on the understanding of mathematical language, together with the provision of games and activities, which develop counting skills, comparisons of size, colour and shape, ensures that most children achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes in this area of learning. By five they can solve simple problems relating to addition of numbers to ten, can count and recognise numbers beyond this, identify, match and order shapes and everyday objects. Those having particular mathematical skills are identified early and are well provided for. Information technology is used effectively to enrich their learning experiences. Care is taken to ensure breadth and balance in the programme of activities for children.

94. Good provision is made to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world. They make good progress and by the age of five most reach the standards expected for the age group, in response to the wide variety of activities provided. Visits make a substantial contribution to their understanding of seasonal changes in the local environment. During the inspection a visitor with a baby was effective in helping Reception children to consider how much they had changed during their own lifetime. This experience was very well extended by the teacher's skilful use of a photographic time line to look closely at similarities, differences, patterns and changes in people's lives. The issue of the previous inspection regarding the provision of information technology has been successfully addressed.

95. Physical development is good. By five, children have had very good experiences and made very good progress in dance, movement and gymnastics. They show good co-ordination and control and use the space available well. Nursery children enjoy running, jumping, crawling, practising ball skills and moving to music in their regular sessions in the hall. During the week of the inspection a visiting drama specialist stimulated them to produce 'robot' movements that were of an exceptionally high quality. Children are given frequent opportunities to use a range of good quality equipment in the outdoor play area. Reception children carry out instructions well and show good awareness of the correct way to replace apparatus. They exhibit good levels of independence in changing for the physical education lesson. In both Nursery and Reception manipulative skills involving a range of tools, brushes, utensils and other equipment, including the computer, are developed well.

96. Most children achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes for the age group in creative development by the age of five. They explore shape, colour and texture in a variety of ways. In the Nursery children learn ring games and listen to a specially selected programme of musical pieces. In the Reception classes children create pictures of good quality in the style of artists such as Lowry and Jackson Pollack.

97. The quality of teaching is good and sometimes very good. There is a high level of teacher expertise in planning and delivering a curriculum which is very appropriate for the under-fives. High expectations, imaginative methods, appropriate organisation and good use of time and resources demonstrate this.

98. An Early Years Unit has recently been created and this phase of children's education is very well co-ordinated and led. There are regular systematic and comprehensive arrangements to monitor and record children's progress and a baseline assessment is carried out on transition to Reception. Teamwork is of an exceptionally high standard. The very good influence of non-teaching staff and parent helpers makes a significant contribution to the progress children make. Arrangements for the development of all staff are good. Admission procedures are effective and older children in Nursery provide good role models for the younger ones. Information for parents is of a high standard. Accommodation is good in the Nursery, apart from inadequate storage for large outdoor toys and poor drainage in the grassed areas. It is satisfactory in the Reception classes. Resources are of good quality, well stored and labelled and sufficient in quantity, except for a shortage of musical instruments in Reception.

99. The early years co-ordinator provides leadership of high quality and an excellent example for others to follow.

## **English, mathematics and science**

### **English**

100. In the previous inspection report it was found that the assessment of pupils' work was in need of further development and that there was a shortage of non-fiction books. Both these issues have been successfully addressed.

101. Standards in English are similar to those found in most schools nationally. This is confirmed by the most recent test results which show that attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is in line with the national average, for both the expected Level 4 and the higher Level 5. The latest end of Key Stage 1 results show the number reaching Level 2 in reading was close to the national average, and that the percentage achieving the higher Level 3 had increased on the previous year. In writing the proportion reaching the expected Level 2 was above the national average but fewer pupils succeeded in reaching Level 3 than in other schools. Over the past three years the performance of boys in reading and writing has been close to the national average in Key Stage 1, whilst that for girls was below the national average in reading and above average in writing. By the end of Key Stage 2 there is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.

102. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with good competencies in speaking and listening as a result of the good progress which many make in the Early Years. Their spoken language skills continue to be well developed through both key stages. Teacher assessment shows a higher proportion reaching the expected level than that found nationally at the age of seven. Good questioning techniques, a willingness to allow pupils to express themselves fully and teachers' expectation of clear enunciation contribute to pupils' confidence and the high standards achieved by the time they leave the school.

103. Inspection evidence shows that a majority of children are on target to achieve the expected Level 2 in reading and writing at the end of Key Stage 1. Successful establishment of the literacy strategy, which has been introduced since the previous inspection, and its associated direct teaching methods have had a beneficial impact on the range and quality of literature made available and on the standards achieved. Pupils are enthusiastically encouraged to take books home to share with parents and good records are kept. Progress is good for most pupils. Many pupils are on course to achieve the higher level in reading and by the age of seven they are reading fluently. They know the difference between fiction and non-fiction texts and are able to use contents and index to locate information. In writing a high proportion of pupils is on target to achieve the expected Level 2. They produce writing that is correctly sequenced, shows some awareness of punctuation and spelling which is phonetically justifiable. Handwriting is usually accurately formed and generally consistent in size. Progress in writing is satisfactory overall.

