

INSPECTION REPORT

St Austin's RC Primary School
St Helens

LEA area: St Helens

Unique Reference Number: 104806

Inspection Number: 187119

Headteacher: Mr B Fyles

Reporting Inspector: Mr A Bond
17263

Dates of inspection : 15th - 19th November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 706735

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school : Infant and Junior

Type of control : Aided

Age range of pupils : 3 to 11

Gender of pupils : Mixed

School address : Heath Street
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Appropriate authority : The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors : Mrs T Reid

Date of previous inspection : 11th - 15th March 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr Andy Bond, Registered inspector	Geography	Attainment and progress
	Physical education	Teaching
		Leadership and management
Mr Michael Hammond, Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	Attendance
		Support, guidance and pupils' welfare
		Partnership with parents and the community
		Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Mrs Sharon Brown	English	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
	Art	
	Under fives	
Mrs Barbara Hill	Science	Curriculum and assessment
	Design and technology	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
	Music	
Mr Norman Bertram	Mathematics	Efficiency of the school
	Information technology	
	History	
	Special educational needs	

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

Compared with similar schools, pupils' attainments are well above average in English, mathematics and science by the time pupils complete their primary education.

- Pupils make good progress in science, music, mathematics and history in Key Stage 1 and physical education in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils' spiritual and social development is good and their moral development is very good. As a result, attitudes and relationships are very good and behaviour is good.
- Parents are partners in pupils' education and there are good community links.
- There is good governor involvement in the life of the school.
- There is a good school ethos and the school's aims and values are implemented well.
- Teaching is good in science throughout the school. It is good in mathematics and history in Key Stage 1 and in physical education in Key Stage 2. Teaching is good in Key Stage 1.
- The provision of extra curricular activities is good.

§ Where the school has weaknesses

Pupils' attainments in English and information technology are below national expectations in Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2.

- I. The senior staff are not sufficiently involved in the management of the school.
- II. The monitoring and evaluation role of many subject co-ordinators is not fully developed.
- III. The school does not make effective use of assessment information.
- IV. Higher attaining pupils do not receive appropriately challenging work.

The strengths of the school outweigh its weaknesses. The weaknesses will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of children at the school.

§ How the school has improved since the last inspection

Following the inspection in 1996, an action plan was produced to tackle the key issues and to improve other elements of the school raised in the inspection report.

The school has worked hard at addressing the issue of development planning. It now links more effectively with the school budget. There have been improvements in resourcing for information technology and the provision of non-fiction books. The quality of work in creative and expressive arts has improved, particularly in music and dance, but a weakness still exists in art. Music is now a well established and thriving component of the school curriculum. All health and safety issues have been addressed since the last inspection. The school is clean and in a sound state of repair. Parents are now more closely involved in their children's education and the school provides appropriate information on the school curriculum and assessment processes. The quality of teaching has improved, overall. There has been an increase in the level of good teaching and a fall in unsatisfactory teaching to a very small percentage. The teaching of the skills element within the curriculum is much improved, although there is still some lack of opportunity for pupils to develop research skills. A policy for marking has been established, in response to the criticism of the previous inspection report. However, it is not consistently applied by staff and requires further development, especially in setting short term targets to give pupils direction on how improvement can be effected. Successful monitoring systems have been established in English, mathematics and science but other subjects still lack systematic procedures for evaluation. Management roles have been revised to provide effective curriculum leadership, but further development is required to encompass the management of early years, the key stages and curriculum development. The progress made by the school in improving educational standards, the quality of teaching and the management of the school has resulted in an improvement in value for money. The school has created a sound platform on which further progress can be made.

Standards in subjects

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

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	
English	D	A	A
Mathematics	C	A	C
Science	C	A	D
			E

The information in the table shows that by the time the pupils left school in the summer of 1999, when compared to all schools they attained standards below nationally expected averages in English but average standards in mathematics and science. When compared with schools where pupils are from similar social backgrounds, standards in English, mathematics and science were well above average.

The school's National Curriculum results vary quite considerably from year to year, due to the differing abilities of pupils within the year groups. There is, however, a general trend of improvement over the last four years. Through observing lessons, looking at pupils' work and talking with pupils in Year 2 and Year 6, the inspectors found the attainment of pupils in English to be below nationally expected averages and that science attainment is average. In mathematics, pupils' attainment levels are average in Key Stage 1, but below in Key Stage 2. Although the school has effected improvements, pupils' standards in information technology are below average by the end of Key Stage 2.

§ Quality of teaching

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 - 7 years	7 - 11 years
English	satisfactory	satisfactory	satisfactory
Mathematics	satisfactory	good	satisfactory
Science		good	good
Information technology		Insufficient	evidence
Religious education			
Other subjects	satisfactory	satisfactory	satisfactory

The quality of teaching, overall, is satisfactory with some good teaching evident in mathematics, science, music and physical education. Teaching is at least satisfactory or better in 95 per cent of the lessons observed. Over half the lessons are judged to be good or better that is 56 per cent, overall. Twelve per cent of lessons are very good. Five per cent of lessons are less than satisfactory. Sixty two per cent of teaching in Key Stage 1 is good. A high percentage of teaching, almost 80 per cent, is good or better in Year 6. There was insufficient evidence to make secure judgements on the quality of teaching in design and technology, geography, art, music and information technology, history in Key Stage 2 and physical education in Key Stage 1. Teachers' lesson planning is good. Clear objectives are set out and lessons generally build on pupils' previous experiences successfully but there is some lack of precision in planning for higher attaining pupils. The management of pupils in lessons is also good but there are weaknesses in marking strategies which do not give pupils clear guidance on how to improve.

There has been an improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. This has enabled pupils to make better progress and generally improve their level of attainment at the end of the key stages.

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

§ Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Behaviour is good.
Attendance	Satisfactory and in line with the national average.
Ethos*	Pupils' attitudes to work are very good, relationships with others are very good. There is a growing commitment to raising standards.
Leadership and management	The headteacher gives effective leadership. The governors support the school well. The senior management role is underdeveloped. The monitoring of teaching and learning is not undertaken routinely in some subjects.
Curriculum	There is satisfactory curriculum provision. Sound systems are in place for the assessment of English, mathematics and science but the information gained is not used sufficiently to set targets for improvement. Assessment procedures are good for the under fives and they inform curriculum planning.
Pupils with special educational needs	Provision is satisfactory for pupils with special educational needs and they make sound progress.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	This is a strength of the school. Moral development is very good, spiritual and social development is good; cultural development is satisfactory.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Generally satisfactory staffing and learning resources. Accommodation is sound but some classrooms are small.
Value for money	Sound, even though there are above average costs for each pupil.

* *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	What some parents are not
----------------------------------	---------------------------

school	happy about
<p>V. The school is approachable and encourages parents to play an active part in school life.</p> <p>VI. Children enjoy coming to school.</p> <p>VII. The positive values and attitudes the school promotes.</p> <p>VIII. The good standards of behaviour expected in school.</p> <p>IX. The school gives clear information on what is being taught to pupils.</p>	<p>Some parents are happy about their pupils' progress.</p> <p>A number of parents are happy about their pupils' progress.</p>

The inspectors support the positive views of parents.

However, the inspectors judge that the provision of homework is generally satisfactory and it contributes to pupils' learning. Sufficient information on pupils' progress is provided by the school and there are many opportunities for parents to speak to teachers about pupils' progress.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

To improve the standards of work and the quality of education provided, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

a) raise the standard of pupils' attainment in English by:

-) continuing to develop teaching in the format of the National Literacy Strategy;
-) continuing to improve the provision for writing in an extended form;
-) improving pupils' handwriting skills and presentation;

(paragraphs 9, 11, 15, 117, 120, 121, 122, 124, 129)

b) raise the standard of pupils' attainment in information technology by:

-) improving teachers' expertise, knowledge and confidence;
-) providing structures to assess pupils' progress and attainment;
-) developing the role of the co-ordinator by providing opportunities to monitor teaching and learning;

(paragraphs 19, 21, 38, 82, 90, 156, 157, 158)

c) improve the management structure of the school by:

-) extending the role of the management team to encompass the leadership of the three phases of early years, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2;
-) providing specific overall leadership for curriculum and assessment;

(paragraphs 54, 80, 99, 111)

d) develop the role of the non-core subject co-ordinators by:

-) improving monitoring and evaluation through a programme of scrutiny of pupils' work and visits to the classroom to assess standards and the progress achieved by pupils;

(paragraphs 55, 82, 164, 165, 173, 180, 195, 207)

e) improve the use of assessment to inform future planning by:

-) analysing the information gained from assessment to set suitable individual and class targets for attainment;
-) applying marking strategies more consistently and giving pupils guidance on how their work can be improved;

(paragraphs 43, 45, 53, 54, 127, 140, 148)

f) improve the attainment levels of higher achievers by:

-) setting more suitably challenging work in lessons.

(paragraphs 23, 39, 48, 115, 119, 148, 173, 187)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

-) increase the progress made by pupils in art in both key stages, through improving resources, staff expertise and providing a structured scheme (paragraphs 21, 82, 162);
-) develop assessment procedures in the non-core subjects (paragraphs 58, 172, 180, 190, 204); and
-) ensure that statutory requirements are met by including relevant information in the school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents (paragraphs 68, 88, 152).

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. St Austin's is a Roman Catholic Primary School serving three parishes within the St. Helens local authority. The school caters for pupils from 3- 11 years of age. There are 316 pupils in school, 172 boys and 144 girls. The nursery has 46 part time pupils. Pupils live largely in terraced houses and council estate properties, although there are a rising number of privately owned homes on the fringe of the catchment area.
2. Forty two per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well above the national average. 6.8 per cent of pupils are on the special needs register, which is well below the national average. 3.7 per cent of pupils have statements of special educational needs, which is well above the national average. The school has served generations of families and is regarded as a key component of the local catholic community.
3. Baseline assessment of pupils on entry to school and inspection evidence indicates that children are below nationally expected levels when they commence school. At the time of the inspection, a total of 71 pupils in the nursery and reception classes were under the age of five. The children are admitted to the nursery in the September following their third birthday, on a part time basis. They enter the reception class the following year as rising fives. At the time of the inspection, the majority of children in the reception class were under five years of age.

The school has a mission statement which reflects its Roman Catholic traditions:

- to promote in each child a loving, close and supportive relationship with the Lord through teaching and example;
 - to encourage a love, understanding and regular practice of the sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation;
 - to comply with the current requirements of the National Curriculum as far as resources allow, whilst recognising that children need to be prepared for life and treated as individuals with unique potential;
 - to create a secure and caring environment where parents and children feel confident to discuss their concerns with staff; and
 - to encourage good behaviour and be fair and consistent in dealing with bad behaviour.
1. Current priorities for the school year 1999-2000:
 - Implementing the National Numeracy Strategy.
 - Improving extended writing provision.
 - Managing the budget prudently during a period of falling pupil rolls.
 - Monitoring pupils' progress in preparation for target setting.
 - Improving transfer arrangements between KS1 and KS2.
 - Developing the Comenius project (link with German school).
 - Viper computer links.
 - ITT links with Edge Hill College (student teacher training).
 - Preparation for inspection.

5. Key Indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	18	34	52

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	13	13	16
	Girls	23	28	21
	Total	36	41	37
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	79 (65)	78 (67)	90 (74)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	13	15	13
	Girls	28	28	29
	Total	41	43	42
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	79 (79)	86 (71)	81 (82)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

Attainment at Key Stage 2¹

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	28	18	46

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	19	20	24
	Girls	12	12	14
	Total	31	32	38
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	68 (56)	71 (62)	83 (75)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	21	22	24
	Girls	13	12	15
	Total	24	34	39
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	73 (69)	73 (72)	86 (84)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

1

Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

5. Attendance

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

		%
Authorised Absence	School	6.6
	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised Absence	School	0.01
	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	12
Satisfactory or better	95
Less than satisfactory	5

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

1. Performance data indicate that pupils generally attain standards in line with national averages by the end of Key Stage 2 in mathematics and science. Standards in English are not as high and fall slightly below nationally agreed levels. There are variations over time in National Curriculum test results, but the general trend is one of improvement. Compared with schools located in similar social and economic areas the pupils attain standards well above average levels in English, mathematics and science by the time they complete their primary education.
2. The children are admitted to the nursery in the September following their third birthday on a part-time basis. They enter the reception class the following year as rising fives. The children's attainment on entry to the school is below average, particularly in language and literacy and in mathematics. The local authority's early assessment system (Leeds) is in place and the information gained from this is used effectively by the teachers in the reception class to group children for learning and to identify those who might have special educational needs. Early assessment information supports the inspection findings that attainment on entry is below average, although there is an improvement on previous years in some aspects of language such as speaking skills.
3. By the age of five, the majority of children remain below the expected standards for their age in most areas of learning. However, although many do not achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes in language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world, they make satisfactory progress, overall. They make good progress in personal and social development and physical development where most children attain the levels expected for five-year-olds. Most children with identified special educational needs also make satisfactory progress in relation to prior attainment and are well integrated into class activities.
4. The children's personal and social development is good. Most children sustain interest in their work for some time, although this is more limited for the youngest children in the nursery. They work and play together, taking turns and sharing. In language and literacy sessions most children handle books carefully, turning pages correctly and they share books with adults. Early writing skills are weak with a significant number of children having poor pencil control. In mathematics, most five year olds can count, sort, match and sequence numbers and objects. They use simple mathematical language, such as "more than" and "less than". Through daily discussions, children learn about the weather, seasons and days of the week. Physical development is good and children make good progress. They are confident and show increasing co-ordination in their movement. Children's creative development is below the level expected for their age because the range of media, resources and activities presented to children are limited.
5. Standards of attainment, as measured by the national tasks in 1999 at the end of Key Stage 1, show that the number of pupils reaching the nationally accepted level 2 is just below average in reading and writing but marginally above in spelling. In mathematics, standards of attainment are in line with national expectations. Inspection evidence supports these results and indicates that pupils' standards in English are below national levels and that in mathematics they are in line. The teacher assessment for science in 1999 indicated that the percentage of pupils reaching level 2 was well below national levels. Inspection evidence derived from examining pupils' work in the present Year 2 classes indicates that levels of attainment are broadly in line for this particular group of pupils (cohort).
6. Compared with pupils in schools of similar social backgrounds the results of 1999 tests show that pupils in

school attain standards well above national benchmarks in mathematics, above in English and in line in science. The percentage of higher attaining pupils attaining the higher level 3 in English, mathematics and science is largely in line with national levels compared with all schools in English, but below in mathematics and science, judged by 1999 national curriculum tests and tasks.

