

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST GEORGE'S CE (AIDED) PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Hyde

LEA area: Tameside

Unique reference number: 106236

Headteacher: Mr P Allen

Reporting inspector: Barbara Crane  
21227

Dates of inspection: 11<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> March 2002

Inspection number: 188105

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 3 – 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Church Street  
Hyde  
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Postcode: SK14 1JL

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr P Nokes

Date of previous inspection: June 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21227	Barbara Crane	Registered inspector	English, art, history, geography, English as an additional language.	The school's results and achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
14141	Ernie Marshall	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
15015	Mike Wehrmeyer	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, science, information and communication technology, design and technology.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
27541	John Collins	Team inspector	Mathematics, music, physical education, special educational needs.	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This Voluntary Aided Church of England school is of a similar size to most primary schools. There are 211 full-time pupils and a further 50 children attend the Nursery class part-time. There are roughly equal numbers of boys and girls. About 90 per cent of the pupils come from white ethnic backgrounds, with the remainder mainly from Bangladeshi families. About 10 per cent of the pupils are learning English as an additional language and half of these pupils are at an early stage of language acquisition. The number of pupils admitted who are learning English is rising. Six per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is below average. Ten per cent of the pupils have special educational needs, which is below average, and three pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need. In the present Year 6, just over a quarter of the pupils have special educational needs. The pupils attend from a wide area and their attainment on entry to the school is broadly average.

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

This is a good school, with a strong sense of community spirit. The pupils achieve well in most aspects of their work. Standards in reading and mathematics are above average by the time pupils leave the school. The teaching is good and the staff work well as a team, putting the pupils first. The school helps the pupils grow in confidence and includes all of them in its efforts to improve their performance. The school is given a good sense of purpose and direction by the headteacher, who is well supported by the staff. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Standards in reading and mathematics are above average by the time the pupils leave the school.
- Pupils achieve well in most aspects of their work and have very good attitudes towards school.
- The school offers a rich and varied curriculum and is good at including pupils from different backgrounds and abilities.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they get on very well together because the school provides very well for their personal development. There is a very good range of activities on offer outside lessons.
- The headteacher provides a good lead for school improvement and he is well supported by the staff.
- The school has a strong sense of community and its aims are very clearly reflected in its daily life.

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

- Standards in some aspects of writing should be higher.
- The planning and facilities for outdoor play in the Reception class.

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

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

The school has made good improvement since its last inspection in 1996. Standards are now higher and the teaching has improved. All aspects of the National Curriculum are now taught. There are now schemes of work that effectively support the teachers' planning. Assessment is generally well used to match the work to needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. The school has effectively developed the role of subject managers and identified senior management responsibilities for the support and monitoring of teaching and learning. Financial planning has improved and the school evaluates the value for money obtained from major spending decisions. The school is well placed to continue to improve because of the good teamwork and commitment of the staff.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	B	B	A	A	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	A	A	A	A	
Science	A	A	A	A	

The eleven year old pupils' performance in the 2001 tests in English, mathematics and science was well above the average in most schools and those in similar circumstances. The school's trend in performance over the last three years has kept up with the national trend. The oldest pupils in 2001 did much better than could reasonably be expected from their results at the end of Year 2. This was because of the school's careful analysis of what needed to improve in teaching and learning and the effective action taken to overcome weaknesses. The school sets challenging targets for its pupils and meets them. Results at the end of Year 2 have been below average over recent years but took a dramatic upturn in 2001, when they were above the national average in reading and writing and well above average in mathematics. This was due to the school's analysis of what needed to improve and improvements in teaching and learning. Writing remains a priority for development for the school.

On the basis of the work seen now, pupils are achieving well in most aspects of their work. Standards are above average in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils read confidently and with good understanding and expression. They are quick and accurate with numbers and find different ways of solving problems. In writing, standards are broadly average at the end of Year 2 but below average in Year 6. In science, standards are above average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. The pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language make good progress because their needs are well catered for. More able pupils have suitably challenging work and do well. The pupils' handwriting should be better and the older pupils do not always use the basic skills they have learned in punctuation or spelling to improve the quality of their writing. The pupils' attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) is similar to national expectations for their age. In all other subjects, attainment is as expected nationally at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

The children in the Foundation Stage (the Nursery and Reception classes) achieve well and reach the goals expected for their ages in all of the areas of learning except in writing. While there is a good whole school policy for practising handwriting, this is not yet fully implemented from the Foundation Stage onwards and this slows the children's progress.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupils are keen to learn and to please the teachers. They are proud to be part of the school community.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The pupils behave well in lessons and outside the classroom. They develop a good sense of self-discipline.
Personal development and relationships	Good personal development and very good relationships. Pupils of different abilities and ages and those from different backgrounds get on very well together.

Attendance	Very good. Well above average.
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The pupils are lively, friendly and enjoy what the school offers them. They show respect for each other and the staff, and know that their efforts are appreciated.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The teaching is good and there are some outstanding examples of good practice. Teachers have a very good knowledge of their subjects. They plan interesting lessons that motivate pupils to learn and so the pupils make good progress. Teachers look carefully at what has worked well in lessons and also what needs to improve in teaching and learning. They use this information well to adapt their planning. Very good relationships are evident and the teachers build pupils' self confidence through rewarding their efforts and successes. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well and so there is a hard-working atmosphere in classrooms. The support staff know what they are doing and so provide valuable help for pupils' learning. The teaching of mathematics and reading are good and the basic skills are thoroughly taught. There are some weaknesses in teaching writing, particularly in handwriting, and teachers' expectations of presentation and of pupils' checking the accuracy of their punctuation and spelling are sometimes too low. The targets set for pupils' writing are often better followed through in reading and mathematics than in writing and although there is some exemplary work in this respect in Year 2 and Year 5 not all of the teachers are as effective in checking that pupils are working towards the targets set.

Teachers take good account of pupils' different abilities, aptitudes and interests and are careful to provide good support for pupils with special educational needs, those who are learning English as an additional language, more able pupils, and gifted and talented pupils. Homework is not as well planned or given as consistently as it should be. The school is aware of this problem and seeking to resolve it.

The staff in the Nursery and Reception classes have a good understanding of how to help children settle quickly into school routines and so the children develop confidence and feel secure. The basic skills in reading and numeracy are well taught, but children in the Reception class lack sufficient practise in how to form letters correctly.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is well planned and interesting. The pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy are well used and extended in other subjects. There is a very good range of activities for the pupils outside lessons.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The pupils' needs are quickly identified and good support ensures that these pupils make good progress towards the targets set for them.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The staff provide good support for these pupils and so they make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural,	Very good. The school teaches what is right and wrong and nurtures pupils' confidence well. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their feelings and develop a good awareness of others' needs. The pupils' understanding of their own and other cultures is well developed.

development	
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The staff know the pupils well and give very good support for personal development.

The teachers' planning is underpinned by good schemes of work and the lessons ensure that pupils use the skills they have learned in one subject well in other subjects. The school has worked hard to improve its procedures for checking how well pupils are doing and uses the information from assessments well to set targets in reading, writing and mathematics. The planning for outdoor play in the Nursery is more effective than in the Reception class and children here have too few opportunities to play imaginatively outdoors and develop physical skills. The school has a good partnership with parents, that is built right from the start in the Nursery.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher provides a clear and effective direction and ensures that the school's aims are well represented in its daily life. He is well supported by an able deputy head. All of the staff are clear about their roles and work hard to bring about improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors have a firm grasp of how well the school is doing and the school's priorities; they have the interests of the pupils at heart. They do not, however, give such effective support for financial planning and rely heavily on the headteacher to check and control the budget.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The staff look carefully at what works well and what needs to improve. The pupils' performance in tests and assessments are used effectively to pinpoint what needs to improve and this has had a very positive impact on raising standards. The right priorities are identified in the school's planning for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Good overall. The school makes careful and effective use of grants to raise standards. The best value is effectively sought for expenditure, for example, in the school's provision of the new ICT suite.

The headteacher and senior staff have established a good climate in which checking on its provision is becoming part of the school's everyday work. The subject managers know what needs to be worked on next to raise standards further. The school has a strong sense of community and a Christian ethos that reflects its status as a church school. The level of staffing is good and support staff are well deployed to support pupils' learning. The accommodation and resources are satisfactory. However, a considerable quantity of resources, some of which are old and unused, are in classrooms and other work areas, and this limits the space available to pupils.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children enjoy school and make good progress.</li> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> <li>• Children behave well and become more mature and responsible.</li> <li>• The school expects children to work hard and do their best.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed and they feel that staff are approachable.</li> <li>• There is a very good range of activities outside</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The consistency with which homework is set.</li> <li>• Information about children's progress.</li> <li>• How well the school works with them.</li> </ul>

