

INSPECTION REPORT

ELWORTH CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Elworth, Sandbach,

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111256

Headteacher: Mr T. Egley

Reporting inspector: Mr P. R. Sudworth - 2700

Dates of inspection: Feb 28th-Mar 3rd, 2000

Inspection number: 192639

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	CE Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4-11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	School Lane, Elworth, Sandbach Cheshire CW11 3HU
Telephone number:	01270 762787
Fax number:	01270 759310
E-mail address	head@elworthce.school.cheshire.org.uk
Appropriate authority:	The Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Claudia Coupe
Date of previous inspection:	3rd February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Peter Sudworth	Registered inspector	Science; Music; Physical education; Special educational needs; English as an additional language.	Leadership and management; The school's results and achievements; Information about the school.
Dennis Read	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities.	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; The care for the pupils; Partnership with parents.
Marjorie Archer	Team inspector	Under-fives; Art; History.	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education; Teaching and learning.
Robert Isaacs	Team inspector	English; Information technology; Religious education.	Assessment.
Tom Prosser	Team inspector	Mathematics; Geography; Design technology.	Curriculum; Staffing, resources and accommodation.

The inspection contractor was:

National Educational Services,
Linden House,
Woodland Way,
Gosfield,
Halstead
Essex
CO9 1TH

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The Registrar
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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Elworth CE Primary School is situated in the village of Elworth near Sandbach in Cheshire. It serves an area of predominantly private housing, although a significant proportion of the pupils, approaching one half, comes from beyond the school's traditional catchment area. The number on roll at the time of the inspection was 307, bigger than most primary schools. The number on roll is very similar to that at the time of the last inspection. Attainment on entry is above average. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. 48 pupils are on the school's special needs register. Most are on the early stages of assessment, but seven pupils have more serious learning, emotional or physical difficulties, including one statemented pupil. All the classes in Key Stage 2 are of mixed-age due to over subscription of pupils, often brought about by successful appeals for admission. The area has a higher percentage of adults with higher education qualifications and fewer overcrowded households than the national average. Pupils begin school in the September of the school year in which they will become five. At the time of the inspection most pupils in the Reception class, in which the under fives are educated, were still under five. Three pupils have English as an additional language, one of whom is at an early stage of language acquisition.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is being led soundly. The headteacher has the support of the Governing Body and the staff. Most parents are very supportive of the school. The School Development Plan is an effective tool for planning improvement in the short-term. Some improvements in standards have been made since the last inspection report three years ago, particularly in mathematics but increasingly in English, despite a slight dip last year at the end of Key Stage 2 and poorer results in Key Stage 1. Nevertheless the trend of performance is upwards. The overall quality of teaching observed during the inspection was good across the school, despite some staffing difficulties brought about by two teachers being on sick leave and one on maternity leave. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are very good. The pupils are very well cared for. Overall the school is effective in educating pupils to an appropriate standard for their ages, with some improvement needed in information technology but with above average standards in mathematics and English in both key stages. It is providing good value for money.

What the school does well

- The good quality of teaching across the school and the staff's management of pupils' behaviour;
- The above average standards of attainment in mathematics, English, art and music by the end of Key Stage 2;
- The good progress made by children in the early years class;
- The very good attitudes of the pupils to their work and their very good behaviour;
- The very good support and care for the pupils and their general welfare;
- The very good provision for the pupils' moral, social and personal development;
- The very good relationships between school and home and the very good support of the parents' association

What could be improved

- Teachers' day-to-day assessment of pupils' understanding of what they have been taught, record keeping and matching work more appropriately to pupils' prior attainment in the mixed-age classes;
- The work of subject co-ordinators in monitoring standards throughout the school, in managing their subject responsibilities and the precision of their job descriptions;
- The provision for pupils to make progress in information technology and in religious education;
- The records and individual education plans for special needs pupils;
- The allocation of funding to curriculum co-ordinators and the use made of it;
- Information for parents on what their children are to study and the quality of the annual written reports.

