

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **BROOK ACRE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Padgate, Warrington

LEA area: Warrington

Unique reference number: 111202

Headteacher: Mr M Hare

Reporting inspector: Mr M Carter  
20714

Dates of inspection: 17<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> January 2000

Inspection number: 190347

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior and Infant with nursery class
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Brook Acre Community Primary School Hilden Road Padgate Warrington Cheshire WA2 0JP
Postcode:	
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Kerr-Brown
Date of previous inspection:	11 <sup>th</sup> to 15 <sup>th</sup> November 1996

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Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
M Carter	Registered inspector	Geography	What sort of school it is
		History	The school's results and achievements
			Teaching
			School improvement
W Twiss	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			Care of pupils
			Partnership with parents
			Leadership and management.
S Dutson	Team inspector	Science	The curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils
		Information technology	
		Design and technology	
P Cassidy	Team inspector	Mathematics	
		Physical education	
		Special educational needs.	
		Religious education	
J Underwood	Team inspector	English	
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		Under fives	

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

### **Information about the school**

The school is a little larger than the average for its type and has 270 pupils with a further 26 full-time equivalent children in the part-time nursery class that accepts children of three. The school's roll has fallen slightly in the last year. Children join the reception class in the September or January before they are five. The number of boys at the school is very similar to the number of girls. There is a significant number of pupils that are admitted and some who leave the school each year. There are very few pupils with English as an additional language and very few from ethnic minority backgrounds. However, there is a very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and more pupils with statements than average. Socio-economic indicators are very low and the school serves an area of considerable economic disadvantage. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is well above the national average. On entry to the nursery, many children have little competence in communicating and about a quarter need speech therapy. By the time they are five, attainment is still low in most areas of learning and there are few pupils with standards close to the local education authority's average in English particularly.

### **How good the school is**

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. It provides a rich curriculum and a secure start to the pupils' education helping them to mature well, despite some very low standards on entry. The leadership and management are good and the school is well run, but there is a wide variation in the quality of teaching, which is satisfactory overall. However, the standards of attainment are very low in English, mathematics and science, although the pupils' attitudes are good and behaviour is sound. A satisfactory number of improvements have been made since the last inspection, but these have not yet resulted in higher standards. However, the school's major strengths have been retained and overall it provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Provides very good protection and care for the pupils, both physically and in their emotional development.
- Fosters good attitudes, personal development and very good enthusiasm for school.
- Forms and uses good partnerships with parents and with other institutions that significantly enhances provision.
- There is a good quality and a wide range of rich learning opportunities, provided through the overall curriculum, special events and extra-curricular activities.
- The provision for the pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development is good and it is very good for their moral development.
- The leadership and management are good and effectively promote the school's aims using finance efficiently and enhancing it through the use of special grants.

### **What could be improved**

- Standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science.
- Consistency in the quality of teaching, learning objectives and the application of handwriting, homework and marking policies.
- The use of assessment information to identify what pupils know and to help plan the work for different groups of pupils, especially higher attainers.
- The details of progression that pupils make through the curriculum and the links that other subjects have with numeracy and literacy.
- The rigour of monitoring strategies for the quality of teaching and the curriculum.

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

## How the school has improved since its last inspection

The school was last inspected in November 1996. Since then a number of improvements have been made although the standards of attainment of eleven year olds have fallen overall. Results of the National Curriculum assessments for eleven year olds in 1998 were particularly low and halted a rising trend. The 1999 results were a significant improvement on this, but did not rise enough to redeem the lost ground. There are now fewer lessons with unsatisfactory teaching, but there is still a considerable variation in quality of teaching. The range of types of writing tasks has improved, although pupils' skills of writing remain unsatisfactory. The school has corrected some unsatisfactory aspects found in the last inspection and improved the stairwells at the building's rear as well as the nursery path. There is now a daily act of collective worship contributing to the pupils' spiritual development and arrangements for pupils with special educational needs have been carefully considered and are satisfactory. However, some schemes of work still provide insufficient guidance for teachers to plan for a progressive curriculum and some aspects of assessment information are not fully in use. Overall the school has made satisfactory improvement.

## Standards

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with all schools			similar schools	Key
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	E	E*	E	D	well above average    A above average        B average                    C below average          D well below average     E
Mathematics	C	E*	E	D	
Science	A	E*	E*	E	

These results are based on pupils who have now left the school. They show attainment that is well below the national average in English and mathematics and in the lowest five percent nationally in science. In comparison to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, attainment is below average in English and mathematics and well below in science. The chart also shows that in 1998 results were all in the lowest five percent, but that those for 1999 show a little improvement. The inspection found that, while still unsatisfactory, the standards of present pupils were improving in English and mathematics where the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy supported teachers. Standards in science remain unsatisfactory. The school's targets for English and mathematics attainment have been raised indicating confidence in the rising standards. Although in information technology the pupils' attainment is insufficiently broad standards are satisfactory. In religious education standards meet the expectations of the agreed syllabus. Learning in art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education is satisfactory. In music in Key Stage 2, it is good.

## Pupils' attitudes and values

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The pupils' are very enthusiastic about their school and show good interest in the lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory, but much that is good. The behaviour of a number of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties is well managed. The pupils are usually polite and helpful to each other and to adults.
Personal development and relationships	Good. The pupils learn to respect others' views and to form good relationships with each other and their teachers.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Well promoted by the school but a small number of pupils continue to arrive late for school.

Considering the late start that many of the pupils have in communicating and relating to others, they make rapid progress in these aspects. Teaching and the school's policies significantly impact in helping pupils to develop socially and in their attitudes to learning and to others. Although the playground is lively, play is friendly and the pupils learn that their actions affect others.

## Teaching and learning

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	good	satisfactory	satisfactory

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

Teaching is satisfactory overall, although there is a wide variation in its quality. Since the last inspection the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has halved and is now 7%. In nearly 10%, it is very good or better, while in 53% the teaching is satisfactory and in nearly 30% it is good. Literacy and numeracy lessons are being effective in improving the pupils' skills, but these strategies are seldom used to help learning in other subjects. Many lessons have exciting ideas to help capture the pupils' interest. Most teachers work very hard to encourage the pupils and raise their self-esteem, often spending considerable time resolving any emotional difficulties. However, only in the best lessons do teachers take sufficient account of the differences in the pupils' prior attainment, and challenge higher attainers enough. Pupils with special educational needs are taught in groups in, or near class lessons, or by withdrawal. There is good provision of extra teaching for such pupils although its quality is monitored insufficiently often. All teachers are aware of the low levels of spoken and written language that many pupils have, and are keen to help pupils appropriately, although the approach is not systematic. Some teachers are insufficiently rigorous in applying such school policies such as those for handwriting, homework and marking.

## Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good in the range, but with weaknesses concerning progression. The curriculum is broad and made relevant to the pupils through interesting ways to teach it. It is enhanced through many special events, extra-curricular activities, and links abroad.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory overall. Provision meets requirements and recommendations and the pupils have much extra help.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Presently there are very few relevant pupils, but there is appropriate provision, which is effective.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for the pupils' moral development is very good. Pupils learn well what is right and wrong. Their self-esteem is strongly fostered and most become responsible and caring. There are many opportunities for high quality reflection and for cultural awareness.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school works hard with all the appropriate agencies to provide a safe and very caring environment.

The curriculum is rich and regularly enhanced by visits or visitors. The links with a school in Africa have led to much enrichment. Teachers often plan lessons that are exciting, relevant and capture the pupils' interest well. However, the detail of the curriculum in providing progressive learning is weak especially in progression in learning skills and in those classes where there are two ages of pupils. Literacy and numeracy strategies are seldom used to support learning in other subjects, while several teachers use information technology to enhance other subjects. Child protection procedures are particularly effective. The school's pastoral role is of great value to the pupils and to their parents. Parents feel it is easy to approach the school and are pleased with the information they get about their children's progress, but some find it difficult to get a sense of their child's comparative attainment. Many have taken part in training sessions or help in the school.

## How well the school is led and managed

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good, but with some aspects of monitoring lacking effectiveness. A sound management structure helps communication and the strong pastoral ethos is well promoted, including the need to raise standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Sound. A good knowledge and involvement with the school, but less secure in its strategic oversight. All statutory requirements, except those for appraisal, are fulfilled.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Many systems now being employed will offer further direction in future.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Several grants have been secured and used well to improve the pupils' opportunities to gain from school fully.

The school's major strength in its pastoral provision, has been maintained with a strong ethos of care for the pupils' overall development. This is consistently promoted by the headteacher. The staff are efficiently deployed, the school has sound accommodation and overall its learning resources are satisfactory, despite weak provision in some subjects. Grants are used well and the governors apply the principles of best value. Monitoring systems lack rigour. Curriculum progression is insufficiently monitored and the monitoring of teaching has not led to identifiable improvements. However, the analysis of test results is beginning to impact on the school's direction and raise awareness of areas where improvements are most needed.