Inspection findings support all of the positive points but not all of the parents concerns. Information about progress is good and the school seeks to work closely with parents and asks for their views. However, homework is not as well organised as it could be; the school is aware of this shortcoming and plans to resolve this are in hand. A number of parents expressed concern about the frequent changes of teacher in one class, due to the permanent teacher's long-term illness. The evidence from the inspection supports the view that the school has sought to minimise the disruption to the pupils as much as possible and that the pupils' work has not been significantly affected.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. There has been a good improvement in standards since the last inspection. The school's trend in performance over the last three years has kept up with the national picture. The results for the oldest pupils in the 2001 tests in English, mathematics and science were well above the average in most schools and those in similar circumstances. These pupils did much better than could reasonably be expected from their results at the end of Year 2. This was brought about by the school's careful analysis of what needed to improve in teaching and learning and effective action to overcome weaknesses. Results at the end of Year 2 have been below average over recent years but improved markedly in 2001, when they were above the national average in reading and writing and well above average in mathematics. Again, these improved standards resulted from the school's analysis of what needed to improve and adaptations to teaching and learning. The school anticipates lower results for the current Year 6 pupils because they are a lower attaining year group, with just over a quarter of the pupils having special educational needs in literacy.
2. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are doing well in most of the areas of learning. They make particularly good progress in reading, speaking and listening and mathematics and in their personal, social and emotional development. They reach the targets set for their age by the end of the Reception Year in all areas except writing. When the children start in Year 1, many cannot form letters correctly because they have not had sufficient practise.
3. Pupils in the infants and juniors are achieving well in most aspects of their work. On the basis of the work seen now, standards are above average in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. In writing, standards are broadly average at the end of Year 2 but below average in Year 6. Writing remains a priority for development for the school. In science, standards are above average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. The pupils' attainment in ICT is at an average level for their age. In all other subjects, attainment is as expected at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils use their skills in literacy and numeracy well in other subjects.
4. The pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language make good progress because their needs are well catered for in teachers' planning and they get the support that they need. More able pupils have suitably challenging work and do well. The school has also identified a number of gifted and talented pupils and work is well adapted to their needs.
5. Standards in speaking and listening are above average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. The pupils express themselves confidently and clearly and listen carefully to the teachers and each other. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are confident and accurate readers. They use good expression when they read and talk in detail about the characters in the story and why they behave as they do. Year 1 pupils understand that words in bold type need more emphasis when read aloud. Year 2 pupils gather information from books competently and have a good understanding of what they read. The present Year 6 is a lower attaining year group, and these

pupils have made very good progress in reading. They find information from books efficiently, when they research work in history, for example. They enjoy reading a good range of fiction. Their progress in writing has not been as consistent through the school. About half of the year group make mistakes in simple spellings and about a quarter of the year group often leave out simple punctuation; few of these pupils routinely check their work. Although they are currently being well supported, good habits for early writing skills are not well established. There is a similar picture of not always reading through writing to see if it makes sense and is accurate in other junior classes, although pupils in Year 5 benefit from the good emphasis placed on this by their teacher. The infant pupils are much better at checking their work, as it has become a habit for them due to a more consistent emphasis by teachers. Standards in writing are better in Year 2 and are broadly average, with some lively and imaginative writing and accurate spelling and punctuation.

6. The pupils use language well when they write, choosing words for effect and impact on the reader. The careful target setting for individuals is thoroughly checked and so pupils here make good progress. Pupils' handwriting, however, is not as good as it should be, because accurate letter formation has not been taught effectively. About half of the present Year 1 and a third of the present Year 2 are still learning to form letters correctly. In the juniors, pupils who have learned to join their handwriting are not always encouraged to do so by the teachers.
7. Standards in mathematics are above average by the age of seven and eleven and pupils of all abilities make good progress. They are quick and accurate with numbers mentally and use what they know to solve problems in different ways. By the age of seven, pupils count and sequence numbers up to 100 and know that the position of a number affects its value. Year 3 pupils have a good understanding of place value in numbers up to 1000. They use their knowledge of tables well to solve problems using addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. They are able, for example, to partition larger numbers such as 78 into 70 and 8 when multiplying this by another single number. Pupils identify two- and three-dimensional shapes and sort them according to such properties as the number of sides and angles. Most of the Year 6 pupils are very confident in calculations involving fractions, decimals and percentages. They are able to multiply decimals and whole numbers by 10 and 100 and more able pupils can extend this to multiplying by 1000. Most of the oldest pupils can multiply and divide decimals to two and three decimal places. They know how to reduce a fraction to its simplest form, and tackle number problems confidently. Work in shapes and measures reaches a good standard. Pupils correctly identify and draw the lines of symmetry on most common plane shapes such as squares and rectangles, and have a good understanding of probability.
8. Pupils make good progress in science because the work builds effectively on what they already know and understand. There is a good emphasis on investigative work. Standards are above average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. Pupils in Year 2 investigate how sound travels and conclude, after collecting evidence from investigations, that sound is affected by travelling through different materials. The oldest pupils understand that a healthy lifestyle is important and know the functions of the body's major organs. They work out how to proceed when they investigate, decide how to make the measurements and understand how to ensure that tests are fair. They know that micro-organisms cause decay in things that were once alive.
9. Pupils are making rapid progress in ICT, following the completion of the school's computer suite. The work is at the level expected for the pupils' ages by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Year 2 pupils word process their work and know how to insert line breaks and capital letters. Year 4 pupils change the size and style of the font and use the edit functions to redraft poems. Pupils use a drawing program in their artwork and know how to program a toy robot to follow a series of instructions. The pupils use the Internet to research information for topics such as designing a buggy, or to find out more about everyday life in India. Year 6 pupils understand how to make presentations using sounds and pictures.

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

10. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and their good behaviour contributes well to their progress and personal development. They like to come to school, are enthusiastic in lessons, and try hard to please. Pupils respond well to the interesting lessons offered by the teachers. Children in the Nursery are quickly made to feel secure and gain the confidence to join in the wide range of activities available. Their relationships with other children and the staff are very good and they make good progress as a result. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into class activities and often receive the support and help of their peers.
11. Relationships across the whole school are very good. Pupils will work well together in pairs or groups when required and will wait turns and share the resources used. A good example of this was seen as Year 1 pupils, full of enthusiasm, worked co-operatively in pairs in the new computer suite. Teaching and support staff show respect for all pupils and their good example encourages pupils to act in a similar fashion.
12. Behaviour is good and confirms the opinions of parents responding to the questionnaire. The school places great importance on this aspect of school life and sets out clear expectations of conduct. Both pupils and parents are aware of the standards required. There have been four fixed-term exclusions in the past year, involving three boys. There is no current evidence of persistent bullying or any racial harassment. Pupils play well together and none are excluded from their games around the school during break and lunchtimes. They show respect for each other and for the premises and equipment the school provides.
13. Pupils' personal development is good. They are polite to visiting adults and confident conversationalists. They can talk about their likes and dislikes and the older pupils can express opinions on matters outside the school. A particularly good example of this was observed in the whole school assembly when an older pupil gave a detailed report, during an assembly, of a visit to the theatre and to a theatrical workshop.
14. The level of attendance by the pupils is very good and is better than the national average for primary schools. There is some extended absence by a small number of pupils visiting the countries of their family origin. Unauthorised absence rates are very low. The pupils arrive punctually and are keen to start work. The very good level of attendance indicates pupils' liking for the school and makes a positive contribution to their rate of learning.

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

15. The teaching is good. In the lessons seen, a quarter were very good or better and three quarters were good or better. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. This represents good improvement since the last inspection, when almost a fifth of the lessons were unsatisfactory.
16. The teachers create a calm and hard-working atmosphere in the classrooms and pupils enjoy learning because of the interesting lessons. Teachers manage the pupils very well, and the very good relationships that are evident have a positive impact on the pupils' level of enthusiasm for learning. Teachers use a good range of methods in their teaching, so that pupils learn in groups, individually or in whole class sessions. The ways in which groups are arranged are often given careful consideration, so that work can be targeted at different ability groups or pupils of different abilities can support each other. Teachers often direct questions very well to extend pupils' understanding, as in a literacy lesson in Year 2, when the teacher asked a group "How do you know what is going to happen next?" and the pupils searched the text for clues before framing their answers. There are occasions, however, when the usually good pace of lessons flags as questions are directed at the whole class, rather than groups or individuals, and the teacher waits for more pupils to put up their hands to answer. This results in a few pupils losing concentration.
17. The staff are good at including pupils of different abilities and backgrounds as well as those with particular needs. The support by learning support assistants for pupils with special educational needs is good. The support staff are used effectively across the school and plan

detailed support work with class teachers. They ask further questions and give useful clues when they support pupils with special educational needs, enabling them to make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. In a Year 5 numeracy lesson, for example, good support enabled pupils to consolidate their knowledge and understanding of recording addition in columns. The needs of pupils who are learning English as an additional language are given careful consideration by both the teachers and support staff. The pupils' understanding is effectively checked and they are well integrated into class discussions, as in a Year 1 lesson, where the teacher directed a question at a pupil to check that some vocabulary that had been introduced was understood. Teachers take account of the needs of more able pupils when they plan lessons. In a Year 5 lesson, for example, the more able group were provided with challenging work involving writing a newspaper report based on their research into the effects of the plague in Eyam. The school has also identified a number of higher attaining pupils and is making appropriate provision to extend their learning. They are given good opportunities to work alongside similar groups of pupils from other schools, and the school is providing an enhanced curriculum within their everyday lessons that caters well for their particular needs.

18. Teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes is good, overall. There are clearly established routines that promote the children's independence and a warm and supportive atmosphere is evident that builds children's confidence. The teachers' weekly and daily planning has improved since the previous inspection. It now contains clear objectives for what the children are expected to learn from the classroom activities. At times the quality of planning, preparation and organisation in the Nursery, together with the adult support, is very good. While the teacher's planning in the Reception class enables children to make good progress in most areas of their work, there is not sufficient time devoted to teaching the correct formation of letters and this has an adverse effect on children's progress in writing. The teachers usually achieve a good balance between planned, directed activities, and those where the children are free to explore and follow their own interests. However, the Reception children have too few opportunities to explore their ideas in outdoor play. The strong teamwork of the staff within the classes builds a very positive attitude to learning in the children and so they concentrate well throughout the busy day.
19. Teaching in English is good overall, and there are particular strengths in the teaching of reading. There is high quality teaching in Years 2 and 5 by the school's leading literacy teachers. The infant pupils learn the sounds of letters very thoroughly and relate these very well to spelling, because the teachers have a high level of understanding of how to teach these skills effectively. As a result, the pupils' skills are considerably enhanced and they approach writing confidently and spell words accurately. The teachers in all classes set a very good example when they read to the class and the pupils pick up their good use of expression and phrasing and reflect this when they read. The targets set for improvements in reading are precise and the teachers are careful to remind pupils of what they are working on next, for example, when groups of pupils read with the teacher. Teachers set good, individual targets for improvements in pupils' writing, but not all of the junior teachers check that these are being followed when they mark the pupils' work and so some pupils repeat mistakes in spelling and punctuation. The school has a good policy for teaching handwriting, but it is not followed consistently. This results in pupils' slower progress in learning to form letters correctly and join their handwriting. Teachers' expectations of junior pupils' presentation are occasionally not high enough and sometimes careless and untidy work is accepted. Older pupils are not always encouraged to check through what they have written to find mistakes. The teachers in the juniors and infants give pupils plenty of opportunities to talk about their ideas and express opinions. They value what pupils have to say, and widen the pupils' vocabulary and introduce more complex sentence structures when they talk to the class.
20. Teaching in mathematics is good. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils and a very good knowledge of the subject. They plan lessons well to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. The targets set for individual pupils are challenging and are well followed through in lessons. Teachers maintain a good balance in lessons of fast-paced, mental sessions and

also plan good opportunities for pupils to use their knowledge and skills in practical work. Pupils are kept alert by the teachers' questions and have good opportunities to explain how they have arrived at answers. Teachers give clear explanations and use resources and support staff well in lessons. As a result of all of these factors, the pupils learn at a good rate.

21. Teaching in science is good. There is a strong emphasis on encouraging pupils to think about how they will set about investigations and analyse their results. The teaching of ICT in both the infants and juniors is good. The teachers get the pupils off to a quick start in lessons through clear explanations and instructions and help them to understand how the computer skills they are learning will help them in other subjects.
22. In all other subjects, the teaching is at least satisfactory. There are some good examples of teachers' setting homework that is linked to the work in lessons or that supports reading and spelling, but homework is not set consistently. The school is aware of this through its own self-evaluation and through asking parents for their views. There are plans to resolve this issue in the near future.

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

23. There has been good improvement in the curriculum since the last inspection. The school now teaches all that it should and there are schemes of work to underpin the teachers' planning.
24. Overall, the school provides a good curriculum and it is enriched by very good range of out-of-school activities. Some of the activities, such as fencing and the coaching in a number of different games, exemplify the intensive involvement of the local community in the school. Others, such as the choir and the support for a large number of charities, show how frequently the school children reach out to the wider community. A strength of the curriculum is the effort the staff put into including pupils of different backgrounds, interests and abilities. In this work the school is aided by the very good links it has with other educational establishments and services. For example, pupils who are identified as gifted or talented have opportunities to meet with pupils from other schools and take part in activities such as theatre workshops. The support of the local high school is most valuable in the effectiveness of the school's programme for gifted and talented pupils, covering sports, arts and academic activities, to really challenge the most able. Equally valuable is the input from the learning mentor who devises programmes of work and styles of learning for several pupils who find the normal classroom environment difficult for a whole day. The curriculum includes a well-planned programme of personal, social and health education. Appropriate attention is given to sex education and parents have the opportunity to view the teaching materials the staff use. The school uses a well-planned approach to bring to pupils' attention the dangers of the abuse of drugs.
25. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage provides an overall good basis of activities for children in the Nursery and the Reception class to work towards the early learning goals set for their age group. The strength in the Nursery curriculum is the very good balance between directed activities and the opportunities for children to explore and investigate freely. At present, the Reception children do not have sufficient access to outdoor play activities of an appropriate kind. In addition, the development of writing in Reception lessons does not focus sufficiently on accurate letter formation.
26. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The steps that pupils with special educational needs make are well planned and reflected in the targets set in individual education plans. Teachers and support staff are involved in the setting and monitoring of these targets and other appropriate support is provided by outside agencies. The pupils who are learning English as an additional language are well catered for. Their needs are recognised and taken into account effectively and consequently they make good progress.

27. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and a strength of the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Current inspection evidence fully supports the views expressed by parents that the school successfully develops an atmosphere in which children develop positive self-esteem and respect for others.
28. Assemblies provide good opportunities for pupils to reflect on their feelings and beliefs and a range of issues. The pupils look forward to the assemblies that take place in church. Good use is made of visits to other places of worship, such as Chester Cathedral, to extend pupils' understanding of Christian beliefs. During lessons teachers are alert to opportunities to extend pupils' appreciation of the wonders of the world about them. This was evident during a sudden, violent hailstorm during the inspection, when pupils were awed by the ferocity of the weather. In the Nursery and Reception classes, the children have very good opportunities to marvel at how things change and grow, as when they study the growth of tadpoles. The pupils are sensitive to what they see and hear. In a history lesson, a pupil was fascinated by the gold braid on the teacher's costume and stroked it gently in appreciation. When pupils walk across to the church, they talk about how they enjoy the atmosphere, because it is "special, still and quiet".
29. Provision for moral and social development is also very good. Good role models for how to behave and get on together are provided by all adults who work in the school. This is the basis for the very good relationships throughout the school. Teachers are always careful to explain why any behaviour is unacceptable and how their actions affect others. All classes have a list of class rules, which place great emphasis on consideration for others. When pupils were asked in one assembly what were the most important things that they needed to do, they immediately replied: "Good attitudes, good behaviour and good work." In their geography and history topics, pupils consider moral and social issues related to the local environment and the wider world. The school sponsors a child in Kenya through the 'Tear Fund' scheme and collects regularly for people less fortunate than themselves. The Year 6 pupils benefit from a residential visit to an outdoor education centre. Regular group working in lessons and the allocation of jobs to do in class and around the school effectively develop pupils' skills of self-reliance, tolerance and cooperation. The schools' expectation that pupils will support one another was evident when Year 6 pupils played happily with infant pupils during one playtime. In a Year 1 literacy lesson, one pupil helpfully whispered, "You've got the 'd' the wrong way round", when pupils wrote words on whiteboards and the guidance was gratefully accepted. In assemblies there is genuine pleasure among older pupils when the younger ones take part. The school council, with two elected representatives from each class, is an effective way of developing pupils' sense of being a citizen.
30. The provision for the cultural development of pupils has improved since the last inspection and is now very good. Opportunities are taken to develop pupils' sense of their own community through singing at Christmas in the local shopping centre and regular assemblies held in church with parents and grandparents. Visitors to school have included dance workshops and puppet theatre groups. The older pupils have visited a local school during the Eid Festival to learn about beliefs of other faiths and have invited the pupils to visit them during the Easter Festival. The school makes good use of visits by parents to help pupils understand the diverse cultures represented in its community. The Year 2 pupils, for example, had a visit last term from a Muslim parent. Pupils become aware, through their work in history, geography and religious education, of their immediate community and of other places. In geography, for example, Year 4 pupils have looked at daily life in Chembakoli in India and have listened to a visitor from Action Aid who talked about how important it is to provide aid to the area that is sustainable. In literacy, good use is made of stories and poems from other cultures to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of other cultures. In a Year 2 literacy lesson, for example, the pupils were reading 'Handa's Surprise' and looking at the exotic fruits that she carried. The teacher announced that these types of fruit would be used for artwork later, that she had found most of them in the local supermarket and that a pupil's mother had offered to take the teacher

to the local Bengali centre to find a guava. Through their work in art and music pupils study a range of art from different cultures and listen to a variety of different styles of music.

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

31. The school succeeds in its aim to provide a warm, friendly and caring community. The teaching and classroom support staff know their pupils as individuals and so can identify and respond to their needs. The level of personal support given as a result is very good. This quality of support starts in the Nursery and continues up through the age groups. Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for with additional support from the staff and from a good range of outside professional agencies. Individual educational plans are prepared as appropriate for these pupils and parents are involved in the regular review and target-setting procedures. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are also given effective extra support. Regular contact between the Nursery pupils and the older children plus good arrangements for Year 6 pupils to work in the receiving secondary school ensure pupils' transfer is smooth and trouble-free.
32. The school takes a firm view on pupils' good attendance rates and gives detailed guidance to parents' concerning their responsibilities. The headteacher and secretary inspect registers twice each week to identify any unexplained absence or any patterns of absence or lateness. Parents are contacted as necessary and the school liaises with the educational welfare officer if home visits are required. Parents are discouraged from taking holidays in term time and homework is made available to those pupils who take extended family holidays or are compelled to be away from school for long periods due to sickness.
33. The school has implemented effective procedures for monitoring pupils' behaviour. The behaviour and anti-bullying policy is well detailed and all staff are familiar with the requirements. The school's rules are well known and observed. The school promotes the good standards of behaviour through the positive attitudes of staff and a fair and consistent application of the code of conduct. Any persistent inappropriate behaviour leads to contact with the relevant parents or carers. The school's learning mentor gives counselling and support to any individual pupil having behavioural difficulties. Positive behaviour and effort are rewarded by house points and by weekly publication of the name of the 'star of the week' and the 'house of the week'. Pupils are well aware of the standards expected of them and the good level of observance contributes positively to their learning.
34. The staff and the governors take a responsible attitude over health and safety requirements and have recently attended a training scheme. The school ensures that the required routine inspection and safety checks are satisfactorily carried out. Fire drills are regularly organised and evaluated. Pupils were able to recount in detail a recent exercise that was made realistic by attendance of the fire service personnel and the fire engine with siren sounding. Child protection procedures are satisfactorily in place and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities. Personal safety issues are dealt with by the staff and by pupils' attendance off-site to visit the 'Crucial Crew', a group of professional officers lead by the fire service. The school arranges road safety and cycling proficiency instruction.
35. The school has worked hard to improve its procedures for checking how well pupils are doing in their work and using the information to plan work that better meets their needs. There has been good improvement in this since the previous inspection. Teachers assess pupils' academic performance and personal development shortly after entry into the Nursery and the Reception class and their progress is monitored regularly as they progress through each age group. The school uses its own testing scheme in Year 1 and, for the remaining years, a range of nationally recognised tests is used, plus detailed analysis of the results. These good procedures enable teachers to set individual targets for pupils in English and mathematics. The more able pupils are identified and teachers adapt the material to be taught accordingly. Pupils requiring a little additional support are identified for participation in the 'booster' sessions. The targets set for pupils are checked well by the teachers in reading and mathematics and in writing in the infant classes. In some junior classes, the use of target setting in writing is not as effective because teachers do not always check to see if the pupils are working consistently towards them.