104. By the end of Key Stage 1 the percentage of pupils on course to achieve the higher Level 3 is low. Though opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their independent writing skills the standards achieved are in need of improvement.

105. Attainment in reading is average for most pupils by the end of Key Stage 2 with a minority achieving a standard above this level. Progress is satisfactory throughout the key stage. By the age of eleven the majority read with fluency and show a good understanding of themes, characters and plot. However, they are not as competent in using their referencing skills. Most use a dictionary and thesaurus competently. The impact of the literacy strategy is having a beneficial effect on the progress being made.

106. By the end of Key Stage 2 writing standards for most pupils are those expected for the age group with a small number exceeding this level. This represents satisfactory progress for most pupils. By the time they leave the school, pupils have good experience of writing for a range of purposes and audiences using a range of stimuli such as poems, plays, stories as well as using their own experiences. They draft and re-draft their work, sometimes using information technology for this purpose. Good opportunities exist to write in some of the other curriculum areas. For example, pupils wrote well in their geography project on Barmouth.

107. Pupils with special educational needs and those who come from homes where English is a second language are well supported and make satisfactory progress. The large proportion of pupils on the special needs register in the current Year 6 impacts on the standards being achieved despite the good progress being made. Effective additional support is made available to those whose attainment is below that expected.

108. Pupils' response is good and often very good in each key stage. They are keen to learn, listen carefully to instructions, concentrate while working on independent tasks, and many are developing a love of literature. The subject makes a positive contribution to their cultural development in introducing them to the works of famous playwrights, poets and authors. Throughout the school pupils work co-operatively together when so required. Most take a pride in the appearance of their work, and some of the holiday homework projects produced written work of a high standard in both key stages.

109. The overall quality of teaching is good in both key stages. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed and more than one in four were very good or better, reflecting in part the effectiveness with which the school has implemented the literacy strategy. General features of successful teaching include good subject knowledge, careful choice of texts, thorough planning to the school's format, questioning which extends pupils' thinking and allows them to express themselves fully, efficient classroom management and organisation which enable lessons to proceed at a brisk pace and excellent relationships. In addition, particular strategies employed by individual teachers include very high expectations, emphasis on the correct technical vocabulary, imaginative use of information technology resources and an appropriate use of humour. Overall satisfactory but comparatively less successful lessons involve a slower pace and lower expectations which are reflected in the provision of activities which do not stretch the higher attainers in developing their writing skills in Key Stage 1. All teachers have introduced the literacy hour well.

110. Throughout the school teachers give positive encouragement to pupils' achievement. Work is marked conscientiously and comments and annotations of work are satisfactory in giving pointers for future improvement. Non-teaching assistants give invaluable support within the classroom to pupils of all attainment levels. Attractive displays reflect and promote pupils' literacy skills.

111. National Curriculum requirements are met and there is generally a good balance between the elements of speaking and listening and reading and writing. Both boys and girls have equal access to the curriculum. The subject is very well co-ordinated and it has recently and successfully been the school's main focus for development. Work is well monitored. Good use is made of the Co-ordinator's Diary. Curriculum planning is scrutinised regularly. There is a good portfolio of pupils' assessed written work in place. Flexible setting arrangements from Year 2 upwards are effective. Assessment tests are analysed and continuum sheets from a published source are checked regularly. There are good links with the English department and curriculum development staff at the local high school. Resources are of very good quality and are conveniently stored. Parents' support is much valued. The library has recently been re-sited and there are timetabled sessions for the development of skills in its usage. Plans to rationalise library and information technology resources in their new setting are under way. Good use is made of the library project loan scheme and of the technology resources within school to enrich the subject.

## Mathematics

112. The results of the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999 show that the percentage of pupils attaining the expected level was slightly higher than the national average. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 5 was below the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 5 in 1999 was more than double that of the previous year. There is no difference between the results of boys and girls. There were no weaknesses outlined in the last report and in the last three years standards have continued to improve.

113. The 1999 Key stage 1 results show that the percentage of pupils attaining the expected level was broadly in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 3 was low when compared to the national average.

114. Evidence from lesson observations, the scrutiny of previous work and talking with pupils indicates that the majority of pupils are attaining standards which are broadly in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. However, an insufficient number of higher ability pupils in both key stages are attaining at Levels 3 and 5.

115. Overall, the results of the end of key stage statutory tests for 1999 and the judgement of attainment in this inspection indicate that in both key stages standards have been maintained since the previous inspection when they were reported as being broadly satisfactory.

116. The school is now in its second year of setting pupils by prior attainment in most year groups. In addition, this year the school has introduced the National Numeracy Strategy and has satisfactorily established the routines and teaching methods required. As a result a good balance of most aspects of the subject is provided.

117. The overall progress of the present Year 6 pupils during their time in school has been satisfactory. However, progress being made currently in the written aspects of numeracy, shape and measurement and data handling is good in both key stages for the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs. Progress in mental mathematics operations is satisfactory overall. However, there is some inconsistency in the way this aspect of the subject is taught. In some classes there is not a sufficiently demanding pace or high level of challenge. Some higher attainers are not making sufficient progress in either key stage. Lesson observations, and the scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' previous work, indicate limited differences between the work done by middle and higher ability pupils.