### 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>• The children like the school.</li> <li>• They make good progress.</li> <li>• Standards in mathematics, science, art, music and physical education.</li> <li>• The school is very approachable.</li> <li>• It gives the children good self-esteem and helps them become responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More information about the comparative attainment of their children.</li> <li>• Standards in writing.</li> <li>• Inconsistency in the giving of homework.</li> </ul>

Generally, parents are extremely supportive of the school and its work. A good number have used the opportunities that the school offers for their own learning at courses run at the school and help in the school. Inspectors agree with many of the points made. However, standards in mathematics and science are below national averages as are those for writing. However, the school is very supportive of parents and significantly aids the personal development of the pupils.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

- 1 The 1999 results of the National Curriculum tests for eleven year olds show that standards in English, mathematics and science are well below average. In 1998 they were very low indeed, but since then they have been rising. Nevertheless, in English less than half the pupils reached the expected level in 1999, while in mathematics just over half did. Very few pupils achieved highly. In science, a little less than half reached the expected level, but this was just three-fifths of the average proportion nationally and well below the average for schools having similar pupils. In English and mathematics these results are still below average for schools having similar pupils.
- 2 The results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests for seven year olds are very low in reading and well below average in writing and mathematics. In all three subjects a much smaller proportion of pupils than is usual, reached the expected standards and very few indeed achieved a high level. In reading standards rose slightly, but in maths they fell slightly. In comparison to schools having similar pupils, these results are below average in mathematics and well below average in reading and writing. Teachers' assessments are used in science and here they also showed the proportion achieving the expected level was well below average.
- 3 Standards in the Desirable Outcomes of Learning for children at age five are well below average. Few pupils reach the average standards for the local education authority's area. On entry to the nursery, many children are immature for their age, especially in their ability to talk and understand. Furthermore, about a quarter of the children are in need of speech therapy. Inspectors' findings reflected the assessments made. A small minority of children in the nursery are confident and have sufficient competence to communicate effectively. When in the reception class, this minority has increased significantly, although standards of speaking and listening are still well below average. Many children enter Year 1 and start learning the subjects of the National Curriculum hardly having met the Desirable Learning Outcomes for children under five.
- 4 The standards observed by inspectors show some improvements have been made since 1999, but they are still generally low, especially in English, mathematics and most of all in science. Standards remain unsatisfactory in these subjects in both key stages. While many pupils speak competently by the age of eleven, reading and writing are unsatisfactory. Few pupils use books to gain information and in their writing, few integrate the skills they have been learning in the range of writing tasks they are given. In information technology, standards are satisfactory in both key stages, although in Key Stage 2, the pupils have not gained sufficient skills and knowledge in some areas of the programme of study. In religious education standards are satisfactory and meet the expectations of the agreed syllabus. The low levels of core skills, such as language, writing and number, affects the pupils' ability to record and show their learning in many other subjects of the curriculum.
- 5 While many pupils start learning from the National Curriculum with low attainment, there is a small number, whose attainment is similar to the local average. These higher attaining pupils often make insufficient progress because their ability is not fully recognised. When given opportunities such as in open-ended questioning by the teacher, they are able to demonstrate their potential. However, due to the limitations of some of the tasks set and to the pupils' limited writing skills, especially in other subjects than English, these pupils' understanding is hidden. However, the misunderstanding and lack of skills of pupils with special educational needs are clear and well known. Consequently, the learning of these pupils (amounting to nearly half the school) is sound overall and occasionally very good.

- 6 Since the last inspection the standards of attainment fell sharply in 1998 and have started to rise again, but for eleven year olds they are still lower than those described in the last report. A combination of factors led to the very low results of 1998. These include a high level of pupil mobility and a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. These factors frequently affect standards in the school, but were particularly strong in 1998. Some statistics from the school's testing regime, indicate a degree of comparative improvement in attainment across Key Stage 2. Literacy and Numeracy strategies are being effective in lessons, but it is too early to attribute substantive improvements. However, despite the many adverse factors such as high levels of immaturity on entry, high levels of special educational needs, the level of pupil mobility and of emotional insecurity, most pupils make at least satisfactory progress. The school has now set targets for the overall attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2. These are appropriate in respect of the individual age groups, but the school is considering raising some to be more challenging. Overall, the pupils' achievements are satisfactory.

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

- 7 The pupils' attitudes to school are good. They display a keen enthusiasm for the school and feel valued whilst in its care. Over fifty pupils, for example, regularly attend the school's breakfast club. This is particularly effective in engendering an enthusiasm for school and in building positive relationships with staff and peers. In lessons, pupils respond to interesting teaching with a sense of enquiry and desire to know more. In one Year 6 group, for example, pupils who were receiving extra help for their learning, challenged the teacher with searching questions about vowels and consonants. Pupils are keen to talk about their work and show care and respect for property. In the reception class, for instance, pupils carefully helped to change the tapes which they were listening to. The school continues to achieve the good attitudes to learning that were identified in its last inspection.
- 8 Overall, standards of behaviour are satisfactory. In classes and around the school, pupils act sensibly and are responsible. They play together well and encourage their friends to join in with games. Lunchtime sessions are orderly and provide good opportunities for the pupils to develop their social skills. Some of the classes have a high number of pupils who need extra help to moderate their behaviour. The teachers know their pupils well and have high expectations of behavioural standards. When required they intervene appropriately and deal effectively with the occasional traumas which occur. This is effective in ensuring that there is no disruption to lessons and that pupils do not miss out aspects of their learning. The teachers are successful in preventing bullying and other forms of oppressive behaviour. The school's recent exclusion of five pupils was necessary to deal with a serious incident. However, exclusions are not a regular feature of the school's approach to behaviour management.
- 9 Personal development is good and the pupils engage in positive relationships throughout the school. In classes, pupils take responsibility for routine jobs. They, for example, provide drinks for the other pupils before school. The pupils are encouraged to lead initiatives. In developing their concern for others, they help to raise funds to sponsor a child in Kenya. This helps them to understand other cultures and that other people may have different needs. The school encourages even the youngest children to develop self-esteem. In one assembly seen, the pupils in the reception class enthusiastically acted a story in front of parents and the whole school. The school offers the pupils opportunities to go on residential visits. These are valued by those who attend as a useful way of developing independence.
- 10 Attendance is in line with the national picture. Staff work to hard maintain attendance levels and to ensure that the majority of pupils come to lessons on time. This has a positive effect on the pupils' attitudes and on their learning.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 11 Teaching is satisfactory overall. The quality of teaching in just under ten per cent of the lessons is very good, including a small amount of excellent teaching. In thirty per cent, teaching is good and in just over half it is satisfactory. However, in seven per cent the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. This proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has reduced significantly since the last inspection. Teaching is more often than not, of good quality for the pupils in the nursery and reception classes who are under five. In the rest of the school it is more mixed and satisfactory overall. Throughout the National Curriculum subjects and religious education, teaching is satisfactory, although in music at Key Stage 2 it is good and helped by the variety of teachers, with specialist knowledge. In the areas of learning for pupils under five, teaching is at least satisfactory and in language and literacy, mathematical and personal and social development, it is good.
- 12 Most teachers work hard to provide interesting lessons with activities that motivate the pupils well. The better lessons have exciting ideas and a variety of activities at the right level of difficulty for the most of the pupils. The majority of the classrooms have relevant and well designed displays that provide further interest and stimulation for what is being learnt. Some of these are of very good quality and become an integral part of the lessons. The school employs two full-time teachers, without a class responsibility. Their work is largely to enhance the learning of groups of pupils, most of which have a special educational need. This is often by withdrawing the pupils from the class. Many lessons are enhanced by the work of a good number of classroom assistants. This help is usually well organised by the class teachers and often involves giving specific guidance to groups of pupils. In the best lessons, some assistants collect information about what pupils have learnt and this augments the teacher's assessments. A number of parents and others, also offer their time to help in classrooms and they are often used in similar ways to augment the teacher's instructions with groups of pupils and in listening to pupils read.
- 13 While the organisation of these three sources of assistance is usually done well, the quality of the teaching help given is very varied. For example, some of the group teaching of pupils with special educational needs is of high quality, following the needs outlined in the pupils' individual education plans and effectively helping pupils gain basic skills. In one lesson a group of pupils with special educational needs quickly learnt to spell a small number of common words, because they were at the right level, the teaching motivated the pupils and there was a good variety of activities well suited to their needs. However, in other cases the teaching insufficiently matches the pupils' needs or fails to help them gain competence and here the pupils' progress is severely affected. For example, in a lesson where a group of Key Stage 1 pupils with low attainment were reading together, insufficient help was given in strategies to aid the reading of difficult words and sometimes phonic help was incorrectly given as letter names.
- 14 Overall the teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach is sound. Many have a satisfactory knowledge of the programmes of study and of pupils' common errors. In the best lessons, these mistakes are used well in whole class sessions to extend the pupils' learning, whilst encouraging their self-esteem. Further intensive training is planned to develop the teachers' knowledge of the National Numeracy Strategy. In some lessons there are weaknesses in teachers' knowledge of information technology and the best ways to teach it. However, several systems are relatively recent and more time is needed to gain familiarity and find the most effective use. In occasional lessons of science and of art, teachers also lack confidence in the subject matter. In music, whilst a few teachers have low levels of musical confidence, the pupils' musical experience is significantly enhanced, especially in Key Stage 2, by the very knowledgeable teaching of occasional and regular visiting specialists.