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

36. Parents express strong support for the school. The staff and governors work hard to develop the school as a focal point for the whole community and parents are encouraged to play an active role in the education of their children. Language difficulties are overcome by use of the bi-lingual skills of the school's own support assistant and by the calling in of a similar assistant from the secondary school. The school has achieved sufficient positive response to enable a rota of 15 parents to be drawn up, who provide regular help in the classrooms. There are more who willingly provide occasional help with special events or accompany children on off-site visits.
37. There is an active and enthusiastic School Association, made up of a small nucleus of staff, parents and carers engaged on the organisation and management of an annual programme of fund-raising events that are very well supported by parents and the community. Funds raised provide a valuable supplement to the school budget and have been spent on items such as computer hardware and software for the new suite, a digital camera, storage building and shelving, toys for the Reception class and furnishings in the teaching areas for Years 3 and 4 pupils. The Association is keen that all children can enjoy the off-site visits and heavily subsidises the expensive transport costs to ensure this is possible.
38. The school has recently conducted an extensive questionnaire survey of parents' views on a large range of topics and is currently making moves to implement change or improvement in some areas. As an early product of the school's survey, parents now feel better informed about the work of the school and about the events and facilities offered. Newsletters are issued more frequently and the School Association issues additional information on the detail of the events and the help that parents can provide. The school is aware of a few minor amendments necessary to the prospectus and to the annual report of the governing body. Some parents have expressed concern at the lack of information regarding the progress made by their children, but this is not supported by inspection evidence. The annual reports issued by the school are very good, are detailed and record achievement in all subjects. Future targets are agreed with the pupils and reports have extensive comments on personal development. Two parent evenings are arranged each year in the autumn and spring terms. Parents are able to see class teachers at the end of the school day to discuss any matters of concern over their children's education.
39. An earlier area of concern over the amount of pupils' homework is repeated in the survey and the school is preparing to revise the homework policy as a result. Currently, homework set is limited to daily reading, some spelling and occasional mathematics activities for the older pupils. Parents responding, particularly those of the older pupils, would be happier with an increase in the amount of homework and a more consistent approach linking that work with what is being taught in class.

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

40. The headteacher provides good and effective leadership and management for the school and ensures that its aims are well reflected in its daily work. He has built, with the support of the senior staff, a climate in which the teachers are comfortable to look at what they are doing and act to improve teaching and learning. The deputy headteacher gives good support and has been instrumental in improving procedures for assessment and setting targets for pupils' performance. The staff work well as a team and put the pupils first. The school's strong sense of community results from this evident commitment. Staff who are new to the school are well supported. The school makes good use of ICT to support its analysis of pupils' progress and daily administration.
41. The roles of the teachers and senior staff in checking the quality of teaching and learning are now well defined and carried out effectively. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers get good feedback on what they are doing well and what needs to

improve. The high level of expertise of two teachers in teaching literacy has been recognised by the local authority and teachers from other schools visit to observe lessons by these leading literacy teachers. The staff at the school also benefit from their advice and example. The literacy co-ordinator provides very good quality leadership and her evaluation of teaching and learning is perceptive and detailed, and has been very well used to pinpoint areas for improvement. All of the weaknesses in writing have been identified by the co-ordinator, through sampling work, observing lessons or analysing the school's results, and she has a good action plan to resolve the weaknesses. The school's system for appraisal is well organised and effective and reflects both individual needs and the school's priorities. Further professional training is well organised and effective. For example, the teachers' skills in using ICT to support pupils' learning have been successfully developed and the technician who works in school under the modern apprentice scheme has greatly enhanced the effectiveness with which technology is used. The school has good plans to further extend the provision of classroom computers and so improve the pupils' use of computers to support their learning in lessons outside the computer suite.

42. The school has comprehensive planning for improvement and the right priorities for development are highlighted and funded appropriately. There is a firm focus on raising standards and the school looks closely at pupils' performance in tests and assessments and draws on the information gained to bring about improvements. This has been particularly successful in improving standards at the end of Year 2, where adaptations to teaching and raising expectations of pupils' achievement have led to better standards. Although the school's results at the end of Year 6 are not likely to match the previous year's results because of the lower attaining Year group, standards are set to return to the previous level in the following year.
43. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactorily managed and the co-ordinator has identified the need to extend the provision for the Reception children in outdoor play, so that it matches that of the children in the Nursery.
44. The management of special educational needs is good and the school is well prepared for the new Code of Practice. Governors will be involved in training. The school supports its provision for pupils with special educational needs through good use of funding from its budget. The school is conscious of the growing numbers of pupils joining the school with English as an additional language and has targeted resources effectively to support the needs of these pupils.
45. The governors fulfil their responsibilities satisfactorily and maintain a good level of interest in the school. They have a firm grasp of its priorities and how well it is working towards the targets that have been set for improvement. The governors have a good understanding of the school's initiatives, such as the provision for gifted and talented pupils and the increased provision for pupils who are learning English as an additional language. The headteacher provides the governors with good quality information about the school's finances but their involvement in financial planning does not match their involvement in monitoring the standards achieved by the school. Some of the governors' decisions at full meetings are not clearly recorded and this does not always provide the headteacher with a clear framework in which to operate. For example, while the governors consider the school's planning for development, the minutes of meetings do not always clearly show what has been agreed. The governors do ensure, however, that the school gains the best value for its expenditure from its spending decisions, such as the new fencing for the Nursery and the new computer suite.
46. The school's staffing is good and there is a good range of expertise and experience amongst the staff. Support staff are well deployed. The accommodation is adequate, but the space available for pupils is limited by the storage of resources in classrooms and other work areas, although there are adequate spaces elsewhere. Some of these resources are out of date and rarely used. Because resources for each subject are stored in each classroom, it is difficult for subject managers to keep an oversight of what is needed and what needs to be weeded

out. In addition, newer teachers occasionally lack quite basic resources and as there are few central stores, they are uncertain where to gain these from.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

### **Raise standards in writing by: \***

- Raising teachers' expectations of how pupils' present their work and ensuring that the school's policy for handwriting is followed by all teachers.
- Ensuring that children in the Reception class have more opportunities to learn and practise the correct formation of letters.
- Ensuring that teachers in all junior classes check that pupils are working consistently towards targets when they mark pupils' work.
- Ensuring that teachers more consistently encourage junior pupils to check through their work to find mistakes in spelling and punctuation.  
(Paragraphs 2, 5, 18, 19, 35, 51, 62, 63.)

### **Improve the provision for outdoor play for the Reception children so that it matches that for the Nursery children. \***

(Paragraphs 18, 25, 47, 56.)

\* These issues have already been identified by the school and form part of its planning for development.

In addition to the above, the governors should take into account the following more minor points when drawing up their action plan:

- Review the storage of resources so that there is more space for pupils to work and resources are more readily available to all teachers.  
( Paragraphs 46, 85, 91.)
- Consider ways in which the governors can give more effective support for the school's financial planning and improve the accuracy with which the governing body's decisions are recorded.  
(Paragraph 45.)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

45

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

22

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	9	22	12	0	0	0
Percentage	4	20	49	27	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	25	211
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	28

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	19

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.9
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	18	12	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	17	17
	Girls	12	11	12
	Total	29	28	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (66)	93 (81)	97 (88)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	17	17
	Girls	11	12	12
	Total	28	29	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (81)	97 (88)	97 (84)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	13	16	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	12	12
	Girls	16	14	16
	Total	27	26	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93 (80)	90 (90)	97 (97)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	12	12
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	25	26	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (83)	90 (87)	90 (93)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

## Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	2
Indian	1
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	17
Chinese	1
White	189
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

## Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	4	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

## Teachers and classes

### Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.8
Average class size	30

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	189

### Qualified teachers and support staff: Nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65
Number of pupils per FTE adult	12.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

## Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	462314
Total expenditure	444453
Expenditure per pupil	1860
Balance brought forward from previous year	6744
Balance carried forward to next year	24605

## Recruitment of teachers

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

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	236
Number of questionnaires returned	80

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	31	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	64	28	5	2	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	59	39	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	46	14	6	6
The teaching is good.	68	25	5	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	49	38	12	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	28	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	38	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	45	39	10	5	1
The school is well led and managed.	51	38	5	1	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	49	2	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	49	36	1	2	11



## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

47. Children usually spend three terms in the Nursery class before transferring to the Reception class in the September of the year in which they are five. The early years staff have taken good account of the previous inspection report and the curriculum is generally well planned to take account of the stepping stones in children's learning. This enables the children to transfer smoothly from the Nursery into the Reception class, because there is now very close communication between the two classes. During the final term in Reception the teacher prepares the children well, phasing their work into the first National Curriculum level, to ease their move into Year 1. The staff are aware that the Reception class does not continue the pattern of outdoor exploratory play, well laid down in the Nursery. This means that there is a break between the development of imagination and investigation in play and the more formal lessons in Reception. The co-ordinator's action plan has identified this area and a review is planned to find a solution in terms of siting and resources.
48. The children's attainment is measured in the first weeks of the Nursery and Reception classes, using simple tests, known as baseline records. These are re-visited at the end of the year to check their progress. The teachers are then able to identify the children who are likely to experience difficulties, at a suitably early stage. The additional support put in place enables the children who have special educational needs to make good progress. There are examples of good use of assessment of skills such as children's speaking. The next stage is to link planning and assessment more closely, so that children can be tracked as they move through the stepping stones at different rates.