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

The significance of the school's strengths outweighs the areas for development. The pupils receive a good start to their education in the Reception class and this provides them with a good foundation, which the other teachers build on to good effect. Standards could be even higher if some of the record keeping systems were more focussed on what individual pupils do well and where they need to improve and if parents were provided with more information so that they can help their children at home to better effect.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was previously inspected in February 1997. The quality of provision for the under-fives is much better. There is more rigour in the activities that they undertake and they have better resources. In the school generally, the overall quality of teaching has improved and more teaching is of a very good quality. The good standards in music and the very good standards in mathematics at Key Stage 2 have been maintained and standards in mathematics have risen sharply in Key Stage 1. More attention is given to the application of mathematics. Pupils now make good progress in this subject. Slight, but insufficient, improvement has been made in information technology. The sex education policy has been clarified. Schemes of work are more in evidence to guide the work throughout the school. The provision for pupils' moral and social development has been improved. The school is more welcoming to parents. The School Development Plan has improved in quality but it does not yet consider the longer term sufficiently well. The library and computers are still under-used. Overall, curriculum leadership remains unclear and curriculum co-ordination is still not sufficiently well developed, although some improvement has taken place. The quality of information for parents remains uneven. Day-to-day assessment of how well pupils are progressing is still an issue, including special needs pupils. The school has good capacity for further 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
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	B	B	C	C
Mathematics	A	A	A	A
Science	C	B	C	C

Key

well above average A

above average B

Average C

below average D

well below average E

Over the past three years the pupils' performance in the national end of Key Stage 2 tests has generally been at least in line with national averages and well above in mathematics. There have been some fluctuations in English and in science from average to above average. Fluctuations have occurred in the Key Stage 1 results from well above average. Poorer cohorts of pupils in 1998 in both key stages account for this difference. The average of the school's results has generally been in line with the national trend. The weaker subjects are information technology, because of a lack of facilities and consequently of opportunities, and religious education, which does not include enough teaching about non-Christian faiths. The school's targets for future results are appropriate. The under-fives children make good progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most pupils have very good attitudes to school and they are keen and eager to attend. They show interest in their lessons. They participate well in extra-curricular activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The pupils' behaviour is very good around the school and in lessons. They are very polite and respectful to visitors. They respect school property and resources.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is very good. Relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils are very good.
Attendance	Attendance is above the national average. Pupils are punctual for school.

The pupils' behaviour and attitudes to their work are consistently very good. Their interest in lessons and the very good relationships between staff and pupils assist their rates of progress.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Overall, the teaching observed during the inspection week was good across the school. Nearly all lessons were at least satisfactory. Just over one-quarter of lessons observed were very good and just over three-fifths were good or better. Only two unsatisfactory lessons were observed. The teaching of English, including literacy, and mathematics, including numeracy, is a particular strength throughout the school, as is music teaching in Key Stage 2. Resources are used effectively in all subjects to promote pupils' understanding and skills. All teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well and as a result pupils relate well to their teachers and to one another. Pupils work very well in lessons and work co-operatively and with thought for one another.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good provision is made for the under-fives and it is good for Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils do not understand enough about other faiths in religious education and the opportunities in information technology are somewhat restricted. Literacy and numeracy teaching is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils who have special needs make sound progress overall. Whilst pupils are supported well in small group work, the individual education plans are not sufficiently precise.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school makes suitable provision for the small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Most of these pupils have a good grasp of written and spoken English and have no need for extra support.
Provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. It is very good for their moral and social development, good for their cultural development and sound for their spiritual development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has very good procedures in place for pupils' welfare and general care. Record keeping and assessment arrangements are satisfactory.

The school has very good links with its parents. The parent teacher association is a very active body and well supported by the parents. The school has good strengths in provision for the early years curriculum, English across the school and in music and mathematics in Key Stage 2. Few teachers make good use of day-to-day assessment to inform future learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Some subject co-ordinators have monitored work and lessons to improve provision but regular review of planning and standards is inconsistent. The headteacher has created a positive climate in which all are valued and where relationships are good.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The Governing Body fulfils most of its legal responsibilities. Governors visit the school regularly but generally informally. Some governors have special links with aspects of the school's work. They are suitably involved in school development planning procedures.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school analyses national and other test results well to determine which aspects of work the pupils are doing well in and where improvements are needed.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses specific grants for their intended purposes. Allocation of money to subject co-ordinators is not always based on prioritised need.