- 15 The teaching of the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information technology is satisfactory overall. In literacy lessons, the teachers have securely introduced appropriate strategies and focus on the development of skills. Most class lessons have an appropriate emphasis upon speaking and listening, but there is now a wider range of writing tasks and literacy work is complemented in a number of other subjects. In numeracy there is a much greater emphasis on mental and other calculations than at the time of the last inspection. Teachers are keen to help pupils gain these skills, but sometimes miss opportunities for pupils to apply these skills to solve problems. In information technology there is a greater emphasis on the group and class teaching of keyboard and other skills related to the effective use of computers. Teachers are also beginning to encourage appropriate use of information technology to support other subjects, but this is not yet consistent.
- 16 The expectations that teachers have of their pupils are varied. Generally, lessons have adequate challenge and they help the majority of pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding. This is encouraged by the many lessons with interesting and sometimes exciting content. However, the pupils' generally low levels of spoken and written communication occasionally lead teachers to make the learning easier than needed. This is particularly so for the minority of pupils whose attainment is higher and not easily recognised. The school's guidance about forming clear objectives for the pupils' learning is helpful in some of the planning but not consistent and other lessons suffer from a lack of clarity about what is to be learnt. Class teachers are very aware of the needs of lower attainers and the many pupils with special educational needs. Here tasks are often suitably adapted or the pupils are taught in appropriate groups by well deployed assistants. While most parents are happy with the homework set for pupils, it is inconsistent between classes and sometimes irregular, reducing its impact on the pupils' learning.
- 17 Class management is usually good. The pupils' behaviour is often good in lessons because teachers manage discipline well. The pupils know what is acceptable behaviour and the teachers usually apply appropriate rewards and sanctions whilst retaining the pupil's self esteem and emotional stability. This is in spite of a number of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The sound pace of many lessons also helps pupils to sustain their interest, despite the difficulty that many have, particularly in Key Stage 1, to listen and remember well. Most lessons are planned to have a variety of activities and to use resources appropriately. Occasionally, there is too little use of equipment or too long spent on introductory sessions and these lessons become less effective. However, in many lessons teachers do not use the information gained from assessments enough to make the work progressive and accurately matched to the differing attainments of the pupils. The quality of marking is not consistent and sometimes gives pupils few ideas of how to improve. The teachers know the pupils and their personal circumstances well, but knowledge of their learning is less detailed. Nevertheless, most teachers establish good relationships with their pupils and encourage them well, often giving praise and advice and spending time in helping any emotional problems they may have.

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

- 18 The curriculum for children under five is planned to meet the nationally recommended areas of learning identified in the Desirable Learning Outcomes and provides a sound range and balance of learning experiences.

- 19 At Key Stages 1 and 2 the overall curriculum is relevant and balanced. It includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education, providing a broad range of worthwhile and often high quality experiences, which broadly meet the pupils' interests and previous experiences, including those of pupils with special educational needs. This richness is a strength because it enables pupils of different levels of attainment to take part in lessons as well as promoting self-esteem and motivation through the relevance of the activities to the pupils' lives. However, progression in acquiring skills is less secure, especially in classes with more than one age group. Curriculum provision and planning is overseen by the headteacher. Some teachers find the termly and yearly planning difficult for the mixed age classes. In some subjects the schemes of work give little guidance on the progression of learning especially in the skills of the subjects. However, there is more whole school subject planning than at the time of the last inspection, especially in the content to be taught. The progress of groups of pupils in learning skills sequentially is not identified clearly or monitored closely enough.
- 20 The curriculum meets all statutory requirements. The time allocated for teaching is in line with recommendations and the proportion for the core subjects of English, Mathematics and Science is appropriate. The religious education scheme of work is based on the locally agreed syllabus and seeks to enrich pupils' spiritual awareness and knowledge of faiths through visits to places of worship, for example the Sikh Temple. There is a daily act of collective worship in which pupils have an opportunity to reflect and think about aspects of their lives. This has improved since the last inspection and now meets statutory requirements. These daily meetings are very positive and have a unifying effect on the school. The pupils are appropriately tolerant of one another, the atmosphere is relaxed and friendly and behaviour is usually of a high standard. In assemblies, lessons of religious education and other occasions, pupils are invited to reflect in a variety of ways. They are given opportunities to appreciate their own emotional reactions to experiences and together these occasions represent good provision for their spiritual development. Provision is made for the teaching of sex and drugs education through science lessons and involves visits from the community nurse and the police. Legal requirements are met.
- 21 The school has effectively planned for literacy and numeracy lessons. These are well established and, due to the positive attitude of the teachers, the detailed planning is helping to raise the pupils' attainment, despite those occasions when learning objectives lack clarity. However, their impact in some aspects is less strong so far, since the links with other subjects have not been sufficiently used.
- 22 The Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs is met fully. More than two pupils out of every five are entered on the register of special educational needs and consequently the school's provision, in terms of teachers, assistants and the curriculum reflects this. These pupils are supported well and integrated fully into the school community. They are withdrawn from classes and work in very small groups with a specialist teacher providing detailed basic skills training. This occasionally causes them to miss other lessons. In order to reduce this loss, teachers change the position of subjects on the timetable so that the same subject is not missed every week. Senior teachers are very aware of this difficulty, and have rightly concluded that the gains in basic skills have a very high priority. Consequently, this change of lessons is monitored, but less is done to help class teachers build aspects of the basic skills learning into their own lessons for the groups of pupils with special educational needs.
- 23 There is a range of after school clubs and activities. They are popular, highly regarded and well attended by pupils. The homework club is viewed positively by pupils and attendance is very good. Sporting clubs and choir have a good balance of boys and girls and different age groups. The activities help to reinforce links with other local schools and the community. The main choir regularly performs concerts at the local church. Entry to the small choir is by audition and a high standard of performance is achieved. Residential visits are organised. The uptake is good. The pupils benefit from these opportunities to socialise and be part of a busy, active community. Together with the opportunities in lessons and around the school, there is good provision for pupils to develop socially.

- 24 The school has started a breakfast club, funded by a local education authority grant. The club is well attended and makes a significant impact on the lives of those children who use it. The school is recognising that feeding the children in the morning not only improves their powers of concentration but it also establishes a sense of community and belonging, allowing children of different ages to chat informally whilst sitting at a table to eat.
- 25 The school makes very good provision for the pupils' moral development. A variety of situations are used to teach pupils the difference between right and wrong. Classrooms have their own sets of rules, visitors are treated politely and with respect, good behaviour is commented on and praised and the whole school ethos is one of consideration and friendship. The pupils gain a good sense of fairness and show understanding and tolerance to each other. The school's rules are agreed with and understood well. In many lessons the pupils are taught to consider the effects of their actions on others. Older pupils begin to deal effectively with moral conflicts and are taught to reason well.
- 26 The school has strong links with a school in Soweto and pupils' cultural awareness is significantly increased through this and other links. The school environment is enriched with artwork, largely of African origin, and the presence of an artist in residence has a significant impact on the quality, range and liveliness of the school display work. The nature of British and other cultures is also introduced in lessons such as literacy, history, art and music. These experiences represent good provision for the pupils' cultural development.
- 27 Links with the community are good. The school has set up a training scheme, which allows parents to improve their own study skills and to learn how to use computers. The arrangement is viewed very positively and parents who follow the course can gain accreditation as classroom assistants and their expertise then helps both their own children and the school. In addition the school regularly accepts students from colleges of initial teacher training and those studying for other care qualifications.
- 28 The local secondary school provides technical support for the computer room. This expertise is shared between a group of primary schools and is very successful. Music support is provided in a similar way and has a very positive influence on the school as well as contributing to the pupils' opportunities for transition.

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

- 29 The school has excellent procedures for child protection. Under the leadership of the headteacher and his deputy, all teachers are aware of the procedures. They are actively involved with professional support agencies in providing appropriate care and protection where this is necessary. The school has good working relationships with the health visitor. These are effective in providing routine health screening for the pupils and seeking out specialist help when it is needed. A designated teacher makes regular inspections of the premises and grounds to identify any health and safety hazards. Suitable action is taken to rectify any shortcomings and risk assessments are up-to-date. The procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good.
- 30 Procedures for monitoring the pupils' personal development are good and those for monitoring academic performance are satisfactory. The headteacher and staff carefully analyse the National Curriculum and other test results. In this way, the school is able to identify those pupils who, for example, need extra help or who have potential to do better. The teachers monitor personal development effectively. They encourage the pupils to build up a record of their successes and to have a sense of pride in their work. The teachers have a sound knowledge of the personal needs of the pupils in their care. Through this they ensure that pupils who need extra help are allocated to the most appropriate groups in classes. The school's expectations of high standards of behaviour and attendance are formalised into policies. These are well understood by staff and pupils. The procedures and policies are very effective in preventing oppressive behaviour and in maintaining attendance levels.