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

49. The children make good progress in personal, social and emotional development. They start at an average level. In the Nursery, children are confident in their environment and display a sense of ownership. Many chat happily with visitors while giving them a guided tour. By the end of the Reception year all the children socialise well, mix appropriately with older pupils and understand the class rules and the behaviour expected of them. The teaching is good. In both classes the teachers use well-established routines, train the children in polite behaviour, and require them to tidy up after activities. Relationships are very good, and adults are good role models for the children to follow. The Reception children get on well with the Year 1 pupils. They line up to go to the hall sensibly, and in assemblies they sit quietly and pay attention. They easily achieve the last stepping stones in self-confidence behaviour and self-control. This is due to good teaching.

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

50. Children start school with slightly below average language skills. They make particularly good progress in speaking and listening and reading because of the good teaching. All of the staff encourage the children to look at books and encourage talk through guided play activities. By the time they leave the Nursery some of the children exceed the middle stepping stones in recognising letters and writing their names and other words. They listen well, and about a third speak clearly and at length.
51. By the end of the Reception year the children achieve the final stepping stones in reading and speaking and listening; they make good progress due to good teaching in these aspects. The teacher uses a structure similar to the literacy hour well to introduce the children to the letters and sounds needed to build their reading skills. The school specialises in a system known as phonographics. This is very well used to help children to build up words more easily, with sounds nearer to the way they occur in the words themselves. Later in the infants the impact

is seen in more confident and accurate spelling. The children love reading the big books with expression in the Reception class and the teacher encourages them to think about what might happen next. In the follow-up activities the children enjoy using their small whiteboards to sequence letters into words. The aim is for children to enjoy writing, and they do, but the activity is too fast and does not give the teachers time to check on precise letter formation. There is too little emphasis on developing basic skills in forming letters and this affects the children's performance in writing. New recommendations on whole-school planning for writing gives more guidance for the Foundation Stage in this matter but have not yet been implemented. All children get equal turns in the group activities, where they experience adult support, independent 'writing' and practical play with equipment that increases their hand movement control.

### **Mathematical development**

52. Children start school about average in mathematical awareness. They make good progress through the Foundation Stage and are likely to achieve the last stepping stones, or above, at the end of the Reception year. The teachers plan and resource good practical activities to give the children the hands-on experience which leads the children to understand shape, size, weight and capacity. The Nursery staff stress the importance of correct vocabulary, and ensure that the children learn the terms 'full', 'empty', and 'half-full'. They seize many opportunities to point to numbers, for instance setting problems around the register, or singing number jingles. The regular play with construction kits enables the children to see different shapes, how they fit together, how heavy they are and how to make patterns with them. They learn how to solve simple problems involving 'more than' and 'less than'. The teaching is good. At the end of the lessons the teacher checks that the children have understood the new material and activities.
53. The staff have good measures of where the foundation children are in relation to the mathematical stepping stones, and can plan accordingly. During simple 'numeracy hours' the Reception children are grouped by ability so that the faster children can move ahead, while the slower are given more time and help to gain a confident understanding. They learn how to solve simple problems involving 'more than' and 'less than'. Good teaching in both classes promotes good learning, with children enjoying number and eager to learn more.

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

54. The children enter the school with a below average knowledge and understanding of the world. They make very good progress and by the end of the Reception year most are likely to reach the learning goals. The teaching in the Nursery is very good, and creates a lively learning environment filled with objects to stimulate the children's curiosity. Teachers plan topics to capture the children's interest. They marvel, for instance, that the vegetables, which they have just been studying for texture and colour, can also be used for printing. The teachers go to a lot of trouble to bring resources, which extend the children's ideas about new life. Children learn to classify ideas, for instance the difference between real and artificial fruit.
55. Children in Reception learn about the world in and around the school, making good use of the school's site and further afield, on visits to widen their horizons. They receive good direct teaching on the use of computers. They develop an awareness of past times from events they recall in their family lives, and from looking at the life cycles of insects and frogs. They talk about the seasons, the changes in the weather and the passage of time. The school values the contribution of parents to the teaching of some of these activities, enabling the many trips to take place. The teachers introduce the children well to the cultural richness of various faiths and nationalities in the locality.

## **Physical development**

56. The children make good progress and most are likely to meet the early learning goals by the time they finish the Reception year. Teaching is good in this area in the Nursery. The school provides a secure outdoor play area where Nursery children can grow in confidence and practise running, jumping and playing imaginatively. This resource is not available to the Reception class, but this due to be re-considered soon. Physical education lessons in the school hall for Reception pupils help them to explore aspects of health and exercise. The children know that their heart beats faster after an active warm-up for the lesson. The children develop independence as they are expected to help, with due regard for safety. Children co-operate well with each other in the small group activities in both classes. They take care to use the space well and show concern for the safety of others. The children are agile, alert and enthusiastic, and have taken to the discipline of the rotation of groups well. The school is aware that it is not making use of the potential of the outdoor play area for Reception children to enhance confidence and imaginative role-play outdoors. Teaching is satisfactory in the Reception class, but a movement and dance lesson showed that the children still need a less structured environment in order to explore movements and develop better skills. In this lesson, the Reception children were not all able to follow the formal instructions on the music tape and so did not gain full benefit from the lesson. The very wide range of equipment and media planned and provided in the Nursery and Reception classes allows children to learn to use tools and materials safely and with increasingly fine control.

## **Creative development**

57. The children make good progress so that by the time they leave the Reception year all the children have reached the final stepping stones and some are above average by this time. This is due to the wide experiences provided, and to good teaching. With the encouragement of the staff in the Nursery and Reception classes, the children develop enthusiasm and confidence to explore their own ideas. They gain knowledge of colour, texture and shape, for instance when printing patterns with vegetables or creating frogs with playdough. At odd moments through the day the teachers will burst into song and lead the children in singing a range of popular rhymes and jingles.
58. Children develop their imaginations well to explore a wide variety of situations when they play with the construction material, run cars along the floor playmats or order the animals about in the small world farm. In the home corner the children happily dispose of the day's chores, ironing gets done in a flash. They also set up a pub in the library room, till a roaring dragon drives them out. The planning for children's creative development both maintains the children's curiosity and imagination and extends their skills effectively.

## **ENGLISH**

59. Standards and teaching have improved since the last inspection. Standards are above average in reading in Year 2 and Year 6. Standards in writing are broadly average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6. In speaking and listening, standards are above average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. Through its accurate assessment of pupils and tracking their progress, the school is aware that the current Year 6 are a lower attaining year group and the high results in English tests in 2001 are not expected. This is reflected in inspection findings. The Year 6 pupils have made very good progress in reading over time.
60. The strengths in teaching and learning are:
- The sounds of letters are very well taught and related effectively to spelling patterns in the infant classes.
  - The pupils know what they need to work on next to improve their reading, and the teachers assess their progress carefully.

- There are good opportunities for pupils to write for a range of interesting and relevant purposes and ICT is well used to develop pupils' writing skills.
- There is good support for pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language.
- The literacy co-ordinator provides very good leadership and management.

61. Areas for improvement are:

- Teachers do not always follow the school's guidelines for teaching handwriting and do not have consistently high expectations of presentation.
- The targets set for some individual junior-aged pupils in writing are not as closely checked as they are in reading and so pupils do not make such good progress in writing.
- Some junior pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to check through their work and so they too often make basic errors in spelling and punctuation.

62. The pupils listen carefully and so make sensible and pertinent suggestions in class discussions. They offer opinions readily and are confident that others are listening and that their views will be valued by the teachers. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are accomplished readers. They use good expression when they read and talk in detail about the characters in the story and look at the text to explain why characters behave as they do and what is likely to happen next. In one lesson, Year 2 pupils used their knowledge of the components of a traditional story very well to predict what characters would do and how the plot might unfold. Year 1 pupils understand that words in bold type need more emphasis when read aloud. They recognise that when characters speak, they need to adapt the tone of their voices in reading aloud. Spelling in the infant classes is good and accurate. The pupils' very good progress is well supported by their thorough knowledge of spelling patterns and the sounds of letters. Year 1 pupils, for example, know several different ways of spelling the 'ay' sound and nearly all chose the correct one when spelling 'rain'. The Year 2 pupils write stories competently and create exciting settings and build characters that are interesting. Spelling for the junior pupils is not as accurate as they have not all benefited from the school's improved teaching lower down the school. The teachers plan good opportunities for pupils to use their skills in writing in other subjects. For example, Year 3 pupils make notes from a video on Roman times and set down the main points competently. Year 4 pupils identify similes in poems by Roger McGough and then use ICT to improve their own similes in poems. Year 5 pupils are a higher attaining year group and their work in writing reaches a high standard. Pupils write openings for stories such as "The morning air is cool and whips my face..." or "You can almost taste the fire in the centre of the crystal...". They refine their writing to improve the phrasing. They check their work thoroughly as they go along. This is not often the case in other junior classes. The present Year 6 is a lower attaining year group, and just over a quarter of the pupils have special educational needs that involve literacy targets. These pupils have made very good progress in reading through the good support that they have been given and careful tracking of their progress. Their progress in writing has not been as consistent. About half of the year group make mistakes in simple spellings and about a quarter of the year group often leave out simple punctuation; few routinely check their work. For many of the pupils in Year 6, good habits for early writing skills are not well established.