The level of staffing is appropriate with a suitable balance of experienced and recently qualified staff. Learning resources are adequate and sometimes good. The accommodation is good. The school has good procedures for ensuring value is obtained when making purchases.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school; • They make good progress at school and are made to work hard; • Behaviour is good • The quality of teaching is good; • They are able to approach the school with problems or concerns; • The school is well led and managed; • The school is helping the pupils' to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pupils do not have the right amount of homework; • Parents are not well informed about the way their children are getting on; • The school does not work closely enough with parents; • The school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside.

The inspection team agrees with most of the positive views expressed by parents. However, there is room for some greater incisiveness in some aspects of the school's management, such as monitoring standards across the curriculum. In response to the aspects that the parents would like to see improved the inspection team is of the view that satisfactory amounts and variety of homework are given for the pupils' ages. In particular, suitable importance is placed on home reading activities. The opportunities afforded to parents for discussion with their children's teachers are similar to those in most schools but the quality of reports and information about what is taught could be improved. The school works well with its parents and the parent teacher association is strong and well supported. Several parents help in school. The school provides a suitably interesting range of extra-curricular activities, provided voluntarily by the staff.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The previous inspection report stated that the attainment of the under-fives was better than national expectations in all areas of learning. The pattern has generally been maintained. The current standards of work of the under-fives indicate that the children's attainments are in line to be above expectations by age five in language and literacy, in mathematics, in their personal and social development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They make good progress in these areas of learning. Attainment in their creative and physical development, in which they make sound progress, is in line with expectations. The children are confident and articulate and most have made a start to reading. They show a good facility with number for their age. They are mature and show good social skills. They are interested in the world around them and take a keen interest in acquiring new knowledge.

2. The previous inspection report indicated above average standards in English in both key stages. Key Stage 1 results have fluctuated widely over the past four years in reading, writing and mathematics. They have alternated between above and below the national average percentages obtaining the expected and higher levels in the past four years for all schools and similar schools, as judged by the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals. Over the past three years there have been gender differences in English in which the girls have consistently done better than the boys in reading and writing, although the boys have outperformed the national average for boys but have been below the national average for girls. Girls have also outperformed the boys in mathematics in Key Stage 1. In the most recent Key Stage 1 national tests, performance in reading, writing and mathematics was well above the national average. Science results in all aspects of the subject, as judged by teachers' assessment, were very high against the performance of both all schools nationally and similar schools. The proportion of pupils obtaining the higher level in all three subjects was above average. Currently Key Stage 1 pupils are making good progress in all aspects of English. Pupils speak and listen well, read clearly and expressively, and their standards of writing are at least in line with expectations as they are in science and mathematics and a significant number of pupils is in line to reach the higher levels.

3. Key Stage 2 results have been more consistent during the past four years, particularly in mathematics, which have been consistently well above average. Results in English and in science have fluctuated between the national average percentage obtaining the expected levels and above average for both all and similar schools. As in Key Stage 1, girls' performance has consistently outstripped that of the boys in English. It is less marked in mathematics but it is still better overall. Girls in the school have also done better than the boys in science but boys have done better than the national average for both boys and girls in the subject. The performance of girls all round has been particularly good. Their performance against the boys in science and mathematics is against the national trend. The inspection team could not find any specific reasons why the girls are doing better than the boys in the school.

4. In the most recent end of Key Stage 2 national tests (May 1999), pupils' attainment in English overall was above average. Currently standards in speaking and listening and in reading are good throughout the school. In writing they are very good in Key Stage 2. By age eleven many

pupils read and write well. They read confidently and with good expression. They can discuss and compare texts and authors and describe characters. The pupils' reading reference skills are satisfactory. They have a limited understanding of book classification in libraries and how to search for particular books, although they have suitable skills in finding information within books. They often use very good vocabulary and a good choice of words in their creative written work. Currently pupils in both key stages are making good progress in all aspects of English, because of the good quality of teaching in the subject.