7. At the end of Key Stage 2, National Curriculum results in 1999 show attainment in English to be below national levels for the percentage of pupils achieving the agreed level 4 grade. In mathematics and science, results show that the pupils' attainment is average compared with all other schools. Comparative benchmark information with similar schools shows that the pupils achieve well above the national average in all three subjects. Although a high percentage of pupils reach the higher level grade 5 in science, only a small percentage of pupils attain higher levels in English and mathematics which, in national terms, is below average for all three subjects.
8. Inspection evidence supports the 1999 curriculum test results in English and science, in that Year 6 pupils' attainment is below nationally expected levels in English, but in line with the national levels in science. In mathematics, standards of attainment are not high in the present Year 6 age group and fall below national levels.
9. The school National Curriculum test and task results, over the last five years are variable in both key stages. The general trend is one of improvement in English, mathematics and science but no smooth pattern of development is evident. It would seem that year groups (cohorts) vary considerably in their performance and attainment levels and, as a consequence, alter from year to year. The teaching staff has been fairly stable for the last four years, so variations in the standard of teaching seem unlikely to be the reason for differing test results.
10. The attainment levels of boys and girls are largely similar, although boys marginally outperform girls in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1, boys and girls have similar scores in English and mathematics, but boys outperform girls in science in achievement at the higher level, in the above average grade 3 level.
11. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are average at the end of Key Stage 1. Although a few pupils lack clear articulation, the majority listen carefully, follow instructions and are confident when speaking aloud to teachers and other adults. Most pupils have positive attitudes to reading, many lack fluency and expression and a significant number, particularly low attaining pupils, lack enthusiasm for reading. Attainment in writing is below average at the end of Key Stage 1. Early letter formation skills are not secure for a good proportion of pupils. They are not developed systematically and, by the end of the key stage, handwriting skills are weak for many pupils, resulting in untidy presentation and poor attempts to join letters. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment in reading is below average. The majority can identify and talk about characters and the plot and are able to predict what might happen next, but pupils lack fluency and expression when reading aloud. Pupils' standards in writing are below average by the end of Key Stage 2. Many pupils are not forming letters and joins correctly. Although opportunities are provided for more extended writing few pupils write at length and lack imaginative ideas and a rich vocabulary. The school has identified low attainment levels in writing. Extra time in the curriculum has been given to developing the extended form of writing in an attempt to raise standards. A commercialised scheme has been introduced to improve handwriting styles and this is having some impact on standards, especially in Year 5, but further progress is required for pupils to meet nationally accepted average levels. The purchase of additional reading material, fiction and non-fiction, has improved the provision for literature since the last inspection, but insufficient teaching focus is placed on diagnosing pupils' reading weaknesses to enhance their reading skills.

12. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have developed sound numeracy skills and know their 2, 5 and 10 times tables. Pupils share blocks of apparatus into halves and quarters. They recognise and name two-dimensional shapes, such as circle, square, rectangle and triangle. The majority of pupils achieve levels of attainment in line with national expectations across the complete range of mathematical elements. In Key Stage 2, good mathematical vocabulary has been acquired and is used effectively in lessons related to shape and space. Pupils make calculations of the perimeters of differing shapes. They use calculators to check their answers. Lower attaining pupils use a number square to help with calculation processes. Inspection evidence indicates that levels of attainment are generally below national expectations in the present Year 6.
13. Year 2 pupils have a sound understanding of the effects of air and friction on movement and speed. They consider questions relevant to their investigations. Pupils discuss the different elements knowledgeably. Inspection evidence indicates that the majority of pupils are in line to reach national levels in science. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils understand that, by adding variables such as switches and buzzers, outcomes can be changed. Pupils accurately draw conclusions from studying diagrams. The majority of pupils are on target to reach the nationally agreed level 4 in science in Year 6.
14. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained improvements in English, mathematics and science. All three subjects were judged to be either “broadly in line” or “sound”. Over the intervening years average national standards have increased and the school has kept pace with improved levels.
15. In information technology, standards of attainment are below nationally expected levels at the end of both key stages. The school has increased the provision of computer equipment generally, but this alone is not sufficient for pupils to achieve appropriate levels. Most pupils enter school with low level skills and require help with even simple tasks such as loading a disk. The majority of teachers lack the knowledge and expertise to teach pupils the higher level skills required to make the rapid progress required to meet national targets.
16. Pupils make sound progress in English in both key stages and in mathematics in Key Stage 2. The recently introduced National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are having a positive impact on teaching approaches and evidence suggests that pupils’ attainment is improving, but standards in literacy are still below national levels especially in writing. Standards in numeracy are generally in line with national expectations by the end of both key stages. Pupils are making good progress in science in both key stages and mathematics in Key Stage 1. Most pupils develop and consolidate knowledge, skills and understanding relating to living things, materials and physical processes at appropriate rates. Some very good progress has been seen in the energy work on investigations and fair testing. All these factors have enhanced pupils’ progress in science. Progress in mathematics in Key Stage 1 is good. Well matched tasks in group activities enable pupils of differing abilities to make good progress.
17. Progress in information technology is satisfactory in both key stages even though national targets are not met. Pupils start with little experience of computers, but make appropriate gains in school commensurate with their previous knowledge, skills and understanding. Progress in music is good in both key stages. The introduction of a scheme of work and a whole school focus on music since the last inspection have had a beneficial effect on pupils’ progress. In art, pupils’ progress is unsatisfactory in both key stages. There are instances of pupils making appropriate progress, but it is uneven throughout the school. Poor resources, the lack of a scheme of work and inconsistent teacher subject knowledge has the effect of slowing pupils’ progress.
18. Sound progress is made in geography, design and technology and in physical education in Key Stage 1 and history in Key Stage 2. Good progress is made in physical education in Key Stage 2 through good teaching and the provision of a good range of resources. Progress in history is good in Key Stage 1. The well developed scheme followed by teachers and enthusiastic teaching enhance pupils’ progress.

19. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress in most subjects, through well targeted learning support and clear individual education plans. Specialist teacher support in withdrawal groups and class grouping aids pupils' progress. The progress of higher attaining pupils is not catered for sufficiently within lessons. Teacher planning does not make appropriate focus on extending the higher attaining pupils with matched challenging tasks. The school has set annual targets for the end of Key Stage 2 and they appear realistic based on previous years' results.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

20. The high quality of pupils' attitudes to learning, their standards of behaviour and the positive relationships that exist are strengths of the school.
21. Pupils of all ages, including those with special educational needs, demonstrate very good attitudes to learning. Pupils listen attentively, are well motivated to work and concentrate well during lessons. They are eager to respond to questions and participate fully in their lessons. Most pupils are confident in class discussions and are willing to share ideas, for example in a Year 2 class when discussing how they might make their cars move, made in an earlier design and technology lesson. The youngest children are developing good, positive habits in their learning. They settle quickly and confidently into the school and very soon establish good relationships with one another and with the staff. They share equipment carefully, and tidy away resources. They work and play very well together and are developing good personal and social skills.
22. Pupils' behaviour is good, contributing to the progress made in most lessons. The school has successfully maintained the high standards of behaviour since the last inspection. The school is a happy and orderly community. Pupils have a good awareness of right and wrong and parents appreciate this moral emphasis. Most pupils behave well in classrooms and in and around school. They are polite and respectful towards staff and visitors. Pupils respond well to the trust shown in them, for instance when required to work independently during literacy and numeracy lessons. Pupils show care for their own property and respect for the equipment they use. They share resources sensibly in all lessons. Pupils respond well to the high expectations and good example set by staff. There have been no recent exclusions.
23. Pupils throughout the school form very constructive relationships with one another and with their teachers and other adults. They work very well collaboratively in pairs and small groups, helping and supporting each other and valuing the response and contributions of other pupils. For example, in a Year 6 physical education lesson, pupils worked in pairs and showed consideration for others. Pupils enjoy each other's company. They are thoughtful and caring towards others.
24. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. When given the opportunity they are keen to take responsibilities and fulfil their tasks well. For example, some pupils are responsible for collecting registers or reading prayers in morning assembly and maintaining science resources in Year 6. However, such opportunities are limited, particularly for older pupils in the school. Most pupils are confident in asking questions and contributing suggestion and ideas in lessons, such as in a science lesson in Year 5 where they made sensible suggestions about appropriate types of materials and in Year 6 where they used their initiative to select additional apparatus needed when experimenting with buzzers and circuits. Most pupils demonstrate good self-discipline skills and show independence in their learning. Year 2 pupils, for example, use dictionaries to help them in their literacy tasks, but, with the exception of pupils in Year 6, pupils have underdeveloped research and investigative skills. Pupils respond positively to local, national and international sporting, musical and community events with enthusiasm.

Attendance

25. Attendance at the school is satisfactory. Authorised absence is broadly in line with the national average and unauthorised absences is well below the national average. Punctuality, both at the start of the day and in the lessons, is good and this contributes to attainment and progress.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

26. The quality of teaching in the school is satisfactory, overall. It is satisfactory or better in 95 per cent of lessons, good or better in 56 per cent and very good in 12 per cent. It is unsatisfactory in 5 per cent of lessons. This is an improvement from the last inspection, which indicated that approximately 10 per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory and 30 per cent of teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 was judged to be good. The improvement in the quality of teaching is having a favourable effect on pupils' progress in lessons and in generally raising levels of achievement across a range of subjects, particularly in mathematics, science and in Key Stage 1.
27. Overall, the teaching for children under five years of age in the nursery and reception class is satisfactory. All lessons observed were satisfactory with 53 per cent of lessons observed being good or better. There are some examples of good, and occasionally very good teaching, especially in the nursery.
28. In Key Stage 1 teaching is generally good, with 62 per cent of lessons observed being good or even better. The remainder of lessons are at least satisfactory. Good progress is made by pupils, particularly in mathematics, science and history. The arrangements in Year 1 for the teaching of a particularly large class by a full time teacher and a part time teacher prove to be satisfactory. Small groups are formed in the morning session and taught by individual teachers. These lessons focus on the teaching of mathematics and English. There is good collaboration between the two teachers concerned so that planning is consistent and delivered effectively.
29. The standard of teaching in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory, overall, but with a wide variation, from very good to unsatisfactory. Within the key stage, 91 per cent of teaching is satisfactory or better, 53 per cent good or better but 9 per cent of teaching is judged to be unsatisfactory. The most successful teaching takes place in Year 6, where three out of every four lessons are good or very good. In these classes, teachers have high expectations of pupils' achievement levels, the pace of lessons is brisk and the management of pupils is particularly good. Pupils make good progress in Year 6 due to the very effective teaching delivery.
30. Teaching is generally good in Key Stage 2 in the subject areas of science, physical education and in the small number of music lessons observed. Teachers have good subject knowledge and in the case of science and music have a well structured scheme to follow. Pupils progress well in these subjects and standards of achievement are generally rising.
31. Due to the significant focus on the teaching of English, mathematics and science and the timetable structure it was not possible to make overall judgements on the quality of teaching in information technology, music, design and technology, art, geography, physical education in Key Stage 1 and history in Key Stage 2.
32. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Class teachers have a clear picture of pupils' needs through their individual educational plans, provided by the special needs co-ordinator. Additional support is given by a visiting specialist teacher and learning support staff who focus on specific targets. Teaching in both individual and in small groups is effective and enables pupils to make satisfactory progress towards the targets set for them.