63. Teaching in English is good overall, and there are particular strengths in the teaching of reading. Teachers in the infant classes teach the sounds of letters very thoroughly and relate these very well to spelling, so that pupils' skills are considerably enhanced and they approach writing confidently. Teachers in all classes read aloud to the class in a lively, expressive manner and the pupils pick this up. The targets set for reading are precise and lead to rapid improvement because the teachers monitor the pupils' progress carefully and remind pupils of what they are working on next, for example, when groups of pupils read with the teacher. The teachers in the juniors and infants give pupils plenty of opportunities to talk about their ideas and express opinions. The pupils' widening vocabulary and increasingly complex use of sentence structures reflects the teachers' good use of language. The pupils' confidence in speaking is greatly enhanced because the teachers value their contributions to discussions.

The school has a good policy for teaching handwriting, but it is not followed consistently. This results in pupils' slower progress in learning to form letters correctly and join their handwriting. Teachers' expectations of pupils' presentation are sometimes not high enough and some careless and untidy work is sometimes accepted. Teachers set good, individual targets for improvements in pupils' writing, but do not always check that these are being followed when they mark the pupils' work and so some pupils repeat mistakes in spelling and punctuation. Older pupils are not always encouraged to check through what they have written to find mistakes.

64. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language are well supported and so they make good progress. Teachers take good account of their needs in planning work. They are careful to check the progress that these pupils make. Classroom assistants provide good support because they know what they are doing and are aware of the pupils' needs. In discussions with the whole class, teachers check the understanding of pupils who are learning English as an additional language well. The bi-lingual classroom support assistant provides valuable support for these pupils.
65. The management of English is very good. The effective evaluation of lessons to see what works well in teaching and what needs to improve has led to action that has brought about improvements in pupils' learning. An example of a specific weakness that has been identified and successfully worked upon is the better modelling of writing by teachers in the literacy hours so that pupils learn to use more complex sentences when they write independently. The results of assessments and tests are thoroughly analysed and the information gained has been well used to improve teaching and learning. The co-ordinator is a leading teacher for literacy and provides a very good example for colleagues, as does the school's other leading literacy teacher in Year 2. The co-ordinator has identified the weaknesses in teaching in handwriting and the pupils' checking of spelling in the junior classes. She has devised a good action plan to address these areas.

## **MATHEMATICS**

66. Inspection evidence and a scrutiny of previous work show that the school is well placed to maintain above average standards by the end of Year 6 and Year 2. Much of this is due to the effective teaching, which has improved since the last inspection. However, due to the high numbers of pupils with special educational needs in the current Year 6, it is likely that the proportion of pupils achieving the higher than expected level, level 5, will be less than in recent national tests.
67. The strengths in the teaching and learning are:
- Enthusiastic teaching, high expectations and very good subject knowledge.
  - A good balance between developing pupils' mental skills of calculation and using and extending their understanding through practical activities.
  - Effective assessment of what pupils can do and well-planned work to meet different needs.
  - The National Numeracy Strategy is very well established and underpins the structure of teachers' planning.
  - There is very good use of resources and support staff and clear explanations so that pupils can quickly get on with their work
68. A point for improvement is:
- More effective questioning to individuals, rather than general whole-class questions, so that pupils are more alert in whole class sessions.
69. The overall quality of teaching now is good, with some very good teaching seen in both infant and junior classes. Pupils continue to achieve particularly well in number, as at the time of the last inspection. This is not only due to good systematic teaching of number facts, rules and

procedures, but also from the way in which teachers are careful to check on how secure pupils' understanding is before moving them on to the next stage of work. All lessons start with particularly good sessions on mental calculations. These are often at a brisk and challenging pace that enthuses pupils to learn. Teachers often use their very good subject knowledge to frame questions so that all groups of pupils are able to make a contribution to the lesson. This was particularly evident in a Year 4 lesson on equivalent fractions. The teacher checked that learning was secure through his questioning and gave pupils opportunities to explain how they had worked things out. As in many other lessons, very good emphasis was given to the correct use of vocabulary and methods of recording so that pupils were clear about what they were learning. This knowledge was then used well in the main activities so that by the end of the lesson, all groups of pupils had consolidated well their knowledge and understanding of fractions.

70. Scrutiny of work in junior classes shows that Year 3 pupils already have a good understanding of place value in numbers up to 1000. They use their knowledge of tables well in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division problems. For example, they are able to partition larger numbers such as 78 into 70 and 8 when multiplying this by another single number. They are able to name two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes and group them according to such properties as the number of sides and angles. The emphasis on number work continues through all junior classes, and by Year 6 the majority of pupils are very secure in their use of numbers in calculations involving fractions, decimals and percentages. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils were able to set out clearly their addition and subtraction of decimals in columns. Pupils with special educational needs during this lesson received good support from a learning support assistant that enabled them to make progress at least as well as the rest of the class. Scrutiny of their previous work shows they are able to multiply decimals and whole numbers by 10 and 100 and more able pupils can extend this to multiplying by 1000. By the age of eleven most pupils can multiply and divide decimals accurately to two and three decimal places. They can reduce a fraction to its simplest form and tackle number problems confidently. Their work in shapes and measures is good. They correctly identify and draw the lines of symmetry on most common plane shapes such as squares and rectangles, and have a good understanding of probability.
71. By the age of seven, most pupils count and sequence numbers up to 100 accurately and have a good understanding of the place value of such numbers. This was seen to good effect in the mental calculating session in Year 2, where pupils were adding and subtracting from a given starting number using a 100 number square to record their answers. This was particularly well planned and resourced, with very effective support given to lower attaining groups. All were able to consolidate their knowledge and understanding of addition and subtraction well and this shows clearly in the scrutiny of their previous work. The majority of pupils are already achieving the level expected of them and many are beginning to achieve standards above those expected. They know and use number bonds up to 10 and 20 in their calculations and can recognise and sequence odd and even numbers. More able pupils use their knowledge that addition is the inverse of subtraction to check their answers. Average and less able groups can correctly sequence numbers up to 100 and recognise and name common shapes such as a square, rectangle, triangle and pentagon. All groups are using correct ways of recording numbers. A good lesson was seen in Year 1 where pupils were learning to record data in tally form and map a list of likes and dislikes. Good reference was made to their previous learning about Venn diagrams and appropriate emphasis was given to the use of correct vocabulary.
72. Pupils enjoy mathematics and most show good concentration and determination to succeed. In all the lessons seen there was a good balance between developing pupils' mental skills of calculation and providing opportunities for pupils to consolidate and then extend their understanding through practical activities. The better lessons are characterised by teachers making very good use of their knowledge of pupils' attainment to match the right question to the levels of abilities of pupils so that they can contribute to the lesson. On a few occasions, however, general questions to the class do not promote the involvement of some pupils,

whose attention can waver. There is very good use of resources to involve pupils in practical activities. Support staff are well briefed and so groups can quickly settle to their work. Teachers manage their classes well and have high expectations of behaviour and work. All this helps lessons to proceed at a high pace with challenge that inspires the majority of pupils to work hard.

73. In the absence of the co-ordinator through long-term illness, the overall quality of subject leadership is satisfactory. At present the headteacher is acting as temporary co-ordinator and has recently completed monitoring teaching and learning in mathematics across all age groups. There are good systems to record and assess pupils' progress and this information is being used well to set targets for individuals and groups. The provision of resources has recently benefited from additional funding and the current school improvement plan contains appropriate targets for the future development of the subject. The co-ordinator cannot easily maintain an overview of resources for the whole school, as they are kept by individual teachers in their classrooms.

## SCIENCE

74. Since the previous inspection the school has achieved a continuous rise in standards for science. In the 2001 standard tests, pupils in Year 6 achieved well above average results, particularly at the higher level 5. Last year, teachers assessed the Year 2 pupils as above average for their age, many achieving well at the higher level 3. The present Year 2 are reaching standards above those expected for pupils aged seven years. The school's rate of improvement has been much faster than the national trend. This is because of the school's determination to overcome the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report. The staff have adopted a new, stronger curriculum based on national guidelines. In-service training in science was extended. Planning shows clear objectives. The co-ordinator has analysed the test papers to show areas of difficulty, and to identify groups of pupils who need extra work. This support is particularly effective in the current Year 6. This class contains a high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs, and so attainment overall is lower than in other classes. Even so the pupils are doing well and achieving average standards.

75. Strengths in the subject are:

- The good teaching throughout the school that promotes good progress.
- The good links with literacy and numeracy.
- The very practical nature of the work that helps to maintain pupils' sense of curiosity.
- The good support for lower attaining pupils.

76. Areas for improvement are:

- To use ICT to present findings more frequently.
- Better presentation of pupils' work.
- Shorten the teachers' introductory talks so that pupils have more time to work.