5. In the most recent Key Stage 2 national mathematics tests, the pupils' performance was well above the national average against both all schools and similar schools. The pupils' attainment is currently above expectations. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have a secure knowledge of place value. They can multiply and divide whole numbers and decimals by two digit numbers, order fractions in size and they have good investigative skills, because of good exposure to such work. They make good progress in the subject. Standards in Key Stage 2 in mathematics have improved greatly since the previous inspection report when progress was judged to be unsatisfactory. In the most recent Key Stage 2 national science tests the percentage of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 was close to the national average, as it was for the percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 5. Pupils' performance in science against similar schools was close to the average. Over the past four years there has been a steady upwards improvement in the end of Key Stage 2 results with year on gains in performance. Currently about three-quarters of the pupils in Year 6 are in line to obtain the expected level in science and about one-quarter to obtain the higher level. Pupils are making sound progress in this subject.

6. Pupils' progress in information technology is sound in both key stages and attainment broadly in line with expectations but it could be higher with greater access to computers and more frequent use of them across the curriculum. There has been a little progress in the development of the subject since the last inspection but it is not yet a strong feature of the curriculum. In design and technology, geography, history and physical education, attainment is in line with expectations at the end of both key stages and progress is satisfactory. This represents a slight decline in standards in the subject in Key Stage 1 since the last inspection. In religious education attainment by the end of both key stages is in line with local expectations overall. The pupils have good knowledge about the Christian faith but their knowledge of other faiths is much less good. Attainment in music is as expected by the end of Key Stage 1 and progress is sound. Pupils make good progress in composition and performance in Key Stage 2 and by the end of Year 6 their attainment is better than found in most schools, particularly in performance. This represents maintenance of standards in music in Key Stage 2 but a slight decline in Key Stage 1. Attainment and progress in art are better than expected in both key stages.

7. Pupils whose first language is not English make sound progress, as do those with special educational needs. Good support arrangements are made for pupils with special educational needs but they do not have very well targeted individual education plans and record keeping is insufficiently precise. Higher attaining pupils do well in mathematics and in English where grouping arrangements allow the teachers to build on their prior attainment but in many other subjects not enough attention is given to different levels of prior attainment or age. This is offset to some extent by booster classes and small group work, for example by special work for Year 6 pupils in mathematics and setted work in science in the second half of Year 6. The targets set for the pupils' attainment levels in future national tests have been well researched and expectations are appropriate.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. The school promotes a very high standard of behaviour amongst all its pupils and the example set by the staff provides a good role model in achieving very good attitudes, both of personal conduct and of learning. The school responds effectively and promptly to any incidents of oppressive behaviour. Parents are strongly of the view that the school promotes good behaviour. The very positive comments of the previous report with regard to pupils' behaviour and attitudes still apply.

9. Pupils are very respectful to one another, to staff and particularly to visitors to the school. They show a high degree of responsibility and maturity in the care of the buildings, equipment and books. Many pupils are involved in the daily class and school routines, which greatly enhance school life, and make it a very pleasant place in which to live, learn, and work. Pupils consistently behave very well and this makes a positive contribution to the purposeful atmosphere in classes and supports learning.

10. There is a very good rapport between all staff and pupils, which grows as the pupils get older and they show an increasing level of confidence and self-awareness. The relationships between the pupils themselves and between the pupils and adults in the school are very good. Pupils listen to each other and respect each other's views. They are encouraged to show respect for the feelings and values of others.

11. There is a very good ethos in the school. Visitors to the school are welcomed warmly and pupils are polite and friendly. They hold doors open for adults who have things to carry and are prompt in their offers of help. Pupils carry out a range of classroom tasks and take good care of displays and school resources.

12. Pupils enjoy the extra-curricular activities that are offered and take part in these with much enthusiasm and interest. The quality of work in music, drama and dance in these activities is particularly strong.

13. The school has maintained its good level of attendance, which is above the national average. The registers are marked in accordance with legal requirements.

14. The school monitors attendance levels closely. It follows up unauthorised absences, both immediately and subsequently with parents, in order to maintain the high standard. No instances of lateness were noted. The school has a good working relationship with the Education Welfare Service. There are no significant variations between different groups within the school, in attendance, attitudes or behaviour, all of which are good. There have been no exclusions.