- 31 The procedures for assessing the pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory. They are not always applied consistently and in some subjects, such as science and information technology, they are in the early stages of development. As yet, there is little systematic assessment on which to base support and future curriculum planning in some subjects. The school has made a sound start in tracking pupils' attainment as they move through the school by using a number of tests. This valuable work is beginning to be used more fully to targeting support to pupils who presently under-achieve. The school's procedures for assessing pupils when they come into school for the first time are effective. They include an initial home visit and formalised procedures are effective in identifying those children who need extra help, such as speech therapy, but the information gained is difficult to use to identify progress for pupils under five.
- 32 Overall, because of its pastoral strengths, the school provides very effective support and guidance for its pupils. As a result of its monitoring, the school identifies the need for extra teaching for pupils who need additional help with their learning and a homework club. The school maintains very good links with the secondary school to which most of the pupils go when they leave. Subject weeks, shared resources and specialist help, provide additional support for pupils as they move on to the next stage of their education. The previous inspection report identified the support and guidance offered by the school as a major strength. The present inspection confirms this.

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

- 33 The parents' and carers' views of the school are positive and the school's relationships with them are good. The parents who support the school regularly make a positive impact on its work. All parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire believed that their children liked coming to school. They are satisfied with the way in which the school keeps them informed and felt that it provided an acceptable standard of education.
- 34 The school works hard to develop effective links with parents. It provides a well-supported course for them in partnership with the local authority and college. This is successful in developing self-esteem and specific skills such as literacy. As a result, parents feel more confident about coming into school and helping their children at home.
- 35 Through its weekly newsletter, the school keeps the parents informed of events. An annual report informs the parent about progress and outlines what their children have learnt. The school holds two meetings each year at which the parents can discuss their child's achievements with the teachers. The teachers are on hand at the start and end of the school day. Parents often use this facility to talk about any concerns they may have.
- 36 A home - school agreement is in place. A number of parents regularly come into school to help with work in the classes. They help pupils with important aspects of their work such as reading. Recently, one parent secured funding to provide storybook collections for the pupils to take home, hence making an important contribution to developing a culture of reading at home. The parents are actively encouraged to come into school to see performances. Over thirty parents and carers attended one of the assemblies seen. The school does not have a formal association for the parents but volunteers help to raise funds from time to time. The positive relationships with parents that were reported in the last inspection report are maintained well.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 37 The leadership and management of the school are good. The previous inspection reported an effective and strong style of leadership. The headteacher has a clear vision of the needs of the school and the community that it serves. The management team and the staff share this common purpose. They are, for example, committed to maintaining the very good standards of personal care for the pupils and to raising standards. As a result, the aims of the school are clear. They are strongly reflected in the daily work of the school and in its drive to become the sort of school in which pupils feel valued, are cared for well, learn effectively and try hard to achieve their full potential. The aims and actions of the school carefully promote a sense of equality. The management team and staff work hard to ensure that all pupils have access to the range of opportunities available throughout the school. Suitable role models are used within the school to endorse its commitment to equality.
- 38 The governing body is properly constituted. It meets regularly to discuss such important matters as the school's present priorities and how to fund them. The governors work conscientiously to support the school. Through their effective but, often informal relationships with the headteacher and staff, they maintain a watching brief on how the school is progressing, but their strategic oversight and planning for the future are less thorough.
- 39 The school uses several systems for monitoring its performance. It carefully analyses the results of the National Curriculum tests given to pupils of age 7 and 11. Additional tests are now given to pupils as they progress through the school. Through these methods, the school identifies pupils who have potential to achieve better results in their tests. It provides additional support through extra teaching usually for lower attaining pupils. For example, the school has recently identified a group of boys who are currently underachieving and is considering strategies to help. As a result of such evaluations and actions, the headteacher and governors have increased the school's targets for improving standards.
- 40 There is a satisfactory system for monitoring of the quality of teaching takes place. This has rightly concentrated on the strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Feedback is given to the teachers, but it lacks rigour and is not always followed up. Opportunities to develop teachers' skills in matters such as recognising and challenging the higher attainers are sometimes lost and there is still considerable inconsistency in the effectiveness of teaching.
- 41 The finances of the school are well managed and efficiently administered. An annual budget is allocated to the school's strategic priorities for improvement. Whilst the current plan for school improvement is not always fully costed, it has clear priorities and identifies the overall level of resources needed. The school uses grant funding very effectively. It has successfully sought finance to run courses for parents and to provide a breakfast club, for example. All grants, including those allocated for the provision of extra help for pupils with special educational needs, are spent appropriately for their intended purposes. The headteacher and governors clearly understand the need to obtain value for money when making major purchases for the school. Suitable comparisons of price and quality are made in order to ensure the best value for money.
- 42 The school has enough qualified and experienced teachers and support staff to enable it to teach the National Curriculum fully. Suitable induction arrangements are in place for new staff. Appraisal of individual teachers has lapsed and is not currently taking place. Overall, resources are adequate. A new suite of computers helps the pupils to develop an enthusiasm for information technology. However, some of the equipment for mathematics and science is old and consequently restricts opportunities for full use in some lessons.
- 43 The school's buildings and grounds generally enable the curriculum to be taught. However, library provision is inadequate. The room is too small to accommodate the classes and book stocks are limited. As a result many of the pupils have underdeveloped library skills. The health and safety issues concerning the stairs and pathways, which were a Key Issue for action in the previous inspection report, have been satisfactorily rectified.

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

44 In order to raise standards of attainment throughout the school in English, mathematics and science and in addition to the strategies presently employed, the governors, headteacher and teachers should:

- gain greater consistency in the quality of teaching through;
  - more rigorous monitoring, based on a shared view of criteria for effective teaching and including all those involved in teaching activities,
  - consistent application of policies such as those for planning clear learning objectives, marking, handwriting and homework,
  - the introduction of an appraisal system for teachers that will help to set targets for improvement and identify further training needs,
  - sharing best practice,
  
- make better use of assessment information to identify what pupils know and can do in order to accurately plan the work of groups of pupils, especially those of higher attainment,
  
- improve planning for the progression of pupils' learning through;
  - implementing strategies for the use of literacy and numeracy skills throughout the curriculum,
  - promoting sequential learning through the schemes of work,
  - developing a plan of strategies to increase the pupils' skills of communication from the earliest age,
  
- improve the effectiveness of monitoring procedures to check:
  - progression in the curriculum for all the pupils, especially those in classes of mixed age and
  - progress towards any targets set for the attainment of groups of pupils within classes.

## **OTHER WEAKNESSES THAT GOVERNORS MAY LIKE TO CONSIDER IN THEIR ACTION PLAN**

- Resources for learning in some subjects are weak.
- Library provision is weak.
- Helping parents understand their children's comparative attainment.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	81
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	65

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	8.6	29.6	53	6	1	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	270
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	12	138

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	6	104

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	19
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	27

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	5.29
National comparative data	5.7

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.60
National comparative data	0.5

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

### *Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1*

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	16	24	40

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	5	9	7
	Girls	18	19	18
	Total	23	28	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	58	70	63
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	5	6	11
	Girls	18	18	19
	Total	23	24	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	58	60	75
	National	82	86	87

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

### *Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2*

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	24	24	48

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	13	10
	Girls	14	13	13
	Total	22	26	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	46	54	48
	National	70	69	78

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	11	10
	Girls	14	13	14
	Total	22	24	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	46	50	50
	National	68	69	75

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	269
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	6	1
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)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.6
Average class size	24.8

#### **Education support staff: YR-Y6**

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	100

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	25

Number of pupils per FTE adult	13
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1998/1999
	£
Total income	535354
Total expenditure	533020
Expenditure per pupil	1832
Balance brought forward from previous year	14706
Balance carried forward to next year	17040

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out

287

Number of questionnaires returned

23

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	78	22	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	74	26	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	57	39	4	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	52	26	13	9	0
The teaching is good.	61	39	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	69	22	9	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	74	22	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	26	4	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	69	22	9	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	70	26	4	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	74	17	9	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	56	22	13	0	9

### **Other issues raised by parents**

Many parents are pleased with the opportunities and support the school offers the pupils and themselves. Many have positive views about the standards achieved by pupils, but less so for standards in writing. Some were unsure how standards compared with those in other schools.

## **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**

#### **Personal and social development**

- 45 Attainment in personal and social development is below average although the children quickly begin to learn how to mix and socialise. On entry to the nursery many children find it difficult to share and play with other children. They are often shy and lack the confidence and ability to communicate with others, preferring to be on their own. Many opportunities are provided to develop the children's social skills, particularly in role play activities in the home corner and sharing of equipment in the sand or water trays. In the reception class, the children become more confident and begin to play together sharing resources, learning to take turns and exploring relationships. They behave well in most situations and start to appreciate others. They work well and are able to concentrate and persevere with their learning during the majority of sessions observed. Teachers create a very supportive atmosphere where each child feels special. They have high expectations of behaviour and the children want to please them. Teaching is good and assessments are used well to help plan future lessons and provision. These features were noted in the last inspection.

#### **Language and literacy**

- 46 The children's attainment is very low, although they begin learning new language skills well. In the nursery about a quarter of the children have speech problems needing additional support and many others do not communicate clearly. Throughout all sessions, the children are encouraged to develop their vocabulary so that by the time they are five they have increased their skills in both speaking and listening and are more confident to answer the teacher's questions, although communication is still below average. They begin to recognise some letter sounds and enjoy books, handling them with care. A few children are able to read simple words and talk about the books they are reading: most can recognise their name when written. The more able children are beginning to write, can copy accurately and make attempts at unknown words even if they only write the initial sounds. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers provide an appropriate range of activities involving speaking and listening, reading and writing. Planning is clear and takes into account what the children know and can do. The school has retained the good links with infant classes that were noted in the last report.