118. By the end of Key Stage 1 the majority of pupils can add and subtract to 20, find the smallest and largest number in a group of numbers, double numbers up to 10 and are beginning to understand place value. Most can recognise and name simple two- and three-dimensional shapes, measure using non-standard units and represent data on simple block graphs. In some lessons, a significant minority of pupils are not sufficiently confident with mental number operations to recall facts quickly.

119. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are developing satisfactory skills in doubling and halving numbers; most can recall multiplication tables up to 10x and use their knowledge of number operations to solve problems. However, pupils take too long to work out the answers.

120. The majority of Year 6 pupils can identify right angles and know when an angle is larger or smaller than a right angle, but most are unable to name other sorts of angles. They have a secure understanding of different types of quadrilaterals and use the correct mathematical language confidently. Work completed earlier in the school year indicates that most pupils can order four digit numbers, have a satisfactory understanding of probability and how decision-trees work and are able to present data using different types of graphs and to interrogate the information at an appropriate level.

121. Pupils' attitudes to their work are good overall and often very good. They are eager to take part in discussion, listen attentively to their teachers and settle quickly to their work. Pupils in both key stages have quickly settled into the National Numeracy Strategy routines and are developing good levels of independent working. When given the opportunity, they are developing confidence in explaining what they are doing and how they have reached an answer. They listen carefully to alternative approaches to solving a problem and are willing to learn from others.

122. Teaching in mathematics is good overall in both key stages. In Key Stage 1 it is good or very good in over half of all lessons. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is good or very good in almost half of all lessons. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Teachers have a secure understanding of the subject. Lesson planning is detailed and provides appropriate learning objectives and activities and these cater well for lower and middle ability pupils. However, in both key stages planning does not often set learning objectives that are designed to challenge all higher ability pupils within the teaching group. Lessons follow the structure of the National Numeracy Strategy. In some lessons, however, teachers do not deliver the oral and mental component of the lesson at a pace and level of challenge that ensures that pupils develop fast mental recall skills. Pupils are managed very well and relationships are very good. Most teachers demonstrate good questioning strategies to check on pupils' knowledge and understanding. Appropriate homework is set on a regular basis.

123. A good policy is in place. Long- and medium-term planning provide an effective framework for teaching and learning. Assessment procedures are good. All lessons are evaluated and provide a consistent record of individual pupils' progress. Assessment information is used well to allocate pupils to sets based on prior attainment and to inform future planning but more needs to be done to ensure that the work for higher attaining pupils is more challenging. The co-ordinator provides a high level of subject leadership and currently is in the process of leading in-service training for staff in the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. Resources to support the subject are of a good quality, well organised and efficiently used. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to use their data handling skills in science, geography and information technology. The mathematics homework club for identified pupils in Key Stage 2 makes a positive impact on standards. The subject meets statutory requirements.

## **Science**

124. The previous inspection reported that not enough opportunities were provided for pupils to undertake independent investigation. Inspection evidence shows that this issue has been successfully addressed. For example, during the week of the inspection Key Stage 1 pupils investigated the use of our senses and in Key Stage 2 they planned their own investigations into forces. Attainment in science at the end of both key stages is in line with the national average. Some pupils at the end of both key stages attain above the expectations for their age in the subject. There is no difference between the results that boys and girls achieve.

125. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests in science held at the end of Key Stage 2 the percentages of pupils reaching Levels 4 and 5 were in line the national average. When Key Stage 2 results are compared with those obtained in similar schools they are average. Inspection evidence shows that the majority of pupils will achieve the expected national level in science in the year 2000 national tests.

126. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils know what a fair test is and can make and test predictions. They know, for example, what materials will dissolve in water and the difference between reversible and irreversible change caused by heating materials. They can draw and label bar charts correctly. Pupils know about electricity, the human body and the planets of the solar system. An examination of pupils' work shows that the school encourages a variety of ways of recording and reporting scientific information. Progress in science is satisfactory overall and good in the development of investigative skills. In one age group pupils use a 'Planning House' for writing up their scientific enquires. They discover which surfaces have high friction and which have low friction. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as a second language make satisfactory progress and receive good support.

127. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests in science held at the end of Key Stage 1 the percentage of pupils attaining the level appropriate for their age [Level 2] was higher than in the previous year and was slightly above the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving Level 3 improved significantly on the previous year. Inspection evidence indicates that the majority of pupils will attain the expected level in science at the end of Key Stage 1 with a significant number achieving at a higher level. Progress throughout the key stage for pupils of all attainment levels is satisfactory.

128. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have a good knowledge of how the five senses can help us, how plants grow and what they need to help them grow. They understand the reasons for having a balanced diet. They can observe carefully and describe what they see accurately. Pupils treat the materials they handle with respect. During the week of the inspection older pupils developed their understanding of electricity. They could correctly identify equipment that used batteries and equipment that used mains electricity. Younger pupils made their own 'magic boxes' with holes for viewing light with flaps over them to help them discover how essential light is for seeing things.