HOW ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. Overall, the quality of teaching throughout the school is good. Just over one-quarter of lessons observed were very good. Teaching was good or better in just over three-fifths of all lessons. Only two unsatisfactory lessons were observed during the inspection week and these were characterised by over long introductions, insufficiently good pupil management and a lack of pupil involvement in the lesson. The quality of teaching is more consistently good, and sometimes very good, in the early years, at the lower end of Key Stage 1 and at the upper end of Key Stage 2. It is particularly good in mathematics, English, PE and in music in Key Stage 2. Little art teaching could be observed but high standards are obtained. The teachers show good subject knowledge and use appropriate teaching techniques. Teachers, in their planning and delivery, share expertise and knowledge for the benefit of the pupils. The quality of teaching observed during the inspection was better than at the time of the previous inspection. There is now a higher percentage of very good teaching.

16. In all areas of the school, teachers have good knowledge of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study and of the requirements of the National Numeracy and Literacy strategies and teach these well. They teach phonics well in the teaching of reading, which is one of the factors in the good reading standards obtained. Their expectations of what pupils should achieve in English and mathematics lessons are high and in many classes pupils are challenged well. Lessons begin promptly and are generally brisk and purposeful. Pupils are clear about what they are learning. They are given opportunities to explain their thinking and to reflect upon what they have learned. Most teachers maintain a good balance between instruction and activity. They question pupils well to establish their levels of understanding and to help them to improve. Most manage the pupils very well. They make good use of the teaching support staff who know clearly what they have to do.

17. Daily lesson planning is satisfactory. Learning objectives are identified and in a small minority of cases assessment opportunities are stated, but many teachers are not sufficiently clear about how assessment of pupils' learning is to be made. Class work and group activities are well organised. Teachers often include summary sessions towards the end of lessons to allow pupils to reflect upon what has been learned. Pupils are generally taught in ability groups within mixed-age classes, but too often insufficient attention is paid to the differences in pupils' ages when work is planned, particularly in the mixed-age classes in Key Stage 2. In only a few classes are different targets set for different aged pupils. The setting for mathematics in Key Stage 2 and the ability grouping in English throughout the school are effective strategies and ensure a good match of work. Numeracy skills are well taught and result in good standards being attained by the end of Year 6. At the time of the inspection the number of teaching groups had been increased as a result of government funding to boost standards.

18. Schemes of work in the foundation subjects and science are organised according to a two-year programme to take account of mixed-age classes, but, within the programme, all pupils cover the same work and there are insufficient opportunities for extended or independent study. There are no written records to establish how pupils approached or understood a task so that future planning can be targeted more to individual need. As a consequence, lower attaining pupils are sometimes supported insufficiently and higher attaining pupils challenged inadequately. Special needs pupils receive appropriate support, sometimes in withdrawal groups, but the lack of records and poorly targeted individual education plans mean that progress is only satisfactory. Occasionally special needs pupils are told too much when carrying out work and too much is done for them, thus denying the pupils the opportunity to think for themselves.

19. Where teaching is very good, lessons are presented in ways that interest and challenge pupils. For example, in one very good lesson pupils took on the role of television commentators and reported the event. Good planning and management of the class enabled the pupils to collaborate to produce oral work of a high standard. In the best lessons pupils respond to the challenge of open-ended tasks where their knowledge and understanding can be applied in different contexts. Teachers and pupils

respect and trust one another. Teachers share learning objectives with their pupils and many encourage pupils to evaluate their own work and to learn to criticise constructively the work of others. Most work is marked and is up to date but there is little evaluative comment to help pupils improve. Appropriate use is made of homework in both key stages.

20. Pupils are keen to learn, respond to challenges and concentrate well in most lessons. The majority of pupils are mature, responsible and work well together in groups. They usually make sound and sometimes good progress in lessons, particularly in English and mathematics, by using their time to good effect. They are polite and respectful to one another and to their teachers. These very good learning characteristics, combined with good listening skills, enable the pupils to understand their work and often make good progress in lessons. They apply good levels of effort and often think for themselves, for example in group compositional work in music and in opportunities to share ideas in discussion in English. The lack of consistency in setting individual targets for pupils, however, is not helping the pupils to assess how well they are doing and marking does not sufficiently help pupils to improve. This retention of samples of work for their individual folders at periodic intervals does, however, give both teachers and pupils some understanding and appreciation of improvements over time.