33. Grouping by attainment levels in mathematics lessons has a positive effect on the progress of pupils with special educational needs. The work is well prepared by teachers and matched to their ability. Pupils are encouraged and given additional teacher and classroom assistant support within their mathematics group.
34. Teachers' knowledge and understanding is largely satisfactory. In the nursery and reception class it is good. The teachers have a good understanding of the Desirable Outcomes and plan effectively to these targets. There are some weaknesses in teachers' expertise in art throughout the school and the lack of a scheme of work to guide teachers compounds this failing. Although the school has made some progress in developing teachers' expertise in information technology, it is still at a comparatively low level to deliver the curriculum successfully.
35. Teachers' expectations of pupils are generally satisfactory. The expectations of behaviour are good, but there is some lack of challenge in the match of work for high attaining pupils. All too frequently, higher attaining pupils are not extended by whole class tasks and, consequently, do not make the progress of which they are capable in lessons. In mathematics lessons, teachers are aware of the need to plan for differing levels of attainment and pupils receive more appropriately matched, challenging work.
36. The planning of lessons is good. In many successful lessons, the objectives are shared with pupils at the commencement of the lesson. This is particularly effectively undertaken in Year 5 classes, giving pupils a clear understanding of the lesson target. Lessons develop progressively, building on pupils' previous knowledge, skills and understanding. Many teachers are adopting the literacy teaching model and planning a plenary session to reinforce learning successfully.
37. Although teaching methods and organisation are satisfactory in the nursery and reception classes, there are some weaknesses in Key Stages 1 and 2. Some teachers spend too long at the start of the lesson giving lengthy explanations. As a result, pupils lose interest and there is insufficient time for written work to consolidate learning. There are limited opportunities for investigation and research in many lessons. Pupils receive the same basic tasks in many lessons and there is little variety to stimulate interest. However, this is not the case in Year 6 lessons where greater opportunities exist for experimentation and research.
38. Teachers' management of pupils is usually good throughout the school. They have a good rapport with pupils and use praise frequently to give encouragement and boost pupils' self esteem. This has the effect of stimulating pupils and helps them to progress. In most classes, there is a good framework for discipline which is embedded into daily routines.
39. Most lessons are delivered at a reasonable pace and resources are used effectively to achieve learning objectives. Some time is lost in Key Stage 1 when lessons finish early to cater for breaktimes and preparation for lunch. The library areas are not always sufficiently used to promote learning and research.
40. Pupils' work is marked regularly by teachers and positive comments are usually made, but the guidance document is not consistently followed. Too few comments are made on pupils' work which give specific targets to enable them to improve their standard of work. Teachers, however, circulate around the classroom during the periods when pupils are completing tasks and make informal observations and comments which aid pupils' general progress. Assessment procedures are well developed in the under five classes and are generally used to inform weekly plans effectively. Some progress has been made towards developing a whole school approach to marking, but it is not securely in place. The key issue identified in the previous inspection has yet to be completely addressed.
41. The provision of homework is satisfactory, it supports teaching and learning, particularly in English, but is

less well developed in mathematics. It generally increases in range and depth as pupils move through the school. It is particularly good in Year 6 and prepares pupils well for secondary education.

The curriculum and assessment

42. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum. This strongly promotes the intellectual, physical, personal and social development of all pupils and prepares them well for the next stage of education. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught, together with religious education and statutory requirements are met for all subjects. In classes where children are under five, teachers plan to the Desirable Learning Outcome, but there is no school specific curriculum for this age group. Teachers maintain their own records and there is a standardised system for recording baseline assessment, National Curriculum standard attainment tests and tasks and recently introduced Qualification Curriculum Authority tests in Key Stage 2.
43. Satisfactory provision is made for the areas of learning for children under the age of five. The length of the taught week is average for Key Stage 1 and above average for Key Stage 2. There are appropriate amounts of time given to the development of pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy. There is also an emphasis on physical education at Key Stage 2 and science in Year 6, which has a positive impact on pupils' progress. Provision for personal, social and health education is good. Curriculum provision for sex education and awareness of drug misuse considerably enhances pupils' development of knowledge and understanding. Both these subjects are taught effectively through a range of topics, which also include bullying and racism, within religious education.
44. The school is committed to equality of opportunity in the curriculum for all pupils, including participation in games. There are no significant variations in attainment between boys and girls across the school. However, teachers' lesson planning does not always pay sufficient attention to the needs of the higher attaining pupils. Extension activities are planned, but they are rarely challenging enough for these pupils to reach their optimum level of performance.
45. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. There are no disapplications from the National Curriculum and these pupils are included in all subject plans. Thorough arrangements are in place to fulfil the Code of Practice. These pupils' individual educational plans are relevant, effective and reviewed regularly.
46. Planning at long-term, medium term and short-term levels is good and ensures appropriate coverage of the National Curriculum in all respects. Day-to-day planning is thorough in the identification of learning objectives and lesson content, but does not always include details of evaluation and assessment to influence future planning for the full range of pupils' attainments, especially for high attainers. Collaborative planning within and across year groups is a strength of the school's curriculum. Planning for children under five is satisfactory in promoting their progress towards the Desirable Learning Outcomes.
47. Policies and schemes of work are available for all subjects except physical education and art. Policies are in place for other aspects of the curriculum such as sex education, health education, assessment, recording and reporting, marking and homework. These provide effective guidance in helping teachers promote development in pupils' learning. Subject co-ordinators review and up-date policies regularly. However, marking and presentation of work are not consistent within the guidelines set by the policy. Overall, information technology and research work in the library is under-used across the curriculum to support pupils' learning effectively.
48. The curriculum is enriched by educational visits to sites of historical and geographical interest such as St. Helens Museum, Liverpool Museum and Liverpool Cathedral, Speke Hall, Quarry Bank Mill, Wigan Pier

and the Maritime Museum. The school provides a good range of extra curricular activities including music, French, mathematics, art and sport. These activities are led and supported by a high proportion of staff. The school is involved in competitive sport, particularly football and rugby league. The school has a good local reputation for the high standard of performance by its teams. Visits to theatres and art galleries are arranged. Visitors to the school, such as musicians and artists also make an important contribution to the curriculum. In addition, volunteer helpers from the Reading Support Scheme (Building Reading Partnerships) enrich the curriculum by providing valuable help in promoting key literacy skills.

49. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are good for the under fives and satisfactory for Key Stages 1 and 2. Legal requirements for assessing pupils' attainment at the end of both key stages are observed. In Key Stage 2, non-statutory tests are held for Years 3, 4 and 5. Records are kept on tracking sheets to monitor progress. However, these records are not used to inform future planning or to set individual targets. There are no structured school systems for assessing pupils' progress in information technology and the non-core subjects. Co-ordinators responsible for these subjects do not have an accurate picture of the rate of pupils' progress. The needs of pupils with special educational needs are assessed regularly and frequently. Individual portfolios are built up from samples of work from pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2.
50. The school reports the results of the baseline assessment to parents. Briefing meetings are held for the parents of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 which give an indication of the tests to be undertaken and the target levels of attainment. Written end of year reports give individual assessment information to parents. Reports are detailed, giving a broad coverage of achievement in subjects, but they do not give individual targets for raising attainment. Use of assessment to inform curriculum planning is satisfactory for the under fives and unsatisfactory for Key Stages 1 and 2. The overall management of curriculum and assessment is weak. There is no designated senior member of staff to oversee this important area of school life.
51. Improvements have been made since the last inspection. Music in the curriculum now meets National Curriculum requirements and pupils make good progress. Working documents are in place for all but two subjects. The curriculum has been developed by co-ordinators. There is improved leadership in science, design and technology, information technology and music. The structure of curriculum management has an effective influence on attainment and skills development in English, mathematics and science, but insufficient attention is given to the monitoring of the other curriculum areas. Projections for future learning priorities in order to raise achievement are not properly undertaken in these subjects.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

52. The school's overall provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good and represents a strength of its work.
53. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Within the daily life of the school there are opportunities for worship and praise. Pupils show feelings and sensitivity in their saying of prayers, reflections and singing of songs. A spiritual dimension permeates the whole life of school. The school Mission Statement 'prompts in each child a loving, close and supportive relationship'. The ethos of the school develops spiritual awareness and self-knowledge. Pupils write sensitively about their feelings when describing 'my home is a happy place'. Pupils' spiritual development is enhanced through their writing of poetry and prayers. The poetry tree is labelled, 'Young Night Thoughts'. Pupils experience a sense of beauty through art and music. Movement and feelings are expressed creatively through dance. Books such as 'Secret Path' enable pupils to reflect on their own experiences of life.
54. Provision for moral development is very good. An aim of the school is to encourage good behaviour and to be fair and consistent in dealing with bad behaviour. Moral themes teach right from wrong. The school is a

well-ordered community with a caring and sharing ethos. Pupils are polite and helpful. They are encouraged to take responsibility. A typical example is the display of rules such as 'look after the new children'. The involvement of the community police constables and good relationships with the wider community enhance pupils' moral development. All staff provide the pupils with very good role models in their relationships with one another.

55. Pupils' social development is good. There is a whole-school climate of mutual trust and respect which contributes strongly to the development of the good relationships between all members of the school community, including teachers, support staff, governors and parents. Pupils with special educational needs are equally involved in school activities. Books on display, dealing with social issues such as disability, racism and relationships, provide good support for pupils' social understanding and development. After-school clubs and educational and sporting links with other schools make a positive contribution to social development. Pupils develop their understanding of responsibility by supporting a range of charitable causes including Children in Need, a sponsored walk, a local hospice and the Nugent Care Society.
56. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils visit places of interest such as Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral and the Maritime Museum. Trips to St Helens Theatre, Parr Hall Theatre and the Walker Art Gallery are organised. The Comenius project, a partnership with Leipzig, broadens the horizon of the pupils, by offering an extended range of activities, such as letter writing, reporting and exchanging data. Pupils' appreciation of other cultures is limited. Some pupils write about Diwali and read books about Judaism, Hinduism and Islam. Pupils have an opportunity to join the French club after school.
57. Since the last inspection, the school has developed the Comenius project to extend pupils' European horizons. Spiritual awareness has been further developed by opportunities to experience, through visits and the use of artefacts, a sense of beauty, of wonder and of awe. Teachers are developing pupils' love of learning through their enthusiasm and imaginative teaching.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

58. The school provides a happy, relaxed and supportive environment and the friendliness and courtesy of the pupils and staff is a real strength of the school.
59. The teachers and support staff have a very caring attitude towards their pupils. They know them well and this helps them monitor their progress and personal development. Procedures for assessing and recording the academic progress of individual pupils are in place, but are inconsistently applied. The school monitors pupils' behaviour on a formal and informal basis successfully.
60. Registers are completed in line with statutory requirements and details of authorised and unauthorised absences are published in the governors' annual report to parents and in the school prospectus. The school has an expectation of good attendance and pupils with 100% attendance receive certificates at an annual presentation. Procedures are in place to deal with any lateness or absence, but no structured systems exist for the analysis of pupils' absence or poor punctuality. Compared with the last inspection, pupils' levels of attendance have remained broadly similar.
61. Relationships between teachers, support staff and pupils are good and pupils are seen caring and supporting each other. The majority of pupils are confident and articulate and more than willing to talk about themselves and their feelings and ask for help when it is needed. This was evident during the swimming lesson when pupils talked about the importance of safety procedures being understood.
62. The school is committed to a positive discipline and behaviour policy. There are effective procedures for

dealing with the very occasional instances of bullying. As a result, the school functions as an orderly and caring community. Pupils are well disciplined and very good behaviour is both a characteristic and expectation of the school. Parents are encouraged to contact the school should a problem arise. Supervision of the pupils when moving between buildings or on trips is very good. Supervision during lunch time and other breaks is satisfactory.

63. There are effective links with all the relevant agencies such as the psychological services and local special schools for those with special educational needs. Parents are involved at all levels of activity. Support is given both in and out of class to suit the requirements of individual pupils. There are effective procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' attendance. The school has a child protection policy and staff are aware of their responsibilities in this area. Satisfactory arrangements are in place to deal with sick children.
64. An effective health and safety policy is monitored by the governors and the site is inspected annually and a report produced. Positive steps have been taken to deal with the areas of concern reported in the last inspection, particularly with the cleaning which is now very good. However, the nature of the site and school buildings continue to present difficulties for some disabled children.
65. The main items of concern regarding health and safety in the Junior building are the loose tiles in the upper corridor, the very hot heating pipes and unsafe main entrance wall. Externally the pitted surface of the car park and main drive need attention.

Partnership with parents and the community

66. The quality of the partnership between the school, parents and the community is good and is a real strength of the school.
67. The level of information given to parents is good. This includes regular newsletters and an annual 'Parents Information Pack'. Parents of children just starting school also receive copies of a 'Starting School Pack'. Parents are kept informed of their children's progress through an annual afternoon meeting and an annual report. Reports are valuable to parents, but they do not tell parents what their child needs to do to improve. The vast majority of parents are satisfied with afternoon meetings. The school offers alternative arrangements for parents unable to attend during the afternoon. Contact is also maintained through the use of home/school reading diaries. The vast majority of parents agree that they find it easy to approach teachers, should they have any queries or should problems arise. There is no formal homework policy, except for Year 6, although spelling and reading books are provided as homework tasks each week. Parents are encouraged to take an interest and assist their child when homework has been set. The school has successfully addressed the issue from the previous inspection and now gives parents far more opportunities to support children in their learning.
68. The school considers the partnership between themselves and parents to be of the utmost importance and consistent efforts are made to involve parents in all aspects of school life and in supporting their children at home. A number of parents act as volunteers in the school, on school trips and with the reading retrieval scheme.
69. Parents, when interviewed, all spoke highly of the quality of relationships between themselves and the staff and expressed appreciation of their accessibility and friendliness. The school has an active St Austin's Income Raisers (STAIRS) which organises well supported social and fund-raising activities.
70. Special Educational Needs review meetings are held in line with the recommendations of the Code of Practice. The school has good contacts with all relevant agencies that support pupils with special educational

needs. Access to the buildings for pupils with mobility problems is difficult because of the stairs in the Key Stage 2 building. Parents are kept well informed of their child's progress. They are involved in the review process.