77. Teaching is good overall throughout the school. It contributes to at least good progress, and in some years to very good progress. The Year 5 class, for instance, is at a high enough standard to resume the pattern of improvement from 2001. Teachers explain well how their lessons link with earlier work to enable pupils to see how their learning is building up. The teachers in the infants encourage the pupils to look at science as questions. For instance, in their study of how sound travels, they considered questions like "Can it travel round corners?" They wondered if they would still hear the clock ticking through a short plastic pipe if it was filled with cotton wool. Teachers prepare and use resources well so that pupils can test out these problems, and guide them to reach accurate conclusions with clear explanations. The Year 6 pupils were curious about the effects of mixing different substances with water. The staff had provided a large range of materials for the pupils to test. The pupils used what they had heard before to work out the right order to proceed, how to make the measurements and how to see that they were fair. Since pupils are learning well by thinking about the practical

situations, they do not need long introductions to lessons and these lessen the time available for them to investigate. The good relationships that teachers develop mean that most pupils are interested and willing to learn.

78. Teachers use question and answer very effectively to draw out and extend pupils' ideas. By repeating the questions "Why?" and "How do you know...?", they encourage pupils to look more closely at the evidence. Teachers make effective links with literacy to enable pupils to develop a sound technical style of recording results. They also link with pupils' mathematics skills in measuring, collecting measurements and displaying them in graphical form. The pupils' quality of presenting their writing is not as good a quality as it might be. Teachers do not use the computers as much as they might for some of the measurements and for presenting information.
79. The management of science is good. The co-ordinator has promoted an enthusiasm for science among the staff, so that the teaching is much more consistent than it was during the previous inspection. She encourages the staff to enrich the curriculum by visits, for instance to North West Water, or bringing visitors like the Quantum Theatre in to add a wider dimension to the curriculum. The teachers plan much more of the science work in terms of investigations which many seem to enjoy as much as the pupils. Due to the improvements in assessment, the staff are well placed to make even more effective use of their assessment information to set even more demanding targets for the higher attaining pupils.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

80. The pupils' work reaches the level expected nationally for their age at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This reflects the picture at the previous inspection and the standard of work and provision for the subject have been maintained. Only two lessons were observed but the evidence drawn from looking at pupils' previous work and talking to pupils indicates that they are making satisfactory progress.
81. The strengths in the subject are:
- Teachers are making good use of the national guidelines for the subject to ensure that lessons build effectively on skills learned previously.
  - There is some good use of ICT to support the pupils' learning.
82. An area for improvement is:
- Sketchbooks are not always used as effectively as they might be to assess, practise and refine skills.
83. Year 1 pupils show an average level of skill in their observational drawings of plants and flowers. Year 2 pupils have produced some good work researching still-life images from the Internet. They can explain that it is easier to rub out and redraw an image on the computer than on paper, but that texture is easier to represent in proper paint. Year 4 pupils have looked at the design of different chairs, and their drawings of chairs from different angles show an appropriate sense of perspective. Year 5 pupils show a reasonable control of paint in depicting fruit, but not many use tone to give a better defined form to their compositions. Year 6 pupils used a digital camera to take portraits that they then split and completed in pencil. These show a firm grasp of how to use line, but the shading is not as well defined. There is some use of sketchbooks to try out ideas or practise skills such as shading and trying out different types of line, but this is not as well developed as it could be to support pupils' learning and improve their final outcome.
84. The teaching in the lesson seen was good because of the teacher's firm focus on promoting the skills of investigating materials and trying out new tools and techniques. The Year 1 pupils had previously looked at trees and plants and were now faced with the task of creating a sculpture from junk material. Through trial and error, which they found most enjoyable, they

learned that some methods of fixing leaves were more efficient and that different effects could be created by re-positioning parts of their sculptures. They used what they had learned from their observations in the immediate environment well.

85. The teachers' planning reflects the national guidelines and there is some good evaluation of pupils' progress at the end of each unit of work. For example, in Year 2, the teacher's evaluation of the pupils' skills in colour mixing included useful pointers for improvement and also noted the good progress in brush control made by some pupils with special educational needs. The teachers' planning is checked by the new co-ordinator for the subject, who has made a sound start on getting to grips with what needs to be improved. The teachers plan good opportunities for pupils to use ICT in art and so pupils see this as an additional tool that has advantages but also weaknesses, depending on what they want to achieve. It is difficult for the co-ordinator to gain an overview of resources as there is no central store. Valuable space in classrooms and other work areas is taken up as each class keeps separate stores of equipment and paper.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

86. Standards in design and technology are at the expected level for the pupils' age at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were judged as variable. The pupils now make consistently sound progress. Pupils who have special educational needs make similar satisfactory progress, and achieve results in line with their peers.
87. Strengths in the subject are:
- The curriculum, which gives equal attention to designing and making.
  - Teachers encourage pupils' problem-solving ability and the care and accuracy they take in their work.
  - Strong links with numeracy, history and science.
  - The pupils' enjoyment in testing their models and seeing them work.
88. Areas for improvement are:
- To encourage pupils to write evaluations of their projects to show what worked well and what was less successful.
  - To develop a simple recording system by which the pupils and teachers know the levels they are working at, and the progress being made.
89. No lessons were observed, because this subject is taught earlier and later in the year. The quality of the pupils' finished products from last term indicates that sound teaching had taken place. The wheeled vehicles, which were designed from the Year 2 pupils' imaginations, showed how they used knowledge of materials and fastenings to produce a wide variety of carriages fit for Barnaby the bear. The quality of the detail that they put is good. Their design drawings are clear, but their evaluations of the finished product are not as good or tidy. The Year 2 pupils are building well on skills learned in Year 1. Here also the teacher has created many links in the planning so that the technology activity enhances learning in other subjects. They learn about healthy eating in science, and in food technology they design and test their own recipes, which they put in the packaging, which they design and make themselves.
90. The teachers' planning has developed well since the previous inspection. It is based on national guidelines and promotes further progress in steps through the juniors. At this time in Year 6, pupils' work demonstrates that they use a wider and more advanced range of materials and tools. Their measurements are more exact and their fastenings more complex than the infants. The buggies, which all Year 6 pupils make to learn and practice particular skills, have a good quality of finish. In the summer term the pupils use these skills to develop projects of their own. They say they are looking forward eagerly to making and testing their vehicle designs when completed, to test some of their science theories about speed and

acceleration. This level of involvement and interest leads to good learning and progress. The pupils are aware that careful measurements result in accurate models. Teachers use this device well to develop pupils' numeracy. Pupils enjoy using drawing skills in the design stage, but they are less interested in the writing needed for the evaluation stage and this is not always sufficiently encouraged by the teachers. Although teachers do not plan in the use of computers to help with designing, they do use them well for researching the background information on which many of the topics are based.

91. The management of the subject is sound. The school does not make the best use of storage areas for equipment, nor of the space to display pupils' work, because space is used to store old and unused resources.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

92. There has been good improvement in this subject since the last inspection. The teachers' planning is now underpinned by a scheme of work that reflects the national guidelines. The pupils are now making much more consistent progress in the subject, and this is at least satisfactory. No lessons were seen during the inspection, but from the evidence of pupils' previous work, teachers' planning and talking to pupils, it is evident that pupils reach the expectations for their ages at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
93. Strengths in the subject are:
- Good quality leadership that provides a clear plan for improvement.
  - Good use of the local area, visits and visitors to extend pupils' skills and understanding.
  - Teachers' effective evaluation of what has worked well or needs to improve at the end of each unit of work.
94. Points for improvement are:
- Better use of current events to extend pupils' understanding of where places are in the world.
  - More up-to-date globes and atlases.
95. Year 1 pupils understand that a map represents physical features. They know that they live close to Manchester and that this is a 'very big city'. Year 2 pupils follow Barnaby Bear's travels around the world and most can find where he has been on a world map and explain how he got there. Parents are very much involved in supporting this work and ensure that postcards are sent from holiday destinations. Year 3 pupils have researched land use in their area and found out which supermarket was the most popular and how customers travelled to reach it. In Year 4, pupils look at life in India and use reference books, videos and artefacts to gain information. They have produced some good work on climate charts for Bangalore and Manchester and know how to interpret the data collected and draw conclusions. Year 5 pupils have completed a study of water that included a visit to a water treatment plant. They understand how rivers become polluted. Year 6 pupils use maps of differing scales to look at mountain environments. From looking at maps, photographs and other data, they explain why the Lake District has no big cities or motorways and why settlements are in the valleys. Pupils understand how to use six-figure grid references to locate features on maps. While the Year 6 pupils' understanding of this work is at a satisfactory level, their presentation is often untidy and this makes the interpretation of what they have recorded more difficult.
96. The co-ordinator provides good quality, well-informed management of the subject and has identified the right priorities for improvement through effective monitoring. She checks the teachers' planning and their evaluations of how well lessons have worked and what needs to improve. The co-ordinator's and teachers' perceptive evaluations of the effectiveness of planning are carefully used to improve future provision. The co-ordinator provides good advice and support for teachers and ensures that the pupils' cultural awareness is well promoted through the subject.