129. Pupils' attitudes to science are very good in both key stages. Pupils' work well together and, when given the opportunity, are able to organise their own learning. A good example of this was seen during the week of the inspection with older pupils working in small groups under the direction of one of the group. They decided how to carry out the tests and how to record their findings. The pupils' ability to work both independently and collaboratively enables them to develop a deeper understanding of scientific processes. In all lessons seen pupils behaved very well.

130. The quality of teaching is good overall in both key stages. Some very good teaching was observed where pupils were encouraged to investigate forces in small groups. Here the teacher used questions to challenge pupils' thinking, encouraging them to choose different materials to test and then drawing together their knowledge on the speeding up and slowing down of objects. In one lesson that was observed in lower Key Stage 1 pupils were kept sitting on the carpet for too long and as a result some lost concentration. Visits by the nurse help to develop pupils' awareness of health education. Lesson planning in both key stages is good.



131. The co-ordinator is new in post and has worked hard in ensuring that science equipment is stored well. She is given time each week to monitor the subject. Assessment procedures are in place. National Curriculum requirements are met. Resources are good. In all classrooms displays are used well to enhance teaching and learning.

## **Other subjects or courses**

### **Art**

132. Pupils in both key stages, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in the development of their artistic skills and knowledge. By the age of seven and eleven standards are above those normally found in the majority of schools. Some of the work, especially portraiture, has very good features. This judgement represents an improvement on the standards observed in Key Stage 1 during the previous inspection. Standards in Key Stage 2 have been maintained. The subject makes a valuable contribution to pupils' personal and cultural development. Pupils experience a broad range of interesting activities, learning about and practising the artistic styles of world famous artists.

133. Year 1 pupils looked closely at the portrait of Mrs. Mounter by Harold Gilman. They then produced their own portraits of a parent volunteer posing with a collection of artefacts. This work was of good quality and showed great detail. Pupils made good progress as they moved carefully from drawings exploring line and shape to pastel and chalk pictures adding colour, texture and shade. Some higher attainers displayed an awareness of background and foreground. In their drawings they accurately represented the differences in size of the various artefacts. Year 2 pupils learn the important skill of mixing primary colours to make secondary colours.

134. Pupils continue to make good progress throughout Key Stage 2 and their work displays increased accuracy and attention to detail. Year 3 pupils applied dry powder paint with their fingers to create images of landscapes in the style of Constable. Some of the work captured the artist's fascination with reflections in water and was very effective. The works of other carefully selected artists such as Monet are used successfully to develop techniques in the pupils' own work.

135. Pupils enjoy art lessons and are enthusiastic when faced with new challenges. They are eager to learn about the different techniques used by a range of artists and to apply them to their own work. Pupils show high levels of concentration as they produce detailed drawings. They take a pride in their work and accept the responsibility of looking after the equipment.

136. The quality of teaching is good overall and never less than satisfactory in both key stage. Teachers plan carefully and make good use of resources. Teaching is very effective when specific skills such as colour mixing are taught. A Year 1 teacher's skilful questioning helped the pupils pinpoint key features from a painting, to comment on what they could see and to suggest how the artist had achieved a certain effect or created an atmosphere. Not all teachers provide pupils with opportunities to evaluate and discuss their own and others' work in order to improve it. In Key Stage 1 some activities are well supported by adult helpers working under the direction of the teacher. This has the effective of maintaining pupils' involvement and helps progress.

137. The scheme of work provides a useful framework to guide teachers' planning and the subject is co-ordinated well. The work on display enhances the learning environment. Art is successfully incorporated into topic work. For example, pupils have produced Greek masks as part of a history project. Pupils processing their own computer-generated work enhance information technology skills. Resources are satisfactory. The previous inspection report recorded a lack of materials to support the work of non-western and female artists. The school has tried hard to address this issue and Year 5 pupils have produced some interesting work in the style of Sally Morgan, an Australian Aborigine artist. Assessment procedures are satisfactory.

## **Design and technology**

138. During the period of the inspection only one design and technology lesson in Key Stage 1 and three lessons in Key Stage 2 were observed. However, an examination of pupils' work and discussions held with the co-ordinator, teachers and pupils provide enough additional information to allow judgements to be made about design and technology throughout the school.

139. At the end of Key Stage 1 standards of attainment in design and technology are similar to those found in most schools. Pupils make sound progress in their ability to produce useful designs and good progress in the development of their making skills. Year 1 pupils design and make hinges for 'magic boxes'. The final product is carefully evaluated. Pupils in Year 2 investigate and evaluate different puppets prior to starting their own models. They carefully consider and select from a small range of suitable materials and try out different techniques for attaching or holding their puppets in place.

140. Attainment in design and technology for most pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 is in line with that expected for the age group. Pupils of all attainment levels make satisfactory progress. Year 3 pupils generate their own good ideas through designing and making model fairground rides. They are confident in joining different materials such as card, string and fabric and make spontaneous improvements during the activity. Items on display show that pupils can cut and shape materials and apply effectively an appropriate finish. Careful development of measuring, sawing and joining techniques has led older pupils to construct some products of good quality, including large scale Tudor houses on display in the school hall.