71. Links with the community are very good. These include strong links with the local Roman Catholic Parish and local community. Pupils support events, such as the annual Parish Field Day, joint local primary school walking day and visit residential homes and drop-in-centre. Beneficial links also exist with local primary schools, the education advisory and medical services, community police, fire service and local sports clubs such as St. Helens Rugby League Football Club and Everton Football Club. Links also exist with the Roman Catholic high school, Edge Hill College and local training agency who send students to the school for teaching practice and work experience. The link made with the Anton Philip Reclam Schule in Leipzig, through the EU SOCRATES scheme, is very valuable.
72. Pupils are encouraged to recognise their responsibilities to the wider community by supporting different charities.
73. All these initiatives are enriching. They support the delivery and development of the curriculum and further pupils' learning and personal development.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

74. The headteacher provides effective leadership for the school. He is well supported by the governing body and the various committees which monitor and evaluate the work of the school. The governors are committed to supporting the school and fulfill their role effectively as "critical friends". They are a knowledgeable body who carry out their responsibilities conscientiously and ensure that they remain abreast of educational developments by undertaking training frequently.
75. The headteacher is well respected by the school community for his integrity and dedication to the school. With the support of the staff and governors he has improved the educational provision. The key issues from the last inspection report of 1996 have all been addressed, although a small number have yet to be completely resolved. The headteacher has sensitively handled the issues arising from the falling pupil roll numbers and the management of a diminishing budget allocation.
76. An influential senior management team has been established and this has enabled the school to make good progress in the delivery of the English, mathematics and science curriculum. However, the school lacks a clear management strategy which identifies key members of staff to take responsibility for the leadership of under fives, Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2 and curriculum and assessment.
77. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is sound and the co-ordinator gives clear leadership. Appropriate consultation with agencies takes place and the special needs co-ordinator successfully gives support and training to staff.
78. Co-ordinators for the curriculum subjects act in an advisory role, prepare schemes and review planning, but in the non-core subjects and information technology they do not have sufficient opportunities to monitor teaching and learning throughout the school. As a result, they are not in a position to evaluate the standards in their subjects and plan further developments based on accurate information. At present there are no whole school schemes of work for art and physical education to give teachers consistent guidance in planning their curriculum delivery.

79. The recent national initiatives for literacy and numeracy have been satisfactorily introduced and appropriate monitoring has taken place to ensure that these areas are embedded into the curriculum. The teaching and learning of science are also monitored successfully, ensuring that the co-ordinator has a clear vision of the needs for future development. The school is improving its systems for identifying weaknesses in its provision and with the help of the local education authority is setting annual whole school targets for National Curriculum tests.
80. The school achieves its present aims in its mission statement and these are reflected in the life of the school. The school policies have a strong Christian thread which is ingrained into the life of the school. High standards of behaviour are achieved in the school, but little mention is made of striving to achieve high academic standards in school policies. Pupils appear to be secure and happy within the school environment. Parents support the school philosophy and they are consulted appropriately on school community issues.
81. The school has improved its development planning. It has effectively addressed the issue of the previous inspection by linking funding much more closely to initiatives. The school development plan is now a sound document. It has achievable targets which act as a guide for future school development. Funding and resources are matched to initiatives and regular reviews are built into the plan. Proper success criteria and named personnel to lead developments are also clearly outlined. Teachers review their resource requirements through structured audits and make their contribution to the plan through discussion in staff meetings. The school's thrust towards the development of literacy and numeracy follows national trends. Training for teachers has been channelled into the latter areas at the expense of the non-core subjects, so slowing curriculum development. The governors play a full part in school development planning through committee consultation and scrutinising initiatives. They have been influential in the development of health and safety policies, refurbishment of buildings and setting priorities in religious education.
82. The school has made satisfactory progress towards school improvement and has a sound capacity for further development.
83. The school has a good, positive ethos. This is evident in its caring philosophy which fosters good relationships and equal opportunities. High standards of behaviour are achieved within an effective learning environment. There is an underlying desire to improve pupils' performance in National Curriculum tests which indicates an endeavour to raise standards. Too little consideration, however, is given to the needs of higher attaining pupils and classroom activities are not always sufficiently challenging to ensure that their full potential is reached.
84. The school governing body generally fulfils its statutory requirements, but there is a total of five minor omissions from the school prospectus and the annual report to parents. The school does not give parents information in the school prospectus on the right of withdrawal from collective worship and insufficient information is given on the provision for pupils with special educational needs. In the governors' annual report to parents, no information is given on the facilities that the school provides for pupils with disabilities. Nor is there a statement on progress in implementing the schools' action plan or details about the next election of parent governors.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

89. *Staffing*

85. There are appropriate numbers of qualified and experienced teaching staff to cover the requirements of the National Curriculum and Desirable Learning Outcomes for under fives. Since the last inspection, co-

ordinators have been appointed for all the non-core subjects and where appropriate in-service training has been undertaken by teachers to improve their subject expertise.

86. The school is committed to an informal staff-development programme in which the headteacher and co-ordinators play an important role. All staff have been involved in in-service training particularly for literacy and numeracy. Only a small number of staff have expertise in information technology and they find it difficult to deliver the curriculum at an appropriate level. There is an informal induction training programme for new members of staff and arrangements for teacher appraisal are in place. However, there is no provision for in-service training of playground and lunchtime supervisors, to give staff clear guidance on routine pupil management.
87. There are adequate numbers of ancillary staff to support pupils' learning. Administration procedures are effectively carried out by a suitably qualified clerical officer.
88. The special education needs co-ordinator has close and effective relations with the senior management team and is a well respected and valued figure in the school community. She ensures that the education of pupils with special education needs is featured prominently in the life of the school.
93. *Accommodation*
89. Since the last report, considerable improvements have been made to the accommodation in the two buildings, particularly with the refurbishment of the Infant building. New furniture has been obtained and every effort has been made to improve the general appearance of both buildings. The accommodation is now well maintained, clean and tidy and staff ensure that displays celebrate the pupils' achievements and stimulate learning. However, some of the classrooms, particularly in the Junior building, remain very cramped and consequently place some restrictions on learning, particularly practical lessons in art, design and technology and science. The junior hall is of an adequate size, but the poor acoustics make it difficult for teachers' instructions to be understood in physical education lessons. Although the Nursery is small and cramped, good use is made of the limited space available to allow the children to undertake a comprehensive range of activities. However, the provision for outdoor play for under fives is unsatisfactory. The playground area is too small for the pupils to receive appropriate physical development experiences.
90. The governors have completed a local Asset Management Plan as part of Department for Education and Employment Appraisal which includes all the outstanding areas of concern from the last report.
95. *Learning resources*
91. Generally, there are sufficient learning resources to deliver the curriculum, but there are variations within particular subjects. The range, quality and quantity of art resources is unsatisfactory to properly resource the activities required to give pupils a rich curriculum. Although provision for information technology has improved through the purchase of additional computers, resources are still fairly minimal. Resources for physical education and design and technology are good. They support learning effectively in lessons. Resources for special needs pupils are adequate and easily accessible.
92. The quality and quantity of books, particularly in the library, has significantly improved since the last inspection. Since the last report, the policy for the purchase of resources has been revised to ensure that adequate support is given to all subjects across the curriculum. The school offers a good range of visits to supplement the curriculum provision.

The efficiency of the school

93. The school system for financial planning of educational development is sound. The school development plan is costed and there are set criteria against which the effectiveness of spending is measured. The senior management team draws up the initial budget, aligned to the school development plan. The finance committee of the governing body scrutinises the plans, before recommending approval to the full governing body. The finance committee monitors spending properly throughout the year and, in this way, it exercises its strategic role effectively. The school's income is high in comparison to similar sized schools. The school's teaching staff are experienced teachers and therefore costs tend to be high. There is a small surplus, which is well within acceptable limits. The budget surplus is prudently retained for contingencies. Funds are directed towards improving pupils' standards of attainment and progress. The school uses all funds properly, including those specifically for pupils with statements of special educational need and from the Comenius fund. The school's accounts, including the private funds, are regularly and frequently audited. The few minor recommendations on financial procedures from the latest audit report have been dealt with effectively.
94. Day to day school and financial administration is efficient. The office manager keeps the school accounts manually. Procedures for ordering goods, paying for them and distributing in the school are clear and effective. The school fund is kept separately and in line with agreed practice.
95. The school operates efficiently on a day-to-day basis. Well established routines are clear and understood by the school community. These make a valuable contribution to school efficiency, as little time is wasted in starting lessons or moving between buildings. Teaching staff are well deployed across the key stages, including those employed to support pupils with special educational needs. Non-teaching staff are also effectively deployed. Co-ordinators of non-core subjects do not have the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects and, therefore, do not fulfil their role effectively. Accommodation and resources for learning are generally used appropriately. There is some under-use of the library for pupils to develop group and independent research. There have been improvements in resources for learning since the last inspection, for example those in information technology, which are increasingly being used to promote pupils' learning. Learning resources are used effectively to support curriculum aims.
96. Taking in to account the attainment of pupils on entry to the nursery, the progress that they make both academically and personally, the quality of the education provided and the cost per pupil compared to the national average, the school gives satisfactory value for money. The previous inspection report indicated that the school had not reached an appropriate level to give sound value for money. The school has made good progress to achieve this present level.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

97. The provision for children under five is satisfactory. They were no key issues for action concerning provision for children under five in the previous report. It was felt that at least sound foundations were laid in both the nursery and reception classes, but continuity and progression could be further enhanced, if the informal liaison was developed. Greater collaboration in planning, evaluating the curriculum for the under fives and the sharing of good practice would lead to improved progression. There was a shortage of space in the nursery particularly and provision for outdoor play was limited in the nursery and lacking in the reception class. These issues remain outstanding.
98. The children are admitted to the nursery in the September following their third birthday on a part-time basis. They enter the reception class the following year, as rising fives. At the time of the inspection, the majority of the children in the reception class were under the age of five.
99. The children's attainment on entry to the school is below average, particularly in language and literacy and in mathematics. The local authority's early assessment system (Leeds) is in place and the information gained from this is used effectively by the teachers in the reception class to group children for learning and to identify those who might have special educational needs. Early assessment information supports the inspection findings that attainment on entry is below average, although there has been an improvement on previous years in some aspects of language such as speaking skills.
100. By the age of five, the majority of children remain below the expected standards for their age in most areas of learning. However, although many do not achieve the desirable learning outcomes, they make satisfactory progress. They make good progress in personal and social development and physical development where most children attain the levels expected for five-year-olds. Most children with identified special educational needs also make satisfactory progress in relation to prior attainment, being well integrated into lessons.
105. **Personal and social development**
101. The children's personal and social development is good. They make good progress and, by the age of five, many are achieving the desirable learning outcomes in this area. Children settle quickly and happily into school, soon learning the importance of classroom routines, such as listening to the teacher, putting up their hand to contribute to discussions and answer questions and lining up to move about the school. Most children sustain interest in their work for some time, although this is more limited for the youngest children in the nursery. They work and play well together, taking turns and sharing, for example when using construction materials and in artwork. Most children listen to instructions and carry these out obediently. The majority of children treat equipment carefully, share resources and tidy away the equipment they use independently. They relate well to teachers and other adults and have a growing awareness of the difference between right and wrong. Behaviour is good. Personal independence is well promoted by the teachers and nursery nurses which helps them to make progress in this area.
106. **Language and literacy**
102. Children are generally below national level in language and literacy in the reception class by the age of five. Most children listen attentively to their teacher and are keen to answer questions and take part in discussions. By the age of five, speaking skills for most children are satisfactory, although a small minority have immature speaking skills. In the reception class, within the Literacy Hour, children used finger puppets, role playing 'The Three Little Pigs', confidently expressing the different characters voices, an example of the

good opportunities provided for the children to develop language skills through role play. The children learn and remember new words, rhymes and songs. They listen to and enjoy stories, responding aloud where possible. Role play activities through the home corner and McDonalds café provide sound opportunities to extend language skills, but opportunities for early reading and writing skills through such play are not always sufficiently developed. Resources in the reception class are limited for such play. The children recognise their names on books and around the room. About a third of the children in the reception class can write their own names independently. Most recognise and name some letters of the alphabet and a small minority recognise some basic words, understanding how they fit together to make sentences. Most children handle books carefully, turning pages correctly. They share books at home with parents and other adults, a good number of whom contribute to the process through the reading diary. Early writing skills are weak, with a significant number of children having poor pencil control.