#### **Mathematics**

- 47 The children's attainment in this area is well below average although they are encouraged to develop an understanding of numbers through many activities in the nursery. By the time they are part of the reception class, the large majority of children can count to ten, and a few can count to ten in 2's, or 50 in 10's. They are able to devise patterns using regular shapes and a quarter produce patterns using two criteria. An appropriate mathematical vocabulary is taught in both the nursery and reception classes. Children enjoy the tasks and work well. They also experience how to weigh ingredients during cooking sessions in the nursery. The quality of teaching is good and provides well-structured tasks to match the children's abilities. However, assessments provide little means of measuring progress. Good teacher-produced resources are used to encourage the children to participate.

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

- 48 Attainment is below average although the children's learning is satisfactory. Children in the nursery are learning about transport and are using the role play area as a Railway Station, where they issue tickets and serve refreshments. They enjoy learning about this topic through stories and many understand different forms of transport. In the reception class, the children are able to explain about different buildings and road furniture, for example, one child explained what a Post Office is for and knows all the contents of the Post Office in the role-play area. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, with an interesting range of topics chosen to explore the world around, enhanced by appropriate visits, such as a visit planned to the local railway station. Pupils are introduced to the computer in the nursery and reception classes. At the time of the last inspection a good quality and range in the curriculum was noted and this has been retained.

## **Physical development**

- 49 Attainment is average and children develop appropriate skills throughout the nursery and reception classes. The younger children initially find holding a pencil and using scissors difficult, but as they progress their manipulation skills develop soundly, with many children demonstrating an improvement in their pencil control, particularly when colouring, and in the use of scissors and paintbrushes. In the reception class, the children show how they can balance and climb on apparatus and move around the hall with confidence. They also help each other balance on a bench and can work both individually and in pairs. Children enjoy these sessions and take delight in demonstrating their movements and talking about their favourite activity. The quality of teaching is satisfactory with the relevant skills being taught. However, the children are given little insight into how they can improve their movements. A weakness in the provision is a lack of large construction toys in the nursery class.

## **Creative development**

- 50 The children's attainment is below average, but the learning is satisfactory. Exploration of sound through music in the nursery class, includes the singing of rhymes and action songs and the use of untuned percussion instruments. The reception children are able to handle the instruments properly and with respect. They are encouraged to discover the sound of different instruments and how to play them. The older children participate more readily in singing than the younger children and enjoy the activity. Children experience the mixing of primary colour paint to make the secondary colours and many children know which colours to combine, for example mixing red and yellow make orange. During art sessions a choice of resources is usually made available, for example in the nursery class, children were asked to choose the size of the paper and the medium for their picture. Children are also encouraged to sew and made some delightful bear puppets in the reception class. The quality of teaching is satisfactory.

## **English**

- 51 In the National Curriculum tests for eleven years olds in 1999, attainment was well below average in English and below the average for schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. The percentage of pupils achieving the expected or higher levels was well below average. The tests results over the last four years indicate that the performance of both boys and girls were well below the national average with boys and girls falling equally below the national average. Since the drop in attainment in 1998, the school's performance improved in 1999 and this trend continued into the present year, although attainment remains well below the national average.

- 52 In the National Curriculum tests for seven year olds in 1999, attainment was very low compared with the national average in reading and well below the average for schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. For writing the attainment overall was well below the national average and well below in comparison with schools having pupils from similar backgrounds. The results for the past four years indicate that the performance of both boys and girls in reading was very low in comparison to the national average with boys falling more below the national average than girls. The results of the tests over the past four years indicate that the performance of both boys and girls in writing was very low in comparison to the national average, with the girls falling more below the national average than the boys. Attainment is rising slightly as the 1999 results showed an increase in the number of pupils achieving the expected levels and the trend is on course to continue this year. In both reading and writing attainment remains well below the national average but is rising.
- 53 The school's literacy strategy is securely in place. The implementation of the literacy hour has been successful, with teachers having clear ideas of the most effective ways to teach the various elements. There is an appropriate balance between guided reading and guided writing, but the role of literacy in other subjects is under-developed.
- 54 The standards in speaking and listening are below average by the end of Key Stage 1. In class discussions pupils are encouraged to take part and most are confident to try but many have difficulty in explaining what they want to say. The pupils usually listen to each other but in some lessons their enthusiasm of some to answer questions precludes other, less articulate pupils. Most pupils can follow instructions, but standards in reading are below average. Most pupils appreciate and handle books with care. They read a variety of texts; some fluently and with understanding; others with less skill. All the pupils are developing ways to read unfamiliar words and using other clues in the books. Some are able to talk about their favourite book and author, however, few have appropriate skills in using reference books and retrieving specific information. By the end of Key Stage 1, too few pupils write competently and achieve the standard expected for their age. There is a large number of pupils on the register of special educational needs often because of the difficulties they experience with reading and writing. The pupils are encouraged to write for different purposes including retelling familiar stories, instructions for making a sandwich, a letter to Goldilocks apologising to Baby Bear, poems about Autumn and favourite colours, and other creative writing. The teaching also includes the use of story drafting and practising skills such as punctuation and spelling. However pupils often fail to use punctuation effectively or spell correctly in other examples of their writing.
- 55 Key Stage 2 pupils continue to develop literacy skills with increasing confidence. They become more confident talkers in a wide range of situations, although many have difficulties with discussion in depth because of their limited vocabulary. They take part in both class and smaller group discussions. They listen carefully to their teachers and each other. They enjoy sharing their work with their peers. For example, pupils in a Year 5 class were keen to share their work on Perseus and to retell the two different endings to the story that had been found from contrasting sources. The pupils' reading skills are further developed, although the standard of reading remains below average. Most find pleasure in reading books both fiction and non-fiction. Many express their opinions about their favourite books and authors. Few pupils have knowledge of how to use a reference book for research except for some higher attainers. Opportunities for research are limited and insufficient emphasis is put on the acquisition of these skills. However, the pupils tackle a range of writing activities including factual writing, poems, haiku, play scripts, instructions, letters, descriptive and imaginative writing. Higher attaining pupils sometimes produce interesting writing using similes and wider vocabulary. Despite the emphasis on punctuation, grammar and spelling, many pupils fail to use this learning effectively when writing on their own. The pupils have limited opportunities to record their learning by writing in other subjects.

- 56 In both key stages the pupils' learning is satisfactory and they are beginning to develop more confidence in their speaking and reading, by building on their previous knowledge. Writing is improving but the limited vocabulary of many of the pupils impedes its development. In Key Stage 2, despite an emphasis on writing skills, the use of story plans and redrafting, the pupils' work still remains below average. Many pupils do not use punctuation effectively and even spell some common words incorrectly. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. They receive additional support within the classroom, are withdrawn, or the task is made accessible to them. Because of the care in matching the work to the pupils' abilities their learning is sound in the majority of lessons.
- 57 Pupils in both key stages enjoy literacy lessons and are keen to participate. On the whole they listen well during the introductory part of the literacy hour and are enthusiastic to respond to the teachers' questions. The pupils respond positively to group reading and enjoy sharing text. They co-operate with each other during group discussions and many are able to work sensibly on their own with little adult supervision. The majority of pupils express enjoyment in reading. When required to write, many pupils' enthusiasm wanes, although they do not misbehave. This was more noticeable in Key Stage 1. Pupils often take insufficient pride in their work and have a tendency to rush or be careless in their presentation. They share resources, and when required, listen to each other's views and opinions.
- 58 The quality of teaching in both key stages is satisfactory overall. Planning for lessons is satisfactory and the literacy hour has helped teachers to focus more clearly on the progression of skills. Activities are planned to match the abilities of the pupils with appropriate challenges. Each lesson begins with an introductory class session followed by group activities. Teachers are enthusiastic in their approach to literacy. Classroom support staff are briefed about the work they are expected to carry out with their groups and pupils' learning is enhanced by the teacher's close liaison, although in some cases the quality of this work is insufficiently monitored. All teachers have good relationships with their pupils and respond sensitively to their personal needs. There have been improvements since the last inspection in the increased range of writing experiences offered to the pupils.
- 59 There is a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator who regularly monitors teachers' planning to promote continuity and progression. Pupils' work is also assessed so standards can be monitored. Despite this there is an inconsistency in the teaching of handwriting and spelling. The outcomes from monitoring have been insufficiently effective in raising standards. Although the school has recently purchased new books to support the literacy hour there is a lack of up to date reference books in the school library. The pupils' have first hand experiences in drama when they perform their Christmas play or lead Assembly. A weekly drama club, visits by theatre groups, authors, poets and a trip to see a pantomime all enhance the pupils' language curriculum.