141. Pupils have good, positive attitudes to their work. They enjoy the practical nature of the subject and are keen to learn new techniques. They take a pride in their work and talk confidently about their products. In the lessons seen, pupils concentrated carefully on their making tasks and were receptive to suggestions for improvement offered by their teachers or voluntary helpers.

142. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching in both key stages. Examples of good and very good teaching were observed during the inspection. In these lessons staff demonstrated good subject knowledge and planned a range of interesting activities. Their plans show progression in the development of levels of skill and knowledge needed. Objectives for lessons are clear, and effective use is made of well prepared resources, as for example when pupils in Year 5 made chocolate biscuits carefully following the recipe. Explanations are clear and backed up by useful demonstrations.

143. The co-ordinator provides effective leadership for the subject. A useful written subject overview is provided for staff that gives details of the themes to be taught. It also outlines progression in pupils' skills and how knowledge will be achieved. This represents an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection that reported that not all documentation was complete. The co-ordinator monitors the subject satisfactorily by compiling collections of pupils' work and by keeping a portfolio of work showing designs and photographs of completed work. Resources for the subject are adequate and well managed.

## **Geography**

144. During the inspection, it was not possible to observe any lessons in Key Stage 1. However, a scrutiny of previous work indicates that standards are similar to those found in other schools. Standards in geography by the ages of eleven are consistent with expectations of pupils of this age. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection when standards were judged to be below expectations. Overall progress is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

145. In Key Stage 1 pupils are learning about the countries of the British Isles. They are able to identify the four countries of the British Isles on a simple map of Europe and can find London, Liverpool, and the Isles of Man and Wight.

146. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils can recognise major physical features of landscapes. They know that places have characteristics that are both similar and different, [as demonstrated in their work on Chembakolli], and are able to use secondary sources such as photographs to find information. They can interpret maps and demonstrate a satisfactory understanding of a map key and how to find features using four-figure co-ordinates. Pupils in Year 6 are developing a satisfactory understanding of how mountains are formed, and knowledge of mountain climates, vegetation and animal life. Work in upper Key Stage 2, related to a study of Barmouth, was of a high quality and displayed well.

147. In the lessons observed in Key Stage 2 pupils listened attentively and were keen to take part in discussion. They worked sensibly together when sharing resources, such as maps and atlases, and developed satisfactory skills in independent learning. Written work following visits provides good evidence that pupils are interested in the subject.

148. It is not possible to make a judgement of teaching in Key Stage 1. The quality of teaching in Key stage 2 is satisfactory overall with a small amount of very good teaching. Where teaching is very good, planning ensures that the development of knowledge, skills and understanding is targeted effectively. Pupils are provided with appropriate resources and given good opportunities to enable them to research geographical questions independently. This has a very positive impact on the development of pupils' enquiry skills.

149. Planning is of a good quality. It takes account of the most recent curriculum guidelines and makes good provision for the development of knowledge, skills and understanding. The subject is taught in blocks each alternate half term. All lessons are evaluated and pupils' progress is assessed against key learning objectives. The subject is co-ordinated well. Resources are of a good quality and well organised. Well planned field trips are organised to support topic work in each year group.

## **History**

150. By the ages of seven and eleven standards in history are typical of those found in other schools. The school has made much progress since the previous inspection when standards were judged to be below national expectations. Pupils in both key stages make satisfactory progress, including pupils with special educational needs.

151. In lower Key Stage 1 pupils are developing a satisfactory understanding of how people's lives have changed over time. They know about aspects of home and school life in Victorian times and are able to make simple comparisons between past and present times. During the week of the inspection pupils visited Wigan Pier. In one class they used their writing skills well in writing letters of thanks to Wigan Pier staff. However, pupils are not given enough opportunities in most classes to use and develop their writing skills in the subject. In Year 2 the majority of pupils can talk about the work of Florence Nightingale and are able to make simple comparisons between a field hospital in Victorian times and hospitals of today.

152. During the inspection it was not possible to observe history in lower Key Stage 2. Pupils in upper Key Stage 2 have a secure understanding of the chronology of Victorian times in comparison to present times. In their study of Victorian toys and games they are developing an understanding of different social groups in Victorian times and are able to make comparisons between toys of the present and those of the past. By the end of the key stage, when investigating a range of artefacts with the support of worksheets, pupils ask historical questions in order to find information. Most pupils are confident in stating their views when asked about their work.

153. Pupils are interested in the subject. They work well together and are generous in their sharing of resources. They respond well to historical questions and are prepared to enter into serious dialogue.

154. The quality of teaching is good in both key stages. Lessons are carefully planned with a good balance of interesting activities. Teachers demonstrate good questioning skills which check effectively pupils' knowledge and understanding and promote further learning. Relationships are of a high quality and this promotes a very good working ethos. Pupils are provided with opportunities to discuss and investigate historical questions.