Mathematics

103. By the age of five, most children are below national levels in mathematics. They count, sort, match and sequence numbers and objects. The majority recognise numbers up to ten and some can write them. They count confidently to ten and some to twenty. They have a good repertoire of number rhymes, which helps to reinforce their understanding. Most children, by the age of five, can recognise and name basic shapes such as circle, square and triangle and are able to match footprints to shoes, with some children able to make simple repeat patterns. They use simple mathematical language with about half the children understanding 'more than' and 'less than'. Opportunities are provided for children to explore volume and capacity through sand and water, although their predictions about filling containers are not very accurate. They understand the terms 'empty' and 'full' in most cases. Sometimes, tasks are not sufficiently demanding to enable higher attaining children to progress further, but progress is satisfactory for most children. The quality of teaching in mathematics is generally satisfactory for under fives and occasionally good, especially in the nursery class.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

104. Most children enter the school with limited knowledge and understanding of the wider world. By the time they are five, although they make satisfactory progress, skills in this area of learning remain below that expected of children of a similar age. Through their daily discussions, children learn about the weather, season, days of the week and observe changing conditions. They explore water, sand, paint and dough and other materials. They identify different food smells, recording their feelings simply in pictorial form. Some lower attaining pupils are insecure in this activity. For example, one child identified an onion as a tomato. Most children can recognise physical features such as rocks, waves, sand, ice and water on a pictorial map. Children talk about events important to them in the present and are beginning to develop an understanding of the past, discussing change and sequencing events, such as 'last week' 'the week-end' and 'last year'. They talk about where they live and their families. They have some opportunity to explore the local environment, although this is limited. Visitors make a sound contribution to the development of children's knowledge and understanding of the world, but visits are limited mainly to the local environment.

Physical development

105. By the age of five, attainment is average in this area of development. Children make good progress. Most children are confident and show increasing co-ordination in their movement. Children in the nursery can jump from hoop to hoop, balance and slide along benches in a variety of ways, roll along mats and crawl through tunnels. A small minority are less secure and co-ordinated than others. They are able to follow a simple sequence. In the reception class, children show good awareness of the space about them as they jump and stride. They combine moving two body parts and respond well to music, expressing themselves freely. There are good opportunities to extend their literacy skills with the development of positional language.

Children with special educational needs participate fully and make satisfactory progress, being given sound support by the adults. Provision for outdoor play for children under five is a weakness. Children make models with construction kits and use various tools in activities such as cutting, sticking and joining different materials. They learn how to use paint brushes and control pencils. The children demonstrate sound manipulative skills to construct, paint, draw and colour.

Creative development

106. Children's creative development is below the level expected for their age, because the range of media, resources and activities presented to children are limited. They paint, draw pictures and have some opportunity to print and make collage pictures, but skills in three-dimensional work, such as modelling with clay, are under-developed. There is limited evidence that skills in observational drawing are being developed systematically. The children use glue and scissors with increasing control, but opportunities to explore and experiment with colour and texture, particularly for the older children, are more limited. Their knowledge of songs and rhymes is satisfactory. They know the difference between loud and quiet sounds and can keep a steady beat in time to music, in most cases. They use instruments confidently, although not all children handle them correctly. They are not able to name the instruments they use because teachers do not emphasise this sufficiently. Although children make satisfactory progress in this creative area of learning, higher attaining children underachieve. The lack of a computer in the nursery adversely affects skills in this aspect of learning. Skills in information technology are below average, overall, for the under fives. Children in the nursery and reception class with special educational needs make sound progress towards the targets set for them.
107. Teaching for the under fives is satisfactory. During the inspection, good teaching was also observed in the nursery and in the reception class. There is clear, effective planning and good on-going assessment, which informs future teacher planning. Children are well managed and there are good relationships between adults and children. There is a suitable range of interesting tasks available for children. The pace of most lessons is sound. However, teachers and other adults are not always deployed as well as they could be in the reception class. Good teamwork was observed in both reception and nursery classes, but links between the nursery and reception classes are a weakness and this affects continuity of learning. Displays are satisfactory. The nursery provides a colourful learning environment. Arrangements for the induction of children into school are satisfactory. Sound links are established with parents.
108. Overall, the quality of teaching in the nursery and reception classes is satisfactory with some good teaching being observed in the nursery class. Teachers plan to the desirable learning outcomes, but there is no school specific curriculum for the under fives. The absence of a co-ordinator for the early years is unsatisfactory, affecting progression and continuity.
109. Although teachers maintain their own records, there is no standardised system of recording children's progress other than the baseline information. This does not contribute to high standards. Monitoring of teaching and learning is a weakness.
110. Resources are satisfactory in the nursery, but, in the reception class, some are old and worn and the resources for imaginative play are limited.

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

English

111. In the previous inspection, standards were broadly in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. Some under achievement was found amongst higher attaining pupils.
112. Analysis of the national end of Key Stage 2 tests for 1999 shows that standards in English were below the national average for pupils attaining the national standard at Level 4 and well below the national average for those exceeding this at Level 5, when compared with all schools. However, when compared with schools with similar backgrounds, results were well above average.
113. Inspection evidence indicates that the level of attainment has risen during this year, although the standards of pupils at the end of both key stages remain below average. The satisfactory implementation of the National Literacy Strategy, more focused efforts to improve reading and writing and improved resources to support the Literacy Hour are having a positive effect on standards. The school is developing its systems for monitoring results to identify weaknesses and plan appropriate help, although these are at an early stage at present. Monitoring of teaching is not yet securely in place, although some observations of the Literacy Hour have been undertaken by the headteacher and identified governor. This is still at an early stage of development.
114. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is average. Most pupils listen attentively, understand the main points of discussion and are eager to respond to questions. Although many pupils are confident when speaking aloud, fewer are able to hold extended conversations or express themselves clearly when describing events or giving their opinions. A significant minority do not have a secure grasp of standard English. Most pupils listen carefully to instructions and show growing confidence when speaking aloud, for example, in the whole school assembly. However, in some classes and in other areas of the curriculum, formal opportunities to extend pupils' skills in this aspect of English, for example through debates and in plenary sessions within the Literacy Hour, are limited.
115. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment in reading is below average. Through the Literacy Hour, pupils are being introduced to a wider range of authors and texts but the majority of pupils do not read a sufficiently varied range of literature. The majority can identify and talk about characters and the plot and are able to predict what might happen next. A minority of higher attaining pupils are able to use inference and deduction and show developing ability to use text to extract information, identifying fact and opinion. Library skills are not systematically developed through the school and are a weakness by the time the pupils leave the school. There is adequate book provision in the Key Stage 2 library, but it is not used sufficiently as a resource for learning. A classification system using colour coding is in place, but this is not effective in developing pupils' skills in the location and retrieval of information. The library environment does not enable pupils to undertake private study and develop these important skills. This is unsatisfactory and does not contribute to improving library skills and pupils' personal development within the key stage, particularly for the older and higher attaining pupils. There is insufficient emphasis in many classes on reading aloud with fluency and expression. There are missed opportunities for this during shared text in the Literacy Hour. This is better at the end of Key Stage 2. Although pupils have experience of an increasing range of authors and styles of writing, there is limited attention given to extending pupils' interest in non-fiction texts. Most pupils read regularly at home. Some higher attainers read with enthusiasm and confidence, but many lack the zest for reading. There are too few opportunities for pupils to analyse and discuss their reading, expressing their preferences and reflecting on their reasons. Knowledge of authors is restricted to a small number of popular authors such as Enid Blyton and Roald Dahl for many pupils. A good number of older pupils belong to the local library, but many rely on books used in school in other year groups. Reading diaries lack diagnostic comments and are not consistently maintained. There is little evidence in some classes of teachers monitoring pupils' reading diaries or contributing to parents' comments.
116. Pupils' standards in writing by the end of Key Stage 2 are below average. There is uneven progress across the key stage in developing the range of purpose and many fail to reach the level expected by the time they

leave the school, although greater emphasis is placed on writing for a range of audiences at the end of Key Stage 2. Handwriting and presentation are weaknesses across both key stages, with many pupils not forming letters and joins correctly and not presenting work neatly. Although a scheme of work is followed for handwriting, there is little evidence of skills being carefully taught and consistently developed in all classes. The variety of inferior biros and felt pens and other writing tools adversely affects pupils' presentation and is a major contributory factor for the weakness in handwriting in Key Stage 2. In addition, teachers do not always take sufficient care to ensure that good handwriting is modelled when writing on the board and marking pupils' work. The introduction of a commercial scheme to support the Literacy Strategy ensures a more consistent approach to grammar, punctuation and spellings, although weaknesses remain in spellings in Key Stage 2. Inconsistencies in the application of the marking policy do not help pupils to improve their work or take pride in what they do. Drafting skills are not well developed and the use of draft workbooks is inconsistent in Key Stage 2. Although opportunities are provided for more extended writing, few pupils write at length, often limited by poor handwriting skills and imaginative ideas and vocabulary. Some older pupils, often higher attainers, demonstrate a good understanding of how to transpose the English used by Shakespeare and in Goethe's 'Faust' into modern English. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have experience of letter writing, formal and informal poetry, play scripts, presenting arguments such as 'whether bonfire night should be banned', stories and formal accounts of events in visits.

117. In the 1999 Key Stage 1 tests for seven year olds, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard of Level 2 or above was below the national average in reading and writing. Results at the higher level (Level 3) were below average in reading and writing. When compared with similar schools, pupils' results were above average in reading and writing. The inspection findings are that pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 is below average in reading and writing, but average in speaking and listening. As at Key Stage 2, results are significantly higher than those shown in the 1998 assessments. Standards over time show fluctuations which are directly related to variations in the cohort of pupils in different years.
118. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are average at the end of Key Stage 1. Although a few pupils lack clear articulation, the majority listen carefully, follow instructions and are confident when speaking aloud to their teachers or other adults. Many pupils have limited experience of the social skills required for successful conversations when they start school, but good opportunities for engaging in conversation with an adult and speaking aloud to an audience help the pupils to develop confidence in speaking and listening. The Literacy Hour is having a positive effect, providing opportunities for discussions and for pupils to answer questions and comment about texts they are studying. However, there are missed opportunities for reading texts aloud. A significant number of pupils do not have a wide descriptive vocabulary. The use of role-play in some classes also extends pupils' speaking skills and contribute to increased confidence in speaking aloud.
119. The majority of pupils have limited early reading skills on entry into school. They make satisfactory progress, but standards in reading remain below average at the end of Key Stage 1. Although most pupils have reasonably positive attitudes to reading, many lack fluency and expression and a significant number, particularly lower attaining pupils, lack enthusiasm for reading. Higher attaining pupils read aloud with reasonable accuracy and understanding. The majority of pupils make systematic use of letter sounds to help them read unknown words and many recognise a good number of high frequency words. The vast majority can explain terms such as 'author' and 'illustrator' and higher attainers can identify their favourite author. They are less familiar with non-fiction texts. Their ability to discuss their reading is more limited because many are not used to discussing their reading at length, predicting events or offering opinions about the book. Most pupils read regularly at home and are heard by a parent or other adult who often responds through the reading record. There are few diagnostic comments in reading records and teachers records lack sufficient detail about where pupils need to improve. The number of pupils belonging to the public library is limited in Key Stage 1. The library in Key Stage 1 is underdeveloped as a resource for learning. It does not present pupils with a stimulating literary environment or promote a love of literature. Display in the library is sparse

and unexciting. The lack of a clear classification system does not promote early library skills, which are weak in Key Stage 1.

120. Attainment in writing is below average at the end of Key Stage 1. Early letter formation skills are not secure for a good proportion of pupils. They are not developed systematically and, by the end of the key stage, handwriting skills are weak for many pupils, resulting in untidy presentation and poor attempts to join, because earlier skills are not secure. The teaching of handwriting is a weakness in the school, lacking consistency of approach and commitment to high standards. As a result, many pupils do not take sufficient care when producing work. By the end of the key stage, there is evidence of pupils writing for an increasing range of purpose, but tasks are sometime undemanding, particularly for higher attaining pupils and this is reflected in the quality and quantity of work produced. Elsewhere in Key Stage 1, the purposes for writing are more limited. Work is not always matched to the differing needs and abilities, resulting in underachievement of high attainers and limited response for lower attainers when they are not supported by an adult. Pupils in Year 2 write stories, diary entries, formal accounts, news and instructions. They write simple poems and construct questions and lists. Texts for the Literacy Hour are well chosen. For example, in Year 2, pupils enjoyed the text of 'The Lighthouse Keepers Lunch', suggesting possible dialogue for Mr Grinling and the sea gulls and compiling a list of sandwiches. In these lessons, there is evidence of good cross-curricular work. For example, the text of Katie Morag is used to compare the imaginary Isle of Struay and for pupils to express their preferences between two locations. Pupils use maps and a globe to locate Scotland. A significant number of pupils are hampered in their writing because of their limited skills in handwriting. There is a satisfactory emphasis on punctuation, grammar and spellings in Year 2, although a significant number of pupils have limited strategies to help them with their spelling. The school has identified writing as a focus for development. The Literacy Hour is making a positive contribution, helping pupils to develop a wider vocabulary, improve grammar and punctuation and extend their knowledge of a wider range of texts and authors.
121. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in English, but progress within key stages is uneven and across some year groups, particularly in Key Stage 2. Progress is better for the older pupils in Key Stage 2. Progress in writing is hindered by weaknesses in handwriting skills and in pupils limited ability to write in an extended form. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards the targets set for them when work is matched to their needs and when they are supported. Within classes, tasks are not always sufficiently matched to the needs of the higher and lower attainers, affecting the amount of progress made by these pupils on occasions.
122. The pupils' response to English is good, overall. Occasionally, when work is undemanding, a minority of pupils lose interest and standards of behaviour deteriorate. Such behaviour is directly related to the quality of teaching. The majority of pupils behave well and persevere well with tasks set. Most pupils work with enthusiasm, enjoying the Literacy Hour. They are eager to join in discussions, value each others' contributions and are well motivated to work. Relationships are very good.
123. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is at least satisfactory and, occasionally, good. In Key Stage 2, there is a wider variation in the standard of teaching, from very good to unsatisfactory. In the good teaching, subject knowledge is secure. High expectations and a clear sense of purpose, with challenging tasks set, help pupils to make good progress. In a good lesson in Year 3, for example, pupils devised a chart to log information extracted from a non-fiction text on birds. They extended their knowledge and understanding of writing for a different purpose, reinforced note making skills, punctuation and their ability to present information in different ways. Presentation and handwriting skills improved because the teacher explained her own expectations of standards. Pupils in both key stages are well managed and relationships are very good. In both key stages, planning has improved, helped by the implementation of the Literacy Strategy. However, assessment opportunities are not identified within planning. In the weaker teaching, lessons lack

pace and vigour. Over-long introductions result in little time for pupils to engage in the writing task. As a result, the amount of work covered in these lessons is insufficient and the standards of presentation are unsatisfactory. The quality of marking is inconsistent, with few teachers indicating where and how pupils might improve their work. There is evidence of some unmarked work. This does not promote high standards.