## **Mathematics**

- 60 The 1999 National Curriculum assessment results for seven year olds and eleven year olds, show that the proportion of pupils attaining the expected level was well below the national average for both ages. When compared with schools containing pupils from similar backgrounds, standards were well below those for seven year olds, and also below for eleven year olds. The attainment of pupils at the age of seven and eleven has been well below national averages since 1996.
- 61 The attainment of present pupils observed during the inspection remains below the national average at the end of both key stages. However, there is an increased emphasis on the teaching of the basic skills and mental arithmetic during numeracy lessons and this is having some effect in raising standards in these areas. However, there is not always sufficient emphasis on using and applying these skills, resulting in a lack of confidence and understanding in their application by the pupils.

- 62 One of the factors affecting standards is the substantial number of pupils identified as having special educational needs. This large number of pupils needing additional help often has difficulty in reading and understanding mathematical words needed for learning the subject. This also affects their ability to solve problems. The teachers recognise this difficulty and target the work in classrooms to extend the understanding and use of mathematical vocabulary in an attempt to raise standards. This was particularly evident, for example, in a lower junior lesson where good use of resources was made in exploring patterns, reinforcing shape vocabulary and enabling the pupils to use appropriate words. It is clear in some lessons, particularly at Key Stage 1, that many pupils have not sufficiently developed the skills of listening to their teachers, thus hindering their learning.
- 63 Throughout the school, the pupils' attitudes to mathematics are satisfactory. They are enthusiastic during the mental activity and thus respond well to the timed targets set, concentrating well to complete tasks. During the plenary session at the end of each lesson, the pupils are generally eager to demonstrate what they have learnt. Learning is appropriately reinforced when teachers give the pupils opportunities to explain how the answer is achieved. The good relationships that exist, enable the pupils to contribute confidently to discussions. In the group activities they co-operate well, sharing apparatus sensibly. In a very few lessons, some pupils lose interest and become restless.
- 64 At both key stages, the quality of teaching is sound overall. The consistent structure of the planning generally results in well balanced lessons, often with a variety of appropriate teaching styles and strategies. These factors also help promote effective pace and results in a suitable impact on the learning. This was particularly evident during a lesson for older infants about estimation. The good use of resources and some good teaching ideas helped the pupils to share thoughts and encouraged their confidence in predicting, counting and recording. In another lesson for older juniors, a teacher involved the pupils in a stimulating practical activity, demonstrating how to find pairs of factors. During this lesson the activities were changed frequently, helping the pupils to progress in understanding the relationship between multiplication and division. The majority of teachers make sure that there is sufficient mental arithmetic and that the direct teaching of skills has prominence. For example, in a lesson on multiplication with older juniors, the teacher constantly emphasised the various methods to use, helping pupils to understand the processes, and prompting instant recall of multiplication tables. As a result, the pupils showed increased understanding of appropriate strategies and widened the range of calculations that they can do.
- 65 Many teachers have high expectations of the pupils' working rate to complete set tasks. However, although appropriate learning objectives are identified in the planning for each group, the work is not always sufficiently targeted to extend higher attaining pupils. In the introductory mental sessions, questions are often planned to challenge the pupils' understanding. But, at times questions are not used to extend the learning of the higher attainers and are too hard for the lower attainers. In many lessons, teachers use the final whole class part of the lesson appropriately to reinforce learning and assess the pupils' understanding. The organisation of the grouping of pupils in Year 2, is having a positive impact on raising standards. The teachers generally have secure knowledge and understanding of the subject and provide a variety of interesting activities appropriately based on previous learning. In most lessons, the teachers maintain firm standards of behaviour and minor disruptions are dealt with quickly and effectively.
- 66 The provision to help pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. The class teachers have drawn up individual education plans containing clear targets to improve their standards and this leads to satisfactory progress. Teachers' usually plan appropriate activities for these pupils. Where extra support is given for numeracy, in class, it is generally effective, particularly at the ends of each key stage. In some of the withdrawal groups, while relationships are sound, the teaching and learning is less effective, because of generalised objectives in planning and some insecure subject knowledge.

- 67 The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic. A good feature is the way that a teacher of a Key Stage 1 class is able to share aspects of co-ordination. Together, they have successfully updated the planning in the light of the National Numeracy Strategy and have clear ideas for the continued development of the subject. Information technology is occasionally used to support learning in mathematics, but not regularly. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard has improved slightly since the last inspection but not in line with rising standards nationally. The last report identified a lack of continuity in the curriculum and this has improved significantly, with the adoption of the National Numeracy Strategy.

## Science

- 68 Standards are well below national averages at the end of both key stages. In 1999, teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 judged three-quarters of the pupils to have reached the expected level, and this was well below the national average. None were judged at a higher level, although nationally one fifth of pupils were. The 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 showed that 48 percent of pupils had reached the expected level, with none higher. This was very low in comparison to the national average. In comparison with schools having pupils from similar backgrounds, these results were well below the average.
- 69 Present pupils of Year 6, are able to explain the movement of the moon around the earth, using the correct scientific words. They know that we can see the moon because it reflects light from the sun and they are able to demonstrate their knowledge using models. They use reference books and the Internet to satisfactorily find out more information about the planets. Pupils in lower Key Stage 2, carry out fair tests on a variety of materials to find out which is the hardest wearing. They then decide which material would be the best for making the sole of a shoe and record their findings as a simple chart. However, too few pupils have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the range of aspects and skills of the subject.
- 70 Pupils in Key Stage 1 who are studying materials and their properties know that some materials are attracted to a magnet and others are not. They are able to make predictions about the materials they are testing and they can record their findings as pictures. The majority of pupils are able to recognise a fair test and they can use their knowledge to help with the planning of simple experiments. However, the pupils' knowledge is patchy and together with low levels of recording skills, much of the pupils work is unsatisfactory.
- 71 Since the last inspection, attainment of pupils at the end of both key stages has fallen. The school has made a determined effort to continue to develop the range of investigative work previously identified as a weakness by inspectors, but there is little evidence that all pupils have a chance to plan, choose equipment and carry out experiments or tests which are based on their own questions and ideas.
- 72 The majority of pupils make satisfactory progress overall. While the pupils are usually interested and the lessons provide appropriate activities, learning is limited due to the difficulties pupils have in recording and the lack of clarity about what should be learnt. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and they make good progress when the science activity does not depend on their reading and writing skills. In many lessons, higher attaining pupils make limited progress because what they are asked to do does not allow them to show the extent of their scientific knowledge and understanding. Many pupils have difficulty explaining what they notice or find out and this sometimes leads to a more limited introduction of terminology.
- 73 At both key stages the pupils enjoy science and respond positively and enthusiastically to the wide range of activities which teachers plan. The pupils are prepared to help and support one another and they are able to use science equipment safely and responsibly. These are strengths.

- 74 Overall, the teaching of science is satisfactory. There are some weaknesses, particularly in the middle of Key Stage 2. However, there is some very good teaching in Key Stage 1 and the beginning and end of Key Stage 2. Teaching is unsatisfactory when pupils are not given the correct scientific vocabulary because it is assumed that they will not be able to use it. Some discussion and questioning does not help pupils to understand or explain what they are doing. In some classes the use of poor quality equipment results in teaching that is unsatisfactory and learning that is limited. In both key stages teachers insufficiently provide pupils with appropriately presented scientific words, to support their independent writing to record their learning and consequently their progress.
- 75 On the other hand, the features of good teaching include the effective use of science vocabulary, high expectations of what pupils can understand and do and questioning which prompts discussion and makes the pupils think more deeply. Making links with other subject areas such as literacy and information technology also improves the quality of pupils' learning. In lessons where good teaching is seen, teachers use their knowledge of national curriculum attainment levels well. This allows them to focus on particular areas of children's learning and challenge the pupils. However, such features are only present in a minority of lessons. The provision of appropriate reference books enhances the quality of learning in a small number of lessons.
- 76 In both key stages teachers day-to-day planning is satisfactory and is largely activity based. The school is also beginning to use a new, nationally recommended framework for science planning. However, planning does not take sufficient account of the need to revisit work and this particularly affects teachers who manage mixed age classes. Present monitoring systems insufficiently promote a continuous and progressive curriculum. Assessments of pupils' work are seldom used to help teachers plan the next learning. High attainment is not always identified. The assessment of individual pupils' learning relies heavily upon their written work, but for many of the pupils, this gives an inaccurate picture of their scientific understanding. Teachers tend to base their planning decisions on the activities which have been covered rather than records of what the children know, understand and can do. However, copies of past National Curriculum assessment tests are used to good effect in Year 6. In some classes the marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and erratic. In Key Stage 2, some marking has allowed the poor quality and untidy presentation of work to lead to the unnecessary copying of mistakes.
- 77 The science co-ordinator has a good understanding of the role and has had a positive influence on the range of activities and recording styles which teachers use with the children. This is a strength and helps to maintain width to the curriculum and active ways of learning. Monitoring insufficiently ensures that lessons are planned to build on the pupils' previous understanding of each particular aspect of the subject or the development of their skills. There is little guidance for teachers in acceptable presentation, spelling or in the effective marking of pupils' work. There are also missed opportunities in the use of literacy, numeracy and information technology to support science lessons.
- 78 At Key Stage 1 the range of science equipment is appropriate and the balance between classroom and central storage works well. At Key Stage 2 there is insufficient science measuring equipment to allow pupils to fulfil all the experimental and investigative requirements of the programme of study. Pupils are seldom offered a choice of equipment and this weakness limits the pupils' development of experimental techniques. The provision of books in the library to enhance learning in the subject is weak, particularly those relating to life and living processes. Science does not make an explicit contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils, beyond the need to care for living things and the environment. However, it does provide a range of practical opportunities through which pupils can demonstrate their maturity, collaboration, safe working practice and consideration for others.