155. The subject is taught each alternate half term. Planning is of a good quality. It incorporates the most recent curriculum guidelines and makes good provision for the development of knowledge, skills and understanding. Lessons are evaluated and pupils' progress is assessed against the objectives within planned study units. The subject is co-ordinated well. Resources are well managed and of good quality. Visits to places such as Wigan Pier and Chester are well linked to planned study units and make a very positive contribution to standards.

## **Information technology**

156. Attainment overall in information technology for the majority of pupils at the ages of seven and eleven is similar to that found in other schools. Standards were judged as unsatisfactory at the time of the previous inspection. Progress in most aspects of the subject is now satisfactory throughout the school, including that of pupils with special educational needs. However, progress in controlling and modelling using information technology remains unsatisfactory. The school has improved overall standards markedly and kept pace with national developments. Determined efforts are being made to make best use of the current national initiative.

157. Key Stage 1 pupils are beginning to use the equipment in the computer room with increasing confidence. They know how to 'log on and off' and locate the appropriate program. Year 2 pupils have a sound knowledge of the main keys and use the mouse to move the cursor with confidence. They select shapes from a choice of options and invert and rotate the shapes to make tessellated patterns. Word processing is used well in most classrooms. However, pupils have very restricted opportunities to operate control programs to move objects on the screen or on a prescribed path.

158. At Key Stage 2 pupils' skills are further developed and by the end of the key stage they are eager to explore the uses of computers. Year 3 pupils save and retrieve documents and use databases about their class to produce graphs and pie charts. They produce imaginative, collaborative stories for others to read. In Year 4 pupils can use successfully a word processing package to write letters in a variety of styles. Year 5 pupils have a good working knowledge of e-mail and can describe how to add pictures and sounds to their communications. They can access information from the Internet to support their learning in other subjects. In Year 6 pupils use desktop publishing to produce a slide show about topics such as shipping or transport. They alter fonts and sizes of letters, import pictures into their presentations and edit and improve their work. They select fonts that complement the subject matter, and alter the layout, size and colour of the text with good results. However, pupils' progress in controlling, monitoring and modelling is unsatisfactory. Most are unable to program simple movements around the screen and lack experience in the use of information technology to monitor external events.

159. The pupils respond well to the work set and clearly enjoy their visits to the computer room. They listen carefully to the instructions and remain on task when working at the machines. They work well together and offer each other advice as necessary. There is clear evidence of the pupils learning from each other as well as from the teacher. In one lesson, a child who is normally very shy gave other pupils a good demonstration of how to change the turtle when using the super logo programme.

160. The quality of teaching in the limited number of lessons seen was satisfactory and sometimes better. Some very good teaching was seen of Year 2 pupils in the computer suite. Where teaching is good or better teachers demonstrate techniques and skills to the whole class and this is followed up by immediate, individual opportunities for pupils to practice, refine and use what they have seen. The tasks set for each session are clearly focussed. Activities are well organised, with programs and equipment prepared beforehand, so that pupils make best use of time. All supervising adults, including volunteers, have good knowledge of the programs and procedures concerned. A weakness identified in the previous report, concerning the lack of integration of information technology into the curriculum as a whole, remains in some classes. When the teachers use the classroom computers regularly good progress is made in using and extending the skills acquired. Recently developed assessment procedures are good and allow the quality of pupils' learning to be monitored as well as the range of work completed.

161. Much work has been done to develop the information technology curriculum. The subject is very well managed by the new co-ordinator who has worked hard to provide a policy and a supportive scheme of work. The new scheme of work has been implemented and teachers have learnt to use new programs and applications. There is an after-school computer club for those who wish to develop their skills still further. Some teachers still lack the confidence to develop the use of the computer in their classrooms to support learning across the curriculum, but a whole day's in-service course is planned to develop teachers' skills. In the previous inspection report the number and condition of computers available limited the development of pupils' skills. The school has worked very hard to remedy this and the current resources provided in the new suite and throughout the school are very good.

## Music

162. In the previous inspection report standards in music were found to be high. Inspection evidence shows that music continues to be a strength of the school. By the time pupils leave standards are higher than those found in most schools. Standards in singing and instrumental playing are of a particularly high quality. The school makes effective use of the specialist music skills of the Key Stage 2 music co-ordinator and this has a direct impact on standards pupils attain in the subject.

163. In Key Stage 1 only one class lesson was seen during the week of the inspection, so it is not possible to make any overall judgement about standards or progress. However, Key Stage 1 pupils sing a variety of songs tunefully and with a developing sense of rhythm. Evidence from the previous year shows that they develop their composition skills well. In the lesson observed pupils were able to maintain a steady beat and also accompany simple songs successfully using untuned instruments.

164. In all lessons observed in Key Stage 2 pupils attained standards higher than those normally found. Progress for pupils of all attainment levels is good. By the time pupils leave, standards are well above average. Progress is good throughout the key stage and those pupils who are learning to play orchestral instruments make very good progress. Special educational needs pupils make good progress.