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

21. The curriculum provided for children under five years of age is good. It meets their needs very well. It is broad and balanced and gives them good experiences of all the areas of learning to which they are entitled. This enables the majority of the children to achieve the national expectations for children aged five. The provision made for the children prepares them well for entry into the next phase of their education.

22. In both Key Stages 1 and 2 sufficient time is generally given to the various subjects of the curriculum and appropriate attention given to the National Curriculum Programmes of Study and to the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. The exceptions are in information technology, in which not enough time is given to teaching the subject, and in religious education, in which pupils have limited opportunities to learn about other faiths. These aspects apart, the curriculum is suitably aimed at promoting pupils' physical, personal and intellectual development and mostly maintains the quality indicated at the time of the previous inspection. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught and meet statutory requirements. The school gives due prominence to the teaching of literacy and numeracy and the effectiveness of the strategies for the teaching of literacy is very good and good for numeracy. Curriculum documents are in place for all the curriculum areas and generally provide a structure to help with planning and for the delivery of the subject.

23. The school has strategies in place to cater for the needs of all the pupils in literacy and numeracy but less successfully in other subjects in mixed-age classes in Key Stage 2. Setting takes place for literacy and numeracy lessons within Key Stage 2 for a number of lessons during the week. This is an effective arrangement.

24. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory but the individual education plans are not sufficiently precise or specific for individual pupils' needs. Provision for special needs pupils is not as good as it was assessed in the previous report.

25. Teaching generally affords equal opportunity to all pupils through the school's curriculum provision and resources. A rota is in place so that instrumentalists do not miss the same lesson each week but, nevertheless, they do sometimes miss important parts of lessons. Sometimes pupils in mixed-age classes all work at the same level of difficulty. In upper Key Stage 2 games lessons, the teaching of netball and football at the same time results in boys and girls generally being split and participating in different types of sport.

26. The school gives a high prominence to the opportunities that it provides for pupils to learn to play musical instruments. Tuition for individual pupils and groups takes place within the music/library room for nearly two whole days each week. Whilst such tuition has obvious positive benefits for the many individuals involved, they are, nevertheless, missing some important aspects of lessons taking place within their classrooms. Additionally the library, because of its use for music lessons and instrument instruction, is not accessible for the remainder of the school to use during these times. During the period of the inspection no pupils were observed to use the library.

27. The curriculum is enriched through a range of extra-curricular activities. These include a school choir, recorders, netball, football and drama and all pupils within the school have access to the activities at some time. Some pupils learn French through a privately organised and fee paying after school venture. On-going curriculum work is also supported and enhanced through visits to local

museums and churches. Furthermore, the biennial residential visits to Llandudno enable pupils to compare and contrast their own area with another and to study contrasting land use. In the alternate year pupils profit by taking part in a residential visit which has a bias towards information technology studies and outdoor pursuits activities.

28. The school has given due attention to pupils' personal and social development in partnership with parents. Sex education and drug awareness are established within the curriculum. The funding of the visit from the Life Education Centre by the parents enables all the pupils to have access to exhibition and videos and this helps to improve their knowledge about drugs and their dangers. The school has developed good links with the community, evidenced by the large number of parents and other adults who work on a voluntary basis within the school. The planned establishment of a hard surface play area for the Reception and younger pupils at the school is going to be financed through the contact the school has made with a local building firm. Relationships between the school and its partner institutions are good. By the time the pupils in Year 6 are ready to transfer to the secondary school, they have already met their new teachers and have had the opportunity to carry out a prolonged period of study on a theme agreed between the two schools.

29. Overall the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. It is very good for the pupils' moral and social development representing a very good improvement in these two aspects since the last inspection. Good provision is made for their cultural development and satisfactory provision for their spiritual development. Very high expectations and a well established ethos promote good relationships and encourage pupils to behave very well and to treat others with fairness and courtesy. The behaviour policy and the class and school rules provide a sound foundation for pupils' understanding of right and wrong. Teachers know their pupils very well. Pupils respect and trust their teachers.