## **Art**

- 79 Pupils' learning in art is satisfactory in both key stages. In Key Stage 1, the pupils are encouraged to explore different media including pastels, paints, watercolours, wax resist painting, modelling clay and crayon. They spend time studying a variety of artists and have reproduced pictures in the style of a given artist, for example, a still life based on Cezanne or block printing patterns to design wallpaper, based on William Morris. They also consider non-western art in the form of Mendhi – making rangoli patterns. As a celebration of Diwali, clay was used to make divas.
- 80 In Key Stage 2 observational drawing has been well developed with some carefully drawn examples of twigs, in both paint and pencil shading. Other such careful pieces of work include aerial pictures. A feature of artwork in this key stage is the opportunities the pupils have of looking at the work of famous artists and working in their style. For example, in Year 6, the pupils have produced a "Tree of Life" in the style of Klimt. Occasionally pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own work, but this was only evident in Year 6 where pupils had written about the difficulties in producing pictures in the style of Klimt.
- 81 Pupils in both key stages are enthusiastic about their artwork and remain on task. Many pay attention to detail particularly in the upper end of the school. The older pupils are interested in the different artists and are keen to express their views about the artist's work and to explain why they prefer one artist to another.
- 82 As only one art lesson was observed in Key Stage 1, a judgement about teaching could not be made, although the variety of activities offered to the pupils would suggest it is at least satisfactory. In Key Stage 2, teaching is satisfactory. Teachers effectively question the pupils to encourage them to build on previous knowledge but opportunities are missed to develop the appropriate vocabulary. Teachers' knowledge overall is sound. Very good use is made of an "Artist in Residence" who works closely with the class teachers of different age groups across the school.
- 83 Although there is a scheme of work it does not provide sufficient guidance, for teachers, in the progression of skills across the key stages. However, since the last inspection the range of activities has been extended and the good quality of resources has been maintained. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic, but is relatively unfamiliar with the new role. The standard of display around the school is varied: some are very attractive showing high quality pupils' work, others are not so well laid out and do not enhance the pupils' work. A portfolio of Year 2, work is a positive feature and allows pupils to see what they have done previously.

## **Design and technology**

- 84 Learning in both key stages is sound and standards at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are in line with national expectations. Pupils in Key Stage 1 use a range of materials including textiles, food, clay and sheet materials. They have designed and made shopping bags, teddy bear biscuits and masks. There are opportunities to use construction sets, but these are few. Links with some other subjects, particularly history and geography are used well. Key Stage 2 pupils work with food, for example, to design and evaluate types of bread and they translate two-dimensional drawings into three-dimensional models when they work with rigid materials. They cut and join materials and incorporate simple mechanisms in their work, for example, to allow movement in a crane.
- 85 At both key stages the pupils enjoy design technology. They are motivated and they are able to use equipment carefully and safely, having consideration for the needs of others.

- 86 Teaching in the limited number of lessons observed is satisfactory. In one lesson the teaching style offered a secure, calm and yet purposeful working environment for pupils. The school offers a wide range of designing and making activities to pupils in a variety of materials. Teachers make very good use of these to make links with other subjects and to support the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, a Key Stage 1 class designed and made a book that told a story for their assembly.
- 87 Insufficient use is made across the school for design technology to reinforce and develop literacy skills. In the lessons seen the pupils had no vocabulary prompts printed in an appropriate size.
- 88 Since the last inspection there has been an improvement in standards in design technology, particularly at Key Stage 1.
- 89 The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and offers guidance and support to teachers. Teachers in both key stages pay insufficient attention to the development of taught skills. The policy, whilst it gives some direction to the management of design technology skills in a range of materials, fails to give teachers enough help and does not guide them to build on pupils' previous learning and skill levels. However, a nationally recommended scheme of work is gradually and effectively being integrated to the school's own programme. Resources are sufficient and they are deployed well. The use of food and textiles as design technology media is particularly strong in the school. Teachers keep their own records of pupils' attainment but these are mainly of the activities rather than the learning and attainment in particular skills.

### **Information technology**

- 90 At the end of Key Stage 1, the attainment of most pupils broadly meets the national expectation. However, at the end of Key Stage 2, attainment meets national expectations in most, but not all aspects of the subject. Opportunities are provided in some classes, for pupils to develop their skills while learning other subjects, for example in English, history and science, but these are inconsistent and teachers do not yet, routinely plan information technology opportunities into their lessons.
- 91 The pupils' attitudes are very positive. They work hard and co-operate well when working in the computer suite. Pupils of all abilities make progress, and their learning is usually satisfactory and sometimes good. In Key Stage 1, the pupils make satisfactory progress in developing mouse control and in using the keyboard, they are able to create and print simple pictures and they can incorporate their name or simple text with a picture. By the end of Key Stage 1, a minority can log on to the computer and most know how to save their work. In Key Stage 2, all pupils learn satisfactorily when working in the computer suite. They improve their skills in communicating and handling information in word processing, retrieving information using CD-ROM's and downloading information from the Internet. However, they have insufficient opportunities to use these skills in other subjects, for example, to improve the presentation of their work or to display and interpret charts, tables and graphs.
- 92 The quality of teaching is variable, and satisfactory overall. In the better lessons in the computer room, teachers help pupils to use their skills to enhance learning in other subjects. Here, the teachers plan ahead and have high expectations of pupils working in pairs. In one lesson, for example, older Key Stage 2 pupils were using Internet information to extend their learning about the lunar eclipse. In another high quality lesson, the pupils sent e-mails describing the geographical features of their town to pen-pals in another part of the country. However, in other lessons the expectations of pupils, or a tedious exposition lead to weak behaviour and slower learning. The information technology room is timetabled for classes on a rota basis and is well used. Teachers and pupils benefit from the support of a technician who is based there for part of the week. In the classrooms, however, many teachers insufficiently develop the strong motivation that using a computer has for pupils' learning. There are missed opportunities to enhance pupils' learning across the curriculum. Classroom based computers are not used enough to reinforce the skills which pupils learn in the computer room.

- 93 Since the last inspection standards have improved in both key stages. The setting up of the information technology suite with ten workstations funded by the National Grid for Learning has raised the status of the subject across the school. Now, the majority of pupils are confident and most have improved their range of skills. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and competent. The information technology policy is supportive and identifies existing staff expertise and is gradually implementing schemes of work based on a nationally recommended framework. The training needs of staff for have been identified and are planned to be met through a structured support programme.
- 94 The coordinator monitors the use of the computer room and the teachers' planning. Staff are gaining in confidence. Assessment procedures relating to the pupils' attainment are very effective in some classes. This is a strength and enables those teachers to plan information technology teaching into lessons in other subjects. Examples of pupils' work in information technology are kept in individual folders in these classes.

## **Geography**

- 95 Learning is satisfactory in both key stages. At the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils have recognised the purpose of maps and are beginning to be able to use them but many pupils still do not fully recognise the function of a symbol. Pupils in Year 6 know about the water cycle and how this creates rain. They are less aware of the process of erosion, but could remember that the River Mersey flows through the town. Pupils in Year 3, have experience of several types of maps and are learning about keys that explain the symbols. By this age most pupils know the function of a symbol. The pupils' past work varies in quantity, quality and range. A high proportion of the work involves mapping, but in some classes there is a wider range including, for example, comparisons with life in Africa. In a Year 1 lesson about Giyani School, the pupils noticed the differences but found them hard to explain and sometimes their peers did not understand their explanations. Many pupils find it difficult to record their findings on paper. Few pupils have high levels of skill or knowledge in the subject.
- 96 Most pupils have good attitudes to the subject. They show interest in maps and enjoy looking at them. They are well behaved in most lessons. Occasionally, pupils are a little noisy during group work and this is sometimes because they have difficulty in writing down their findings. However, pupils with behavioural and emotional difficulties are very well supported and disruptions are few and kept to a minimum.
- 97 Teaching is usually sound and occasionally good. Most teachers endeavour to provide interesting lessons and use resources well to make the learning practical. There is a strong emphasis on mapping skills and this is sometimes at the expense of other aspects of the subject such as environmental change. Teachers' subject knowledge is usually sound although occasionally learning opportunities are missed, such as pointing out the difference between a plan and an elevation as a symbol on maps. The expectations that teachers have of different groups of pupils are largely appropriate. The tasks for pupils with special educational needs are suitably easy, but those for the higher attaining pupils sometimes make insufficient demands, because their writing confidence is not high.
- 98 Since the last inspection, the learning has changed little. However, there is a greater emphasis on maps and the school uses computers more often to support the subject. The resources are still limited although there is improvement in the supply of maps. Although the time allocated on timetables is appropriate, it is unclear if the subject is taught for this time. This is because it alternates in blocks with history in many classes and in some classes there are two year groups, making progression through the skills harder for teachers to track. The school provides insufficient monitoring of these aspects.