165. Standards in singing are high throughout Key Stage 2. Singing is tuneful and is full of vitality. The previous inspection found that the high quality of pupils' singing enhanced the quality of school assemblies and this continues to be the case. A large number of pupils learn to play instruments and combine together to play in the school's orchestra. The music they produce is of a very good quality and this serves to further enhance school assemblies.

166. Pupils in Key Stage 2 develop their listening skills well. For example, in one lesson they listened to a piece of music from the Andes in South America. They then identified correctly some of the instruments, for example, pan-pipes, and also the broken chords they played. Older pupils were able to name correctly notes on the treble clef. In a younger age group pupils developed their composing skills well by using tuned melodic percussion instruments. They made good use of the pentatonic scale to compose their own tunes.

167. In the lessons seen pupils of all attainment levels responded well. Pupils play instruments sensibly and look after them well. Behaviour in all lessons seen was very good. Pupils enjoy the subject and show a good level of concentration.

168. All Key Stage 1 pupils are combined together each week this term for a music lesson. The Key Stage 1 co-ordinator shows good skills in teaching this short lesson. However, the large number of pupils, and with two age groups involved, means that it is very difficult to ensure that musical skills are systematically developed. It is not possible to make any judgement about the quality of teaching at Key Stage 1. In the one lesson seen during the week of the inspection teaching was good. However, some teachers lack confidence in teaching some aspects of the subject.

169. The teaching of music in Key Stage 2 is very good. A music specialist, who has exceptionally high musical skills, takes all lessons. As a result pupils benefit tremendously. He uses his musical skills well. These include teaching pupils to play stringed instruments and producing his own scored arrangements of tunes for the orchestra to play. Lessons are planned well and include all aspects of the subject. The key to the success of lessons and to the high standards attained is the good use made of evaluative comments to help pupils improve the quality of, for example, their singing. High standards are expected and high standards are attained.

170. The subject is co-ordinated well and the school has a good range of instruments. Good use is made of the school's music room. The Key Stage 2 co-ordinator gives of his time freely to work with the school choir and instrumental groups. The subject is a strength of the school.

### **Physical education**

171. No overall judgement on standards in physical education can be made as only a limited range of the activities on offer could be observed. The quality of dance in Key Stage 1 and performance levels in games and gymnastics skills throughout the school are good. Records show that standards in swimming are above average. Almost all eleven-year-olds achieve the expected 25 metres and some progress well beyond this level. The standards have improved in these aspects of physical education since the last inspection. Very good opportunities are provided for pupils to take part in competitive sport.

172. Progress in dance, games and gymnastic skills is good during Key Stage 1. By the age of seven pupils' co-ordination, balance and control are above average. In games lessons they demonstrate reasonable levels of accuracy when rolling a ball through their partner's legs. During dance pupils can interpret and explore ideas as they adapt movement to music. In one lesson they successfully mimed the actions of chopping, tossing and sprinkling represented in stir-fry cooking to Chinese music.

173. Pupils make good progress during Key Stage 2 as their range of experiences is widened and they become increasingly more agile. During the autumn term they have experience of hockey, netball and football. This enables them to develop good skills in catching a ball and to acquire a good understanding of the strategies associated with attack and defence games. For example, Year 4 pupils demonstrated an above average ability to control, dribble and pass a ball using hockey sticks. In gymnastics a significant number show a good level of performance in sequencing their movements. Pupils sustain vigorous activity, including energetic warm-ups and are developing a sound understanding of the effect exercise has on the body. Boys and girls are equally skilful in throwing, catching and fielding. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress in relation to their prior attainment.

174. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes in physical education lessons and work with enthusiasm. Pupils work sensibly on their own to improve their performance and collaborate well in pair or group activities. Behaviour is always very good and they respond immediately to instructions and suggestions from their teachers.

175. The quality of teaching is good overall in both key stages. Teaching standards have improved since the last inspection and teachers are more confident in the subject. Lessons are well planned and contain an appropriate balance of activities. Good routines have been established, instructions are clear and pupils are given positive encouragement to do well. In one lesson pupils were inactive for too long a period whilst equipment was being put out. Where teaching was very good opportunities are provided for pupils to look at what makes some performances better than others and to use these ideas to improve their own standards.

176. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has a good understanding of the subject. A scheme of work provides a framework for teachers' planning. Resources are satisfactory, stored efficiently and are accessible. The previous inspection report recorded that both the main and small hall are used as thoroughfares during the day. Though this is still the case, it does not have any adverse effect upon standards.

177. Teachers give generously of their time to offer a very good range of extra-curricular activities. There is also a good level of inter-school competitive sport and Years 5 and 6 pupils are given the opportunity to take part in outdoor adventurous activities during a residential stay.

### **Swimming**

178. The inspection of this school included a focussed view of swimming.

179. Standards in swimming are good. Teachers' records show that almost all eleven-year-olds achieve the expected 25 metres and many progress well beyond this. Although it was not possible to observe Year 6, pupils in Year 5 demonstrated a good range of swimming skills and high levels of stamina. Beginners from Year 3 were making good progress in developing their confidence and a significant number could swim lengths of the pool using front and back strokes. An after-school club, which focusses on the development of life saving skills, has a beneficial effect upon the overall standards being achieved in swimming.