124. Since the last inspection, there has been an emphasis on improving reading standards and, more recently, writing standards. The Literacy Hour has been implemented, although not all teachers are secure in all aspects of this. Pupils are beginning to read a wider range of texts and write for a wider purpose. The development of literacy in other areas of the curriculum is more apparent. The school has made great strides in addressing the key issue from the previous inspection regarding the provision of non-fiction books. Resources are now much improved, but there are on-going needs for book provision in both libraries and in some class libraries. A portfolio of work to support teachers assessment is in place. There are samples of moderated work which range from Level 1 to Level 5. Frequent use of work sheets, variations across and within year groups and marking continue to require attention.
125. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic, with good subject knowledge. Her role is still to be developed. Due to a period of absence when the National Literacy Strategy commenced, insufficient opportunity was available for her to develop a monitoring system.
126. Resources for English have been increased to meet the requirements of the Literacy Strategy. These are satisfactory. Library provision is satisfactory, but the use of the libraries to extend independent learning skills is a weakness. The quality of class libraries is variable, with few providing a rich literary environment and a welcome invitation to read.
127. The school meets statutory requirements in the teaching of English. There is sound use of literacy across both key stages. The school makes effective use of theatre visits to enrich the curriculum. English makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Mathematics

128. The results of National Curriculum tests of pupils in Year 6 in 1999 show that pupils' standards of attainment are broadly in line with national averages and well above standards in similar schools. The results are above those attained in 1998 and, over time, the trend is upward, though not in a smooth progression. Results of tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 show pupils to be in line with national averages and well above the results from schools of a similar kind. The results over the years show an improvement of around thirty per cent since 1994, but the improvement is uneven over this time.
129. As a result of lesson observations in all classes, viewing of pupils' work and talking to pupils and teachers, the findings of the inspection show that the Key Stage 1 pupils are in line with national averages that is the expected level for pupils aged seven. At the end of Key Stage 2, on the basis of inspection evidence, pupils are generally below the levels expected, although some classes in Key Stage 2 show higher levels of attainment for their comparative age. The National Curriculum tests for 1999 indicate that the majority of pupils were in line with national levels. However, the present Year 6 cohort are not attaining at the same level.
130. Seven year olds have a secure knowledge and understanding of number. Many successfully complete addition and subtraction sums to 20. Lower attainers use cubes and other counting aids to support them in this work, but the majority do so unaided. Most use number lines to aid their work, but other pupils draw on their own knowledge and memory of number facts to find answers. Most know tables that include two, five

and ten times. The majority know that 'subtract' 'find the difference' and 'minus' all have similar meaning. They know the names of common two-dimensional shapes and can describe and draw them with confidence. All pupils know the reason for having standard measures and use them appropriately. They use rulers to measure accurately the different sides of objects and shapes. The vast majority understand the relationship between metre, centimetre, and millimetre.

131. By the end of Key Stage 2, a proportion of pupils are attaining standards expected of them, but, in general, levels are below national averages. The cohort in Year 6 is one that had below average results in Key Stage 1. Although pupils have made sound progress and increased skills and knowledge, overall, they have not improved sufficiently to meet national targets. Many know and understand number bonds to 100 and solve mental problems with increased confidence. They recall number facts and patterns to help them in calculations. Some pupils are unsure and need help with number problems. Many understand how to round up or round down to the nearest ten and can understand addition of large four digit numbers. Most measure accurately and have an understanding of perimeter, area and symmetry. They all follow instructions to obtain perimeters and areas, with varying degrees of speed and success. The majority use geometrical descriptions such as parallel, horizontal, vertical and perpendicular. Lower attainers have difficulty in using these descriptors. Pupils with special educational needs are in line to reach the targets in the individual education plans set for them.
132. Progress in Key Stage 1 is good. Pupils enter this key stage with a basic number concept. By the end of Year 2, they understand and know the basic facts needed to begin more complex calculations. Particularly, towards the end of the key stage, they not only know how to count securely to 20, but most can go far beyond and understand how to write to thousands in numerals. They count forward and back having thrown a random number on a die and record the results of additions and subtractions with confidence. Many offer various methods of calculating the solution to a number problem.
133. Overall, progress to the end of Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. Despite the current Year 6 being below expectations, there are, in the intervening years, examples of good progress which improve standards to the national level. In Year 3, for example, pupils work at open-ended questions using real life examples. In Year 4 work, there are examples of pupils solving problems on perimeters and areas that are normally encountered later in the programme of study. They use mathematical vocabulary easily, such as the 'product' of a multiplication sum and use the best method for subtraction in appropriate situations. Progress in the lessons observed is consistent with the teaching standards. There are some good examples of cross-curricular use of numeracy particularly in geography, physical education and science lessons. Overall, pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards their targets.
134. Attitudes to mathematics are nearly always positive. The vast majority of pupils work willingly, listen to the class teacher and volunteer answers in the mental agility sessions. They show good levels of concentration in group or individual phases of the lesson. They are polite and helpful. They volunteer answers and listen attentively to others without negative comments being made. They are keen to do well. The good class relationships help in raising self-esteem and in striving for higher standards. In Key Stage 1, they enjoy the new number flip books. Presentation of work is inconsistent, but most pupils are beginning to understand the need for correct lay out.
135. Teaching is good in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2 there is a greater range in the quality of teaching, from satisfactory to very good. Teachers' planning is good and firmly based on the Numeracy Strategy. There are clear lesson objectives. The initial session of lessons is used effectively as a mental "warm up". Rapid and directed questioning ensure that the majority of the class are involved. Good teacher knowledge means that questions are pitched at the right level to raise pupils' standard of work throughout the class. Simple resources such as board work, number lines and counting blocks are well used to develop new topics. By the

use of probing questions, teachers know how pupils are progressing in each lesson and vary their approach to suit. Subject knowledge is sound. Teachers set appropriately matched work for different levels of attainment within the class. Good use of the plenary session is made at the end of the lesson. It is effective in consolidating pupils' understanding. In the most successful lessons, the use of humour and praise ensures enjoyment and motivates pupils effectively towards higher achievement.

136. Marking of books is not consistent and does not provide suitable comments which help pupils to improve their standard of work. There are expressions of praise and encouragement to spur pupils on, but few comments are directed to target improvement. Some classes, particularly in the upper part of the school, are given homework to encourage personal development, but it is not well developed throughout the school. The National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced recently and is being embedded into the school curriculum. Assessment of work to monitor pupils' progress through the school has been established and linked to National Curriculum levels.
137. The co-ordinator has good knowledge which has a positive impact on the subject. Significant staff training has taken place which has resulted in a greater rigour in teaching and a renewed value of recording and tracking of progress. The use of information technology in mathematics is limited, despite the availability of personal computers.
138. Since the last inspection, teaching has improved and with the implementation of the numeracy initiative has strengthened curriculum provision. National Curriculum requirements in numeracy are met by the school and standards are generally satisfactory.

Science

139. The National Curriculum results for 1999 teacher assessment in science for seven year olds indicate that pupils' attainment is below national expectations. For similar schools, attainment is judged to be in line. However, inspection evidence, based on lesson observation and scrutiny of pupils' work, indicates that standards of attainment in the present Year 2 classes are in line with national levels. They know subject specific language. Year 2 pupils understand the effect of air and friction on movement and speed. The pupils observe closely and readily ask and consider questions relevant to their investigations. However, the presentation and recording of work is a weakness. There are variations in levels of attainment in particular year groups. Inspection evidence indicates that the present Year 2 cohort are reaching levels of attainment higher than the previous year 2 classes.
140. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations and this is supported by 1999 National Curriculum tests. Compared with similar schools, attainment is well above average at the end of the key stage. Inspection evidence supports the view that the present Year 6 pupils are in line to meet national expectations in science by the end of the key stage. Year 5 pupils can classify and identify different kinds of paper and wood. Year 6 pupils can make a circuit to light a bulb. They understand that by adding variables, such as switches and buzzers, things can be changed. They can investigate a wide range of materials to discover which are conductors and which are insulators. However, they do not regularly undertake challenges of research and independent learning by using the library and computers.
141. Trends over time show that attainment is generally average at the end of both key stages, but there are variations in differing year groups (cohorts). There are no significant differences in attainment between boys and girls.
142. Pupils' progress is good throughout both key stages. Most pupils develop and consolidate knowledge, skills and understanding relating to living things, materials and physical processes at appropriate rates. Some very

good progress has been seen in the energy work on investigations and fair testing. Pupils in Year 1 investigated materials, cloth, rubber, paper and glass, to discover which were flexible or rigid. Experiments on moving toy cars were fair tests. Work done in Year 3 on the body has promoted good understanding of the body and what makes a healthy balanced diet. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have acute observation skills. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to their peer group.

143. Pupils' response to lessons is good, overall, at both key stages. They display interest in practical activities, listen attentively to explanations and instructions and ask and answer questions sensibly. They apply themselves well to tasks and experiments, both in small groups and in whole class lessons. Pupils with special needs work well in pairs. All pupils show commitment and concern. Pupils' attitudes to taking turns and sharing are very good. Behaviour is very good. Personal development is satisfactory. The pupils co-operate well and help each other. However, their written recordings of findings need more care. They are not often independent in their learning or research work.
144. The vast majority of teaching in both key stages is good. Very good teaching is evident at the end of the key stages especially in Year 6. The teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject. They set high expectations and planning is good. Organisation, discipline and use of time and resources are also good. Assessment is thorough, but the use of assessment for future planning is a weakness because it does not set targets for pupils to improve their work. Work set does not always match the pupils' level of attainment especially for higher attaining pupils. Presentation of written work is inconsistent in both key stages. Standards vary within classes.
145. The subject is supported by a good scheme of work that ensures progress and continuity. The co-ordinator plays a very important strategic role in developing and monitoring science. The scheme of work is well matched to the programmes of study. It is discussed at staff meetings and updated every year. The assessment, recording and reporting in science are good. The co-ordinator has identified appropriate issues for future development. The resources are of a satisfactory standard and are well organised. There is a sound range of non-fiction books in science.
146. Parents see science as a strength of the school. Links with numeracy are developed, good examples are discussions on 'how many are needed' and in measuring and weighing. Pupils record their science work by writing reports and by labelling charts and diagrams, aiding the development of literacy skills.
147. Science has sustained the good work recorded in the previous report. There is an emphasis on science in Year 6. The structure of curriculum management has an effective influence on attainment and skill development. The co-ordinator effectively guides the teaching of colleagues through the monitoring of teaching. The school meets statutory requirements in the teaching of National Curriculum in science.

Information technology

148. Attainment at the end of both key stages is below the national average. Pupils' attainment is closely related to the confidence, subject knowledge and practice of the class teachers. There has been sound progress since the last inspection, but observation of lessons, talking to pupils and teachers and looking at work produced by the pupils during the present inspection show insufficient advancement since then to meet national expectations. Few pupils, other than the small number with private access to computers, can be said to have attained the levels of skill, knowledge and confidence expected at the end of Key Stage 1 and 2.
149. Progress at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory, since the pupils enter Year 1 with virtually no previous experience of using computers. By the end of the key stage, some of them have used programs in mathematics and reading to support their learning in both subjects. They have effective control over the mouse which enables

them to progress with already-loaded programs. For example, a pupil in Year 2 mathematics was able to select, from the screen, the level of task at which to work and select the correct answers to the problems shown. The program was already loaded, but there was evidence of elementary knowledge used to support learning in mathematics. In mathematics, some simple block graph work was seen to demonstrate the different levels of enjoyment of crisp flavours from information gathered in lessons. In Year 1, a pupil working at a parallel program to the reading scheme was able to go from one screen to the next. However, when asked, the pupil was unable to select the way in which single words, rather than the whole phrase, could be heard from the display.