## History

- 99 Only one lesson in each key stage was observed, but from these, the analysis of pupils' work and some discussions with pupils the learning indicated is satisfactory in both key stages. The subject is largely taught through topics or units of study. These are appropriately planned to enable pupils to progress by gaining increased knowledge and understanding of the periods studied. The pupils' progress in the key elements of the subject, such as evaluation of historical evidence is less certain. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1, are able to empathise with people in past times and the difficulties of such lives as the cook in a medieval castle. However, they have little sense of how long ago that was or of how we might know about past times. Pupils in Year 4, have been introduced to time lines, while learning about the Greek Gods. Only a minority have a better sense of time in the past. The pupils' knowledge of aspects of these gods is impressive. However, many have difficulty in reading texts to find information and in writing to record their findings.
- 100 In the lessons observed the pupils were very interested, particularly when the teachers gave enthusiastic expositions. Such excitement also is shown in some of the displays of history topics around the school and in some pupils' work. In lessons the pupils' behaviour is sound and they usually listen well to the teacher and ask and answer questions well. Most quickly learn any new words associated with the subject. However, some pupils attention lapses when they have work to do that is either a little too easy in its historical content, or too difficult for the pupils' levels of writing and presentational skills.
- 101 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Some lessons are taught with a high level of enthusiasm and the ideas for learning are exciting, engaging the pupils' interest. However, progression in the pupils' understanding of the key elements of the subject is not well planned, especially in the mixed age classes. Teachers use what resources are available well and these help to provide a visual stimulus. Although some lessons are exciting and, on occasions, the pupils become noisy, the teachers have sound control and quickly regain good order. Teachers seldom record what the pupils have learnt and consequently it is difficult to know the right activity for groups that match their stage of understanding, particularly in the skills and key elements of history. The subject is taught separately from others and most teachers are interested. Resources do not comprehensively cover all the study units taught, but teachers often borrow from a local resource library. Teachers sometimes enrich the topic with visits or visitors. Teachers have continued to teach the subject enthusiastically since the last inspection and there is some work that represents good learning as the last inspection reported.

## Music

- 102 The pupil's learning in music is satisfactory in both key stages. In Key Stage 1 they enjoy action songs, singing with enthusiasm even if not always in tune: most can keep a steady beat. They experience the exploration of sound using the instruments but have limited opportunities to appraise and evaluate music from other countries or their own compositions. Pupils in Key Stage 1 enjoy music and participate in all the activities. In Key Stage 2, pupils sing in tune with some dynamics and clear words. They can successfully sustain two-part singing: each group singing a different hymn tune. The teachers' planning indicates that the pupils are given experience of composing and recording, using non-standard notation. For example, in Year 6, pupils are currently working on composing an advertisement and will be expected to record their attempts on paper.
- 103 Pupils enjoy music and have a very positive attitude towards it, as demonstrated during a special whole school assembly and Key Stage 2 hymn practice, when all but a handful of pupils participated with enthusiasm, clapping successfully some very complex rhythm patterns. They are well behaved, listen carefully and when required work well together. Again in Year 6 pupils discussed the adverts together sharing their ideas.

- 104 The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory and Key Stage 2 is good. Teachers are interested and keen, even if their knowledge is limited, and this inspires the pupils to do well. They plan lessons with a variety of activities and the better teachers explain technical points of music when they occur during a lesson. This was observed mainly in Key Stage 2. Despite adequate resourcing some classes had difficulty in finding the appropriate instruments for the lessons.
- 105 Although there is a newly introduced scheme of work for Key Stage 2, the music co-ordinator is aware of the need to complete the scheme in order to ensure the teachers have sufficient guidance on the progression and development of musical skills. This was highlighted as a weakness in the last inspection. The school continues to enrich pupils' musical experiences with a good number of events and visitors of good quality. Liaison with the music teacher from the local high school and the involvement of this teacher with the vocal group and school choir enhances the quality of music tuition available. Opportunities to perform within the local community and on the radio encourage the pupils to join appropriate groups.

### **Physical education**

- 106 No lessons in games or swimming took place during the inspection. Overall the pupils learn soundly as they move through the school, in gymnastics. The school reports that by the time they leave for secondary school, the majority of pupils are able to swim at least 25 metres. Pupils have the opportunity to go swimming in Year 5 and Year 6.
- 107 At the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils show good control of their movements when travelling across the floor. When using low apparatus, they successfully link the actions together. They are beginning to evaluate their performances. The youngest pupils move with imagination, balancing and climbing on a variety of apparatus. At Key Stage 2, in gymnastics, the pupils plan and perform more complex sequences of movements on the floor and on large apparatus. They are able to sustain vigorous activity for an appropriate length of time.
- 108 At Key Stage 1, progress is good. In gymnastics the pupils learn to work co-operatively, and in using gymnastic apparatus safely. They show an increasing understanding and awareness of space and are beginning to recognise the effect exercise has on their bodies. Overall, at Key Stage 2, pupils make steady progress in gymnastics as they move through the key stage. At the end of this key stage there is rapid progress in dance, when the pupils improve significantly, through evaluations of their performance.
- 109 The pupils' response throughout the school is good. They listen attentively to instructions and follow them quickly. They behave well throughout gymnastics lessons and are keen to work. They show enthusiasm and perform confidently to others, taking pride in their performances. They co-operate, in groups and are eager to practise to improve.
- 110 The quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall, with a small minority of unsatisfactory teaching. The sound teaching is supported by reminders about the need for safety, appropriate warm up activities and the opportunities given for the pupils' to evaluate their work. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, there is less control of the pupils, no warm up activities, and use of a limited range of apparatus. In Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is sound overall, with some good, and very good features in the teaching of dance, at and towards the end of the key stage. There is a very small minority of unsatisfactory teaching. Where teaching is of higher quality, for example in dance, there is secure knowledge, clear instructions are given and well chosen music to engage the pupils' interest. There is good use of language to stress the importance of the response to the mood set by the music. The sound teaching is supported by, appropriate planning, suitable learning objectives and links with other subjects. Where there are weaknesses, there is less control of the class, insecure subject knowledge, poor organisation of groups and the pupils are not given the opportunity to evaluate their work.

111 The subject has at least maintained its strengths since the last inspection and there are improvements in the range of activities and the reported standards in swimming. Sporting and games activities are provided as extra-curricular clubs and these enrich the curriculum, although none was observed during the inspection. Outdoor and adventurous activities, and athletics are planned into the curriculum, including residential trips.

## **Religious education**

112 At the end of both key stages the pupils' attainment in religious education matches the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and satisfactory learning takes place in the acquisition of knowledge and understanding. This is in line with the findings of the previous inspection. Through the contribution of assemblies and religious education lessons, pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 have begun to have a sound knowledge of some of the major festivals and practices of the Christian Church. They talk about the celebration of Christmas as the birth of Jesus, and recall the story of the Annunciation. They know how they worship in a variety of ways, for example, singing hymns and praying. They have some understanding of the world faiths, particularly of Hinduism and recalled the special celebration of Diwali. The pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 have recently visited a Sikh temple. They understand the significance of the symbols and the distinctive features in the Sikh religion. They are knowledgeable about the practices of how Sikhs pray and can compare these with their own experiences of the Christian Church. Such a visit had a positive impact in helping the pupils to recognise how important religion is in the lives of believers.

113 Pupils' in both key stages make steady progress in acquiring knowledge and understanding about religion. They are developing knowledge of the Bible, progressing from recognising it as a special book at Key Stage 1, to an understanding of the meaning of Jesus' teaching, through parables, at Key Stage 2. They show increasing understanding that leaders and laws are central to many religions and to life in a community which has an impact on their social and moral development. This is evident in the pupils' learning about the significance of the Ten Commandments given to the Jewish people, and they are able to relate the commands to everyday rules of the school.

114 The pupils show appropriate interest in their work and are happy to volunteer responses to questions. They generally listen attentively to the teachers' and each others' ideas. However, in some classes a few pupils become restless when expected to concentrate for too long.

115 The quality of teaching is satisfactory in both key stages and the teachers have secure subject knowledge. The locally agreed syllabus is appropriately used as a basis for planning and teachers are developing a variety of approaches. Many opportunities are given for the pupils to make contributions to discussions and to reflect on religious issues enabling them to form thoughtful views. The teachers handle these discussions sensitively, and give the pupils the confidence to ask pertinent questions to extend their understanding. The teachers also often use skilful questioning to probe the pupils' understanding. For example, in a lesson on the parable of the unforgiving servant, the pupils were encouraged to reflect on its relevance to their own lives. The teachers' preparation and use of resources, for example, videos, artefacts, interesting stories, visits to places of worship and visitors to the school, are effective in promoting and reinforcing learning. Most of the lessons seen contain a variety of activities and sufficient challenge to sustain the pupils' interest. This is an improvement on the last inspection. The commitment and enthusiasm of the teachers has a major impact on the quality of learning.

116 The subject contributes well to the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills and to their spiritual and social awareness. The co-ordinator has developed a suitable scheme of work in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus. He monitors teachers' plans each term but has no opportunity to monitor work in the classroom. There has been no improvement in assessment procedures since the last inspection, they continue to be informal and lacking in structure.