180. The quality of teaching is good. Pupils are usually split into three groups based on prior attainment. Two of the groups are taught by qualified pool staff and the third by the class teacher. All the specialist instructors displayed very good subject knowledge and supported pupils well. Lessons had a good pace to them and clear time targets were set for activities to be completed in. They appropriately built upon pupils' previous skills and developed particular techniques and strokes. Clear instructions were given and safety factors stressed.

181. Non-swimmers receive appropriate instruction from one of the pool's specialist instructors. He is very supportive and concentrates on providing pupils with a range of experiences to develop their confidence in the water. As a result most make good progress.

182. The arrangements for swimming are well organised. The school pays for an extra instructor out of its own budget and every member of staff has had emergency procedure training. All Key Stage 2 classes receive lessons for two terms every year. This works out at between 12 to 15 half-hour sessions. The pool is within walking distance from the school and pupils are accompanied by two parent helpers as well as their class teacher. Assessment procedures are good and are passed on from teacher to teacher. The co-ordinator and pool staff also keep a record of pupils' achievements.

### **Religious education**

183. Attainment in religious education is in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus at the end of both key stages. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in both key stages. These findings are similar to those of the previous inspection.

184. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have deepened their understanding of belonging to a family to include the wider community of God's family. The story of John the Baptist from the New Testament helps them to realise that there is a link between Jesus' baptism and the present day Christian baptismal ceremony. Year 1 pupils know that in the Christian faith Christmas is a time of celebration because Jesus was born and He is God's gift to us. They learn some important human values, such as thinking of others and are encouraged to put them into practice in their own lives in school or at home.



185. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have a sound knowledge of Christianity and some of the major religions of the world such as Judaism and Hinduism. They know that people have different beliefs and values and that these can have an effect upon how people lead their lives. This aspect of their work has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Pupils gain a very good understanding of stories from the Bible. For example, Year 6 can relate the story of how Esau lost his birthright to Jacob. Most follow up activities take the form of filling in worksheets and few opportunities are provided for pupils to undertake reflective writing in order to explore their own ideas and to raise questions. This was commented upon in the previous inspection report and has still not been addressed.

186. Pupils respond well during lessons and are eager to answer questions. They listen with interest to stories from Christianity and other faiths. They show respect for people's beliefs and customs.

187. The quality of teaching is good overall in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1 teachers use discussion well to encourage pupils to talk about their experiences and express their views. Teaching is very good when imaginative resources are used to capture pupils' interest and teachers share with them experiences from their own lives. Teaching is less effective when too much is covered in a short period of time. In Key Stage 2 lessons are well prepared. However, pupils are given insufficient opportunities to relate the lesson content to their own lives.

188. A scheme of work has been put in place which is based upon the locally Agreed Syllabus. The subject makes an important contribution to the teaching of other cultures in the school. Resources are satisfactory.

## **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

### **Summary of inspection evidence**

The inspection was carried out by a team of six inspectors, who were in school for a total of 24 inspector days.

During the inspection week

108 lessons or parts of lessons, representing over 74 hours, were observed ;

all the work from a significant sample of pupils, including work from the previous year, was monitored;

the inspectors heard a cross-section of pupils read and held discussions with pupils about their work;

teachers' planning files and records, attendance registers and pupil records were examined;

discussions were held with teaching, non-teaching and visiting staff.

Prior to the inspection week

a meeting to ascertain parents' views was held;

school policies, other documents and records of meetings were analysed;

meetings were held with the Governing Body and with the staff.

## Data and indicators

### PUPIL DATA

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on schools' register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR - Y6	476	0	68	92
Nursery Unit	55	0	0	0

### TEACHERS AND CLASSES

#### Qualified teachers (YR - Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	22.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21

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

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked each week	280

#### Qualified teachers (Nursery classes)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28

#### Education support staff (Nursery classes)

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked each week	105

Average class size:	28
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### FINANCIAL DATA

Financial year:	1998/9
	£
Total Income	778,381
Total Expenditure	823,658
Expenditure per pupil	1,745
Balance brought forward from previous year	26,054
Balance carried forward to next year	-19,223

## PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

476

Number of questionnaires returned:

206

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	33%	55%	9%	2%	0%
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	38%	54%	3%	4%	1%
The school handles complaints from parents well	16%	52%	26%*	5%	2%
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	23%	59%	9%	9%	0%
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	29%	56%	8%	7%	0%
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	42%	51%	7%	1%	0%
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	44%	47%	9%	1%	0%
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	32%	55%	7%	5%	0%
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	41%	50%	7%	1%	0%
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	48%	48%	3%	1%	0%
My child(ren) like(s) school	61%	34%	4%	0%	1%

[Because of rounding, not all rows add up to 100%]

\* This figure includes a significant number of parents who felt that they could not agree or disagree with the statement, because they had never had a complaint.