150. Progress in Key Stage 2 continues to be satisfactory, taking into account the low level of prior learning. In Year 5, some pupils opened programs and files. In one lesson, a group, following instructions, could import graphics from a clip art folder and construct a simple poster on 'recycling'. In Year 6, many pupils joined in a lesson to improve their French pronunciation by the use of a CD-ROM. Some show how to access the program and use the menu correctly. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress in information technology, taking into account, their prior attainment.
151. Pupils are keen to learn how to use a computer and, once shown, sustain concentration. They show obvious enjoyment and understanding of work demonstrated. They keep to their set tasks and are not easily distracted. At all times pupils respect the machines and the software, answer questions quietly and politely. They are also excited when they are able to produce a finished item on the screen.
152. It was not possible to give an overall judgement of the standard of teaching because little direct teaching was seen during the inspection. It varied from a small amount of unsatisfactory to a greater amount of satisfactory teaching. In unsuccessful lessons, insufficient time is available to complete set tasks. Pupils learn through demonstration how to use different programs, although, sometimes, a lack of technical knowledge failed to produce a final piece of work. The majority of teachers have a limited range of experience, confidence and competence.
153. There is a good scheme of work, closely aligned to the National Curriculum. It is helpful and supportive for teachers. Assessment is unsatisfactory. No structured system exists to monitor pupils' progress throughout the school. The resources are adequate and an improvement on the last inspection, with more up to date personal computers available for use in most classrooms. There is only one computer per class. This restricts pupils' progress, but planned work is still possible. The lack of a computer in the Nursery class inhibits the acquisition of early manual skills, such as mouse control and click and drag. There has been little systematic training over a period of time. A programme of training is planned and is due to begin next year in an attempt to remedy this.
154. The school has improved since the last inspection, both in the provision of computers and in their usage. New CD-ROMS are available in a wide variety of subjects and this is helping to improve levels of attainment. Systems are not in place for the co-ordinator to formally monitor teaching and learning. The standard of teaching and pupil attainment are not gauged accurately to form a clear picture of information technology in the school. The school and the co-ordinator are aware of the position and are working hard to improve pupils' attainment in information technology. Pupils have opportunities to use their information technology skills in other subject areas. There are examples of word processing in English, the use of CD-ROM's in geography and history and the development of pattern work in art. The school is on target to meet National Curriculum requirements in information technology.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

Art

155. Findings during the previous inspection identified the limited development of some skills and limited range of art experiences offered to pupils, which affected the progress being made. Progress was also hindered by the lack of a co-ordinator for the subject, lack of an effective scheme of work and assessment policy, which resulted in a lack of continuity and development in art.
156. Since the last inspection, limited progress has been made in addressing these issues, except for the appointment of a co-ordinator for art.
157. Pupils' awareness of the works of famous artists has been maintained. Little progress has been made in establishing clear guidelines outlining the skills to be acquired and how they should develop. Three-dimensional work, creative work with textiles and print making remain underdeveloped. The systematic development of skills, assessment and its use to inform planning remain weaknesses in the provision for art.
158. Progress in both key stages is generally unsatisfactory. In Key Stage 2, pupils are making satisfactory progress within some year groups but this is not consistently developed throughout the key stage. Pupils with special educational needs also make unsatisfactory progress. The lack of resource provision and very limited range of experiences and media with which pupils work do not enable skills to be acquired and developed satisfactorily. The low standards being attained in both key stages indicate that insufficient attention is given to the systematic acquisition and development of skills in art. Pupils use works of famous artists to stimulate their own work and to explore techniques, but there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to experiment with and explore a satisfactory range of different materials. Pupils in Year 1 produce simple seashore collage pictures and print with cotton reels on prepared shapes. There is some repetition of skills used in the nursery and reception years and limited evidence that printing skills, for example, have been developed further. In Year 2 pupils also use collage for a frieze of Katie Morag. They paint pictures in response to Turner's *Fire of London* and Sickert's *'Bathers, Dieppe'*. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have worked with paint, crayon and collage materials. There is limited evidence of modelling, using boxes to make vehicles in Year 1, for example. In Key Stage 2, pupils acquire some technical language such as 'line', 'pattern', 'texture', 'portrait' and 'landscape', but artistic language is not consistently developed across the key stage. Pupils in Year 3 create interesting black and white line designs, inspired by the work of Escher. In Year 4, pupils draw harvest pictures and apples from observation, using pastels and crayons, but skills in observational drawing are not systematically acquired and built upon. Pupils in Year 5 use pastels, crayons and charcoal copying the style of Picasso, Lautrec and Lowry. Pupils in Year 6 also create pictures in the style of Picasso and Monet using paint and pastels. They use charcoal in response to literacy work on *'Faust'*, with some imaginative results by a few pupils.
159. When given the opportunity to express themselves freely and when tasks are well matched to pupils' abilities, most pupils demonstrate positive attitudes. They listen attentively to instructions, ask relevant questions and are keen to contribute ideas in discussion. The majority settle quickly to their work, showing respect for resources and for each other's work. The vast majority persevere with art tasks, concentrating for long periods at times, particularly at the upper end of Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated and participate fully, often working with enthusiasm and enjoyment.
160. It was not possible to observe art being taught in Key Stage 1 and only a small amount of art was observed in Key Stage 2, therefore, no overall judgement can be made about the quality of teaching. Where teaching is good, it is because subject knowledge is secure and skills are carefully taught. Such lessons proceed at a brisk pace. In the weaker teaching, subject knowledge is lacking. Lessons, including resources, are not well prepared and the lesson purpose is unclear. There is little evidence of skills being developed. Expectations are too low, particularly for higher attaining pupils and this results in unsatisfactory progress. The sparse

and poor quality of resources does not contribute to progress being made. The lack of an effective scheme of work to assist teachers when planning also adversely affects progress made in both key stages, as does the lack of assessment opportunities. The lack of a portfolio of work to support teacher assessment and absence of any individual card of progress are other factors which contribute to the weak progress in art. The use of sketch books in Key Stage 2 is inconsistent. There is little evidence of their use to experiment with different techniques and improve skills. Not all teachers are aware that sketchbooks are available.

161. Although the co-ordinator has good expertise and enthusiasm, her role is insufficiently developed to enable her to monitor progress in the subject. Resources are unsatisfactory both in range and quality. They have an adverse affect on progress. The few resources available are difficult for teachers or pupils to access' The small size of some classrooms also limits progress for some pupils, as there is insufficient space to experiment with materials.
162. The quality of display is variable between classes. There are examples of interesting and attractive displays which value pupils' efforts, but there are also some classes where little artwork is evident and standards of display are weak.
163. Good opportunities are provided for visits to galleries. Pupils have visited the Walker Gallery, Tate Gallery and Lowry exhibition in recent times, but opportunities are missed to extend the enrichment through the use of sketch books on such visits, for example. Satisfactory use is made of the local environment by some teachers on occasions. Art makes a limited contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development mainly through the focus on the work of artists and visits to galleries.

Design and technology

164. There were only limited opportunities to observe design and technology lessons during the inspection due to the place of the subject within the timetable structure. Judgements are based on these as well as evidence of pupils' completed work which featured artefacts, designs and photographs.
165. On this evidence, pupils make satisfactory progress in both key stages. There is a satisfactory range of work in design and construction, using mainly non-resistant materials such as card and fabric. There is some use of wood and plastic. Constructional kits, Lego and magnet blocks, together with work cards, have been bought for pupils in Key Stage 1. Pupils at both key stages solve problems, test their work and evaluate results. At Key Stage 1, pupils discuss and plan how a wheeled car moves. They saw dowelling for the rods and make wheels for the car. Subject specific language is discussed. The pupils describe dowelling, clamps and glue guns. Younger pupils make models of cars out of waste materials, which they strengthen with cardboard and then paint. Good numeracy work was seen in the labelling; ' I made a car. I used 4 cylinders, 4 prisms and 2 cuboids'. Scientific cross-curricular work is seen in the caption: ' Jennifer made some weights to push and pull her aeroplane '. At Key Stage 2, pupils design a cage for a hamster. They plan and design equipment for inside the cage. Some Year 3 pupils make millennium plaques. Pupils in Key Stage 2 design and make 'pop-up' models, using box constructions and 'pop-up' characters, such as Punch and Judy. They successfully use scientific ideas of pumping air to raise the characters.
166. Good language is developed in discussion sessions. The labelling of models in Key Stage 1 is well presented with consistent handwriting. In both key stages, pupils' have opportunities to work together and to develop manipulative skills in line with their stage of development. Pupils with special educational needs generally make sound progress in the development of artistic skills, knowledge and understanding.
167. Pupils' response is good at both key stages. They clearly enjoy the work and are eager to plan and to make. They are keen to show their models to visitors. Pupils work well, both individually and co-operatively.

Relationships are good: the pupils are helpful in sharing materials and equipment.

168. Insufficient teaching was observed to make an overall judgement, but, judged by the evidence of pupils' work, teaching appears to be generally satisfactory. The school's medium term planning and scheme of work ensure that the subject provides a broad and balanced curriculum. Good links are made between pupils' work in design and technology and methods and understanding in science. There are suitable cross-curricular links with literacy, numeracy and art. Only informal assessment of pupils' work is undertaken in design and technology and is not used for future planning. Moderating of work to set levels of attainment is not carried out.
169. The advisory role within subject co-ordination provides clear support for teachers, but opportunities to monitor teaching and learning are limited. A school policy has been developed by the co-ordinator. Appropriate resources have been purchased and re-organised. There is sufficient equipment which is reasonably accessible to pupils and teachers. A safety policy for design and technology has been introduced and this is operational.

Geography

170. Only two lessons were observed during the period of inspection due to the place of geography within the curriculum timetable. However, sufficient evidence was gained from the scrutiny of pupils' work, discussion with Year 2 and Year 6 pupils and the viewing of teachers' planning to make a secure judgement that pupils' progress is generally satisfactory in both key stages.
171. In Year 2, pupils have developed a sound knowledge of the constituent countries of the British Isles. They readily identify the locations of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales on a map. Pupils have a basic understanding of compass points on a map as an aid to finding direction. Higher attaining pupils have a good geographical vocabulary for their age, using terms such as "mountains", "rivers", "factories" and "city" in context. They draw comparisons successfully between the life of Scottish characters in Katie Morag's story and their way of life in St. Helens. Higher attaining pupils have good mapping skills, recognising roads, railways and the neighbouring church on a local A to Z map.
172. By the end of Key Stage 2, sound progress has been maintained by pupils. In Year 6, pupils identify the main continents on a world map and make a list of European countries, plotting their location on an appropriate map. In group discussion, they identify features of environmental change accurately, such as the negatives and positives of the building of a supermarket in the local area. They know some features of rivers, such as a waterfall, mouth and meander. Higher attaining pupils can interpret simple data from a bar chart, successfully identifying countries with high pollution rates. Many Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of pollution and the effects on the environment. Sound progress has been made by pupils with special educational needs towards the targets set for them.
173. Pupils have positive attitudes towards work in geography. They are interested in maps. They share materials in group activities and help each other to solve problems. Relationships in lessons are good. Pupils in Year 6 persevere with their homework and take pride in their work when producing a fact file on a European country.
174. No overall judgement can be made on the quality of teaching because of the small sample of lessons viewed. In the most successful lesson, planning is good. The pace is brisk and the teacher expectation is high. In the less successful lesson, although teacher knowledge is good, tasks are not well matched and pupils are confused by a variety of differing maps.
175. The school curriculum planning for geography is good. There is a well planned scheme, devised by the co-

ordinator, which gives good progression and continuity of skills. Knowledge and understanding elements are well covered throughout the school. The topics are interesting and are relevant to pupils' own experiences, especially the local study element. There is a sound link with information technology through the use of CD ROMs and research is encouraged in the latter years of Key Stage 2. There are sound links with literacy and numeracy. Pupils use the skills gained in these subjects appropriately to support their work in geography.

176. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory. Reports to parents at the end of the school year are accurate and detailed, but based on informal assessment only. There is no system for plotting individual or group progress. Although the co-ordinator views teachers' planning, no structured opportunities are available to monitor teaching and learning throughout the school in order to allow a clear picture of standards to be gained. Learning resources are generally satisfactory and well matched to the year group topics but there is a shortage of large modern maps and Ordnance Survey maps.
177. Since the last inspection, a good scheme has been introduced and the school has made improvements in the development of pupils' mapping skills.
178. The curriculum provision is enhanced by visits to places of interest in the wider community. In Key Stage 1, pupils visit a farm and a local supermarket. In Key Stage 2, visits are arranged for pupils to Rainford, to study a village settlement and to the River Mersey as part of a focus on water. These first hand experiences have a favourable impact on pupils' learning.
179. The Comenius Project, which links St. Austin's with a school in Leipzig is beginning to develop a European perspective within the curriculum. Staff have already exchanged visits and some written communication with pupils has taken place. This is providing a good knowledge base for pupils to further their understanding of a European country.