## **HISTORY**

97. The teachers' planning is now underpinned by a scheme of work that reflects the national guidelines and this is a good improvement since the last inspection. The picture of pupils' attainment is similar and they reach the expectations for their ages at seven and eleven. Only two lessons were observed, but the scrutiny of pupils' previous work and teachers' planning, along with discussions with pupils, indicates that the majority of pupils are making at least satisfactory progress in the subject.
98. The strengths in the subject are:
- The good range of visits and visitors to school that support the pupils' learning.
  - The opportunities that pupils have to use their skills in writing to express their ideas and set out their findings.
99. A point for improvement is that there are limited computer programs to support pupils' learning, although there are plans to address this.
100. Year 2 pupils have looked at holidays in the past and how these have changed over time, with people now more easily able to travel further. They have gathered information from their parents and grandparents about how they spent holidays and looked at old pictures of holidays at the seaside. From these sources they can identify what has changed. Year 3 pupils are studying the Romans in Britain and know that the roads were important for the efficient operation of the army. They have used the Internet to research information about Roman times. Year 5 pupils have written good, perceptive accounts of how they felt as an abandoned child, a criminal or a monk in Tudor times. They used their knowledge of the period very effectively to add detail to these accounts. The Year 6 pupils have a sound understanding of life in Victorian times and of the significant people of that era who shaped the social reforms of the time. They have written competent accounts, after researching from a variety of sources, detailing the conditions and dangers of working in Victorian factories. The pupils enjoy the subject and are particularly enthusiastic about the good range of visits that are organised to support their learning.
101. The teaching is good. In a lesson with Year 5 pupils, well-prepared resources enabled the pupils to gain a good insight into the difficulties faced by the villagers of the plague village, Eyam, and how these people sought to stop the plague from spreading. By the end of the lesson, all of the pupils were able to record their feelings or findings through well-planned written tasks and the more able pupils created a newspaper report which would later be word processed. In a very good lesson in Year 2, the pupils were transfixed when a teacher dressed as Samuel Pepys visited the classroom to answer their questions about the Great Fire of London. The pupils had prepared their questions carefully, after researching from books about the clothing, buildings, food and transport of the time. They asked questions such as "What was the smell like in the streets and why were you in your underwear?" sensibly, and listened carefully to the answers.
102. The new co-ordinator for the subject is providing satisfactory management but has not yet had the opportunity to check teaching and learning, although teachers' planning has been monitored.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

103. Prior to the opening of the new computer suite, pupils made slower progress and did not reach the standards expected for their age in some areas. Since the beginning of the year all classes have used the suite regularly. Pupils are making rapid progress and standards have already risen. In the topics covered pupils reach the expected standards. The comprehensive planning scheme indicates that the school intends to fill remaining gaps by the end of the year,

to meet all the requirements of the National Curriculum. Therefore provision and progress have improved significantly since the previous inspection.

104. Strengths in the subject are:

- The new structured planning scheme, which builds pupils' learning in small steps.
- The determination of the staff to get the best value out of the computer suite.
- The wide range of experiences and skills that pupils now acquire quickly.
- The good support given to teachers and pupils by the co-ordinator, the on-site technician and the teaching assistants.
- Very good links with the high school, enabling Year 6 pupils to develop more advanced skills in presenting information using sound and movement.

105. Areas for development are:

- To use assessment information to accelerate the learning of higher attaining pupils.
- To use the classroom computers, when these are available, to better support learning in other subjects.
- To extend the hardware for pupils to sense and monitor data.

106. The teachers and pupils are delighted by the new facilities. The teaching in both infants and juniors is good. In lessons the teachers get the pupils off to a quick start and explain to them how the computer skills will help them in other subjects. Teachers plan well and build up the lessons as a series of steps to learning. For instance, Year 4 pupils practised standing and turning in right angles, then observed how the floor robot could be programmed to do the same. This information enabled them to try more difficult programming on the computer screens. As a result they gained a good understanding of what programming is about and helped them solve problems when the software proved more difficult than they at first thought.

107. Similarly, when Year 2 pupils learned the skill of inserting line breaks and capital letters they understood how this would be useful in neat presentation of English work. All teachers focus well on the important basic skills. As a result, Year 2 pupils are good at word processing and using the computer in their artwork. Classroom computers are not used as much as possible for learning in other subjects, but teachers are waiting for them to be connected to the main network. The school's programme to use the suite for some of the work in literacy and numeracy is very effective, and the school is ahead of many others in this respect. This doubles the time available to pupils and extends their progress in particular topics in English and mathematics. For example, Year 4 pupils rounded off their classroom work on similes in poetry with a riot of verse, the computers making the drafting easy for them. This strong enthusiasm, allied to very good concentration, is typical of all the sessions in the suite. Pupils behave well and think hard during them.

108. The co-ordinator has developed a strong sense of purpose in the teaching team. The staff are determined to get the most benefit from the suite and are looking forward to the completion of their training, which will enable them to widen the range of their input even further. Teachers and classroom assistants keep a general track of pupils' attainment in ICT. The teachers are well placed to begin to use the assessment side of the planning scheme to identify the more able pupils and set them more challenging work. The pupils with special educational needs, however, get good support in lessons enabling them to progress as fast as their classmates. The teachers are aware that they cannot yet fully exploit pupils' skills in supporting learning in lessons outside the computer suite at present, because there are too few computers to do this. The school has good plans to extend the provision of computers in the classrooms in the near future and has earmarked funding to do this.

## **MUSIC**

109. It was not possible to judge overall standards in music, or the quality of teaching, because only one lesson was seen and no composing or performing was seen. The teaching in the lesson seen was good and evidence from listening to pupils sing in assemblies shows that this aspect of the schools' provision is sound. From discussions with the co-ordinator and a scrutiny of teachers' long and medium-term planning, it is apparent that all the requirements of the National Curriculum are being met.
110. The new co-ordinator is well qualified and has already raised the profile of the subject through developing the school choir. They have sung at Christmas in a local shopping mall and at a local centre for old people. In rehearsal they sing with enthusiasm and great enjoyment. Overall standards in singing are good. Pupils sing hymns in tune, in time and with enthusiasm. They listen to other pupils playing with attention and appreciation. The school has three recorder groups, which are well supported. Additional tuition for the clarinet and flute showed its success when pupils played at the start and end of assemblies during the inspection.
111. The new scheme of work is helping to address the issues identified in the last report concerning teachers' confidence in teaching music. In the lesson seen, the teacher had planned the lesson well with clear learning objectives to develop pupils' sense of rhythm and beat. She led them confidently in singing songs and they responded with enthusiasm to changes in pace and tempo. Pupils were eager to contribute to the lesson and enjoyed the extra challenges that developed throughout the lesson.
112. The management of the subject is sound. The new co-ordinator has already developed a policy for music and introduced the new planning guidance. The school improvement plan contains appropriate targets for future development. Resources have benefited from local funding, particularly for junior classes, and are being used well to contribute to the raising of standards. There is currently no systematic monitoring of teaching and learning but the co-ordinator is aware of standards through working in other classes and she has an overview of teachers' planning on a termly basis.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

113. As at the time of the last inspection, standards are similar to those found in other schools. As they move through the school, the majority of pupils make satisfactory progress in developing a range of skills and movements typical for their ages.
114. Strengths in the subject are:
- Some very high quality teaching in dance.
  - Teachers place a good emphasis on developing pupils' awareness of safety in lessons.
  - The curriculum is enhanced for considerable numbers of pupils through the very good range of after-school clubs.
115. A point for improvement is:
- Teachers' direct questioning of individual pupils to improve involvement and concentration.
116. During the inspection, only lessons in dance and gymnastics were seen. Discussion with the co-ordinator, other teachers and pupils, and a scrutiny of teachers' planning show that all the requirements of the National Curriculum are met. The school lacks a grassed playing field, but the school hall and playground are well used to enable all groups of pupils to participate in indoor and outdoor team games, athletics and gymnastics and to respond to music through dance and movement. Junior pupils in Years 3 and 4 take part in swimming lessons and by the end of Year 6 most are able to swim the required 25 metres. Year 6 pupils benefit from a residential visit to an outdoor centre.
117. The teaching seen in three lessons was satisfactory and one excellent lesson was seen in Year 2. Teachers show a satisfactory subject knowledge, which they use well to guide pupils to improve their performance. As pupils are praised and encouraged, they increase in

confidence and are willing to experiment and improve. This was a particular feature of the excellent lesson seen. The teaching had a clear focus on developing pupils' sense of imagination and they responded with flair, feeling and confidence in what they could do. The lesson was well linked to an earlier lesson of the Great Fire of London, and all pupils responded very well to the guidance and direction of the teacher as they moved about becoming 'flames' that developed into the Great Fire before gradually subsiding. They showed style and expression in the ways they interpreted the mood of the music to their movements and this was helped considerably by the use of 'paper flame streamers'. At the end of the lesson there was a real sense of enjoyment and achievement in pupils' performances.

118. Pupils generally respond well to physical education and the majority listen well and follow instructions. Teachers are careful to give guidance without it becoming over direction, so that pupils are encouraged to experiment for themselves as well as follow set patterns of movement. When using small and large apparatus they do so safely as was seen in a Year 1 lesson. Teachers are quick to reinforce safety in setting out and putting away apparatus..."How many people carry a mat?"..."How do we carry a bench?" All pupils are able to move about the hall safely with good awareness of their space and that of others. When asked to act as critics of each other's performances, pupils respond sensibly and use appropriate language : "Land softly, "Point fingers and toes."
119. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is only recently in post but already has an action plan for future development of the subject. She is enthusiastic about raising the profile of the subject in the school but has yet to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. The new policy and scheme of work to support teachers' planning reflects national guidance and resources are appropriate. The curriculum is enhanced for considerable numbers of pupils through the good range of after-school clubs, which includes fencing, and the visits of specialist coaches and groups. Specialist coaching in basketball for Years 5 and 6, and a dance group for all classes have all helped to extend the experiences of pupils in physical education.