History

180. Pupils' progress is good in Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. Pupils in Year 2 look at their own families in their history lessons. From this, they gain a sense of the passing of time, know what is meant by 'older' and 'younger' and realise that people change with the passing of years. Topics such as the Fire of London and Guy Fawkes at the Houses of Parliament interest pupils. By studying these events, they find out about life in those times and how different they are from the present day. They understand some reasons for these differences, such as the lack of a fire brigade to slow the spread of the Fire of London amongst many wooden buildings and the significance of remembering the attempt to destroy the parliamentary buildings.
181. In Key Stage 2, history topics develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of Britain in the past. Roman Britain is explored and emphasis is placed on comparing the conditions of living in Britain at that time and of the importance of the social structure of the Roman Empire. Local history is studied in Year 6. Good use is made of first hand evidence to arrive at appropriate judgements. The records of accidents in the collieries gives pupils an opportunity to take a close look at the young age of the workers, the wages and the kinds of conditions in the collieries. Pupils find it particularly interesting to discover their predecessors' names in Victorian records. By demonstrating the use of the dolly tub, the washboard and the mangle, pupils are able to make comparisons with domestic life then and now and to decide which they would prefer.
182. The majority of the pupils like studying history and some, particularly in Key Stage 1, delight in their new found knowledge. They relay dates such as 1666 and describe the events of the period to visitors. They show genuine interest in lessons. There are good levels of concentration during activities. Some pupils continue their interest by gathering information at home. Pupils collaborate well during group work and listen to each other with respect. Behaviour is good at all times.

183. Teaching is good in Key Stage 1, but no judgement can be made about teaching in Key Stage 2, due to the small number of lessons observed during the inspection. In lessons, teachers use brisk recall of previous learning through effective question and answer sessions to ensure that knowledge and understanding are developed. Detailed responses are encouraged by the use of questions such as ‘What happened...?’ and ‘How did...?’. Teachers’ subject knowledge is secure and draws on pupils’ own experiences to make comparisons with the past. The management of pupils is good; low-key prompts for control keep the sound levels down and allow all contributions to be heard. Artefacts such as the washing aids and accident reports from the past make the lessons realistic. Teachers use good story telling techniques, delivered at a pace which retains pupils’ interest. Worksheets are well prepared and relevant to the themes being taught. Suitable homework is given in Year 6 based on finding out about people in the community. Teachers’ expectations of pupils’ achievement are not always sufficiently high. Some tasks are a little undemanding of the higher attaining pupils.
184. Pupils acquire levels of knowledge and understanding in history in both of the key stages that prepare them adequately for the next stage of their education. They understand that the passing of time influences people and events and that consequences follow from human acts.
185. The curriculum matches the needs of pupils of primary age studying the National Curriculum programmes of study. It is progressive and well resourced, with books and artefacts. There is some study of local history in Key Stage 2, but insufficient use is made of local resources such as parish records. Pupils in Key Stage 1 do not receive sufficient exposure to primary sources of evidence to enhance their historical understanding.
186. Assessment is little used, so that teachers do not have a thorough view of pupils’ skills, knowledge and understanding as they progress through the school. The school has made good progress since the last inspection. Teaching is of a higher standard and there is a greater variety of historical materials. Pupils are gaining a greater understanding of historical values and have improved attitudes towards the subject. However, further improvement is still required in the development of local history studies.

Music

187. From the limited evidence gained from three lessons and the music heard in four assemblies and one hymn practice, together with scrutiny of the work and displays, pupils’ progress is judged to be good in music in both key stages. Pupils’ singing is melodic with good pitch and diction. They can recognise the beat, rhythm and tone of the music. Music is played in assemblies for reflection and to convey feelings of beauty and wonder. Pupils are encouraged to listen to music and express it in dance and performance. They respond to the musical elements of duration, dynamics, timbre, texture and structure. The pupils are aware of mood in the music and can identify change. They can name a phrase, such as loud, soft, loud and repeat it. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils can play two part scores of recorders and percussion. They can accurately perform, using notation.
188. Pupils’ response to music is good. They have a very good attitude, giving of their best and appreciating each other’s efforts. They listen well and show interest and enjoyment. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 are very confident in playing musical instruments. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in line with their peer group. Listening skills are included in the individual education plans.
189. From the small amount of teaching evidence gained, it is apparent that work of quality is a result of the high expectations of the teachers. Good planning of the lessons, together with good development of discussion and feedback, raises the standards of achievement.
190. Music is now taught through the Nelson Music Scheme. However, the pupils do not benefit from instrumental

tuition by visiting musicians. There are no regular opportunities to listen to music from other cultures. All pupils have an equal opportunity to develop their musical skills. Assessment includes observation, recording work on tape and an assessment sheet in the Nelson guidelines for each year group.

191. The co-ordinator plays an important role in ensuring that good pupil progress is made through the development of the curriculum. However, opportunities to monitor pupils' progress in lessons is limited. Good resources have been purchased and well organised in both buildings. Pupils are encouraged to perform in assemblies and church services. Extra-curricular activities include making two compact discs of 'The Children of St Helen's Sing', BBC Songs of Praise, 'Mersey Glory' and a live performance of singing on stage for Children in Need.
192. Music is now a strength of the school. It has been developed very successfully since the last inspection. Pupils are provided with suitable opportunities in music to experience a sense of beauty, of wonder and of awe. A detailed scheme of work is in place which makes a positive impact on the standards of achievement.

Physical education

193. Overall, pupils make good progress in physical education by the time they complete their primary education. Progress is generally sound in Key Stage 1 and in the early part of Key Stage 2, but it is accelerated towards the latter part of the key stage. Pupils in Year 6 make good progress in swimming and attain levels which are generally above nationally expected standards of performance.
194. In a Key Stage 1, Year 2, games lesson, pupils catch and throw large balls competently in a standing position. They build up their skills through regular practice and by increasing the speed of passing rates in paired work. Pupils use the space sensibly in the hall and follow safety instructions carefully.
195. Pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress in dance lessons. In Year 5, they refine and control their movements whilst interpreting music. They gain in confidence and express their feelings fluently, matching the mood of the music. The school has made good progress in the development of dance as part of expressive arts. Pupils are achieving much higher standards in their dance lessons.
196. In gymnastics, there is evidence of good, synchronised partner work in Year 6 lessons, Pupils' planning and performing is of a good standard. They develop their movements successfully, giving due attention to controlled take-offs and landings. Energetic activity is sustained well in warm up sessions and pupils increase their stamina. The lifting and carrying of equipment is undertaken properly and with due regard to safety. Although physical skills and some aspects of knowledge and understanding are well developed, group and paired appraisal is less well developed. Pupils do not reflect sufficiently on their own and peer groups' performance in order to make further adjustments to their sequence of activities. Good teacher expertise at the end of Key Stage 2 and the provision of a good range of extra curricular activities have a positive impact on pupils' progress. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to their peer group. Appropriate arrangements are made to ensure that they are fully integrated into lessons.
197. In lessons, pupils' response is good across both key stages. A particular strength is their collaboration, in paired and group activities. They share equipment sensibly and match their movements creatively in sequences. The behaviour of pupils is almost always good. They follow teachers' instructions, but also use their initiative within the framework of the lesson targets. Pupils show interest and enthusiasm.
198. Only one lesson was observed in Key Stage 1 during the period of inspection, so no overall judgement on teaching can be made, due to the limited evidence. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is good. Lessons are well planned with clear objectives in mind and a progressive build-up of physical activities. Teachers generally have good

subject knowledge and provide challenging activities to stimulate pupils. The element of the “effects of physical exercise on the body” is sometimes overlooked by teachers in lessons which means that pupils’ understanding is limited.

199. The management of pupils is good, resulting in high standards of discipline. Time and resources are used effectively, but assessment of lessons is largely informal and unstructured.
200. The school does not have a scheme of work to guide teachers, so planning for progression and continuity is weak. There are, however, plans to remedy this deficiency in the near future. Assessment procedures are largely informal and are left to teachers’ professional discretion. There is some recording of achievement in swimming through an awards scheme which allows progress in swimming to be monitored and individual pupil targets to be set.
201. Competitive sport and extra-curricular activities are well developed. There is a strong rugby league tradition in the school. This is supported by good quality coaching by the youth development officer from the local club. Thriving games and gymnastics clubs meet regularly in both key stages after school hours and this enhances pupils’ interest and skills in physical education.
202. Pupils are dressed appropriately for physical education lessons and demonstrate positive attitudes towards fair play in games lessons. Boys and girls work successfully together.
203. The ethos for learning is good in the subject. Physical education has a high priority in the life of the school. The co-ordinator has too few opportunities to monitor the subject, so is not well placed to evaluate the standards of attainment in physical education. Although planning is reviewed, teaching and learning are not systematically monitored. The school has benefited in the past from the involvement of an interested governor who has a high level of subject expertise. His involvement has helped in developing teachers’ confidence and understanding in the teaching of the subject. Teachers forge good cross-curricular links with numeracy. In Year 2, pupils were observed counting in odd and even numbers whilst waiting to enter the hall and form appropriately sized groups when instructed by the teacher.
204. There is a good stock of equipment in the school, which is of a reasonable quality and is easily accessible. The school provision benefits from a shared playing field, two small playgrounds and two halls, although acoustics in the junior hall are poor and make teaching difficult.
205. The school has made improvements in the quality of teaching since the last inspection and, as a consequence, the rate of pupils’ progress has increased. The weakness in the evaluation of pupils’ own performance remains and still needs addressing.
210. *Swimming survey*
206. The inspection of this school included a focused view of swimming which is reported below.
207. The vast majority of pupils in Year 6, approximately 80 per cent, are in line to exceed nationally agreed levels in swimming. At present, two thirds of pupils can swim 25 metres in a credible front crawl style. The higher attaining pupils are very confident, swimming distances well beyond 100 metres and using a range of strokes including backstroke and breaststroke. The small number of lower attaining pupils are gaining confidence in the water. They are beginning to swim short distances of approximately 4 metres and are improving their range of strokes. Pupils have opportunities to gain confidence in the water and learn how to rest, float and adopt support positions. The principles and skills of water safety and survival are part of the school curriculum. Pupils have good knowledge and skills in this area and generally achieve above average

standards.

208. Good pupil progress is being made in the development of swimming techniques and the understanding of the principles and skills of water safety and survival. Good progress is maintained through well-focused teaching by school staff and a poolside instructor.
209. Lessons are well paced and are matched to pupils' ability levels. Clear instructions are given. Teachers generally have high expectations and provide challenging activities to develop pupils' stamina and skills. Lessons are well structured and well resourced. A local education authority guidance document is a useful aid for teaching and a scheme of awards for attaining levels of performance provides a framework with which to assess pupils' progress.
210. There are good levels of enjoyment in lessons. Pupils are enthusiastic and persevere with tasks. Levels of pupil collaboration are particularly good, especially in survival activities. They encourage their partners to swim for the side and use tow ropes and broom staves to effect a recovery.
211. The school provides appropriate opportunities for pupils to swim. Provision for the teaching of swimming has remained unaltered over the last few years.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

212. The inspection was carried out by a team of five inspectors including a lay inspector. A total of 24 inspector days were allocated. An additional day was made available to the lay inspector to undertake a focused inspection of swimming provision.
 - . Seventy three lessons, amounting to 54 hours of teaching time were observed. All teachers were seen teaching.
 - . A total of nine hours inspection time was spent in scrutinising samples of pupils' work, supplied by the school.
 - . A total of 36 pupils, across both key stages were interviewed to gauge their levels of attainment. Nine hours of inspection time were allocated to this activity.
 - . The lay inspector spent two and a half hours interviewing parents before and after school.
 - . Breaktimes, assemblies, pupils' arrival and departure from school were observed and the movement of pupils between buildings during the lunchtime.
 - . Registration periods were monitored and a range of extra curricular activities was observed.
 - . Discussions were held with pupils to discern the levels of progress made in history and geography.
 - . Work on display in corridors and classrooms was inspected.
 - . Pupils' records and reports were examined.

- . Documentation provided by the school before and during the inspection was analysed and used to inform the inspection.
 - . Discussions were held with teachers, governors and ancillary staff.
1. Before the inspection, the registered inspector held a meeting for parents. It was attended by 14 parents. There were 40 questionnaires completed and returned by parents. The issues raised were used to inform the inspection.

2. DATA AND INDICATORS

Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR - Y6	316	9	26	132
Nursery Unit/School	23	0	0	N/A

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (YR - Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	14
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.6

Education support staff (YR - Y6)

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked each week	117

Qualified teachers (Nursery school, classes or unit)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23

Education support staff (Nursery school, classes or unit)

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked each week	66

Average class size:	26.3
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Financial data

Financial year:

1999

	£
Total Income	590,239
Total Expenditure	581,240
Expenditure per pupil	1,735.04
Balance brought forward from previous year	-480
Balance carried forward to next year	8,519

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

316

Number of questionnaires returned:

40

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	18	65	13	3	3
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	35	63	3	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	13	53	25	8	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	35	53	8	5	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	20	43	15	20	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	23	60	5	8	3
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	13	65	13	5	3
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	15	43	23	13	8
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	25	73	0	3	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	25	50	23	3	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	45	43	13	0	0

Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year