30. The daily acts of collective worship are often purposeful, with an appropriate Christian ethos in which Christian values and traditions are reinforced. Use is sometimes made of the school creed in drawing the pupils together and this provides a moment for quiet reflection and corporateness. However, the school does not have a worship policy and there is no clear planning or progression in content or organisation. Music is played in the background whilst pupils enter the hall for assemblies but insufficient use is made of it to further pupils' appreciation of music or knowledge of composers. Opportunities, such as the provision of a visual focus for prayer to create an atmosphere of spirituality, are lacking. The links with the local church are improving and the newly appointed vicar has already made plans to visit classes and to take part in collective acts of worship. Pupils visit the church occasionally, including major Christian festivals. The very good orchestra and choir make a positive contribution to the spiritual ethos of the school.

31. Pupils learn to take responsibility for their own behaviour, which is evident in the way that they conduct themselves around school and consider and support their peers. Older pupils take on some responsibilities and help with routine tasks, such as reporting to peers about road safety matters, acting as library monitors and befriending the youngest pupils when they first come to school. Almost all pupils are naturally polite. The house system encourages pupils to work hard. Occasionally pupils involve themselves in decisions about their school environment, as for example, when two pupils from each class, selected by their peers, were involved in helping to make decisions about the design of the playground. Pupils take part in inter-school sports and musical activities. They involve themselves in both musical and theatrical performances and entertain both their parents and local elderly people. Pupils' social development is further encouraged through the residential visits older pupils make.

32. Whilst pupils' cultural development is good overall, some aspects are less well developed than

others. Pupils learn to appreciate their own cultural traditions through the celebration of Christian festivals, music and singing and visits to local museums and places of interest. Theatre and music groups visit school and a Bermudan woodcarver worked with Year 6 pupils to produce a Millennium tree. The school is part of a local consortium of primary schools, which has commissioned a composer to write a cycle of songs to represent the local area and to be performed in Chester Cathedral. The pupils have been involved in this at all stages. Opportunities to appreciate the beliefs and traditions of other cultures are not well developed. Pupils have few opportunities to learn about the lives of many of the people who live in Britain today. There is no provision for the celebration of other festivals or for an appreciation of music or dance from a range of cultures. An exception was the visit of a Ghanaian dancer who visited school last year.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. The school is a very caring community and it provides a safe and pleasant environment for all its pupils, staff, and visitors, continuing the effective support reported in the last inspection. Class teachers know their pupils well and the very good relationships between pupils and adults in the school ensure that pupils are well supported when they have problems. The school's health and safety policy and procedures promote and maintain the sense of care and support for the pupils. The school clearly understands its responsibilities under the Children's Act, and follows the locally agreed child protection procedures correctly.

34. The buildings and grounds are well maintained and cleaned; equipment is safe and kept in order. The school makes very good efforts to ensure the pupils are safe.

35. Class teachers set good role models, and the school's discipline policy, which was instituted after full consultation with pupils and parents, is very effective. Pupils feel a high degree of trust in the teachers, and neither pupils nor staff tolerate misbehaviour.

36. The programme for the pupils' understanding of personal, social and health education issues is appropriate for the ages of the pupils and their levels of maturity. Pupils are enabled to develop self-confidence, self-esteem and positive attitudes to their own health. They are made well aware of the dangers of drugs and taught about sex education in a context of loving relationships.

37. Overall the quality of assessment, recording and reporting is satisfactory. Assessment of work at the end of each key stage is accurate. There is, however, no policy for assessment. The quality of day-to-day assessment is sound for English and mathematics but inconsistent for other subjects, including science and information technology.

38. Assessment in the 1999 National Tests was usually accurate, except for Key Stage 1 writing and mathematics, in which teachers underestimated what pupils could achieve, and in Key Stage 2 science, in which teachers overestimated what pupils would do. Assessment in English and mathematics from year to year is accurate and consistent and is based on an appropriate balance of observation, marking, focused assessments and commercial, standardised tests.

39. The strength of assessment lies in the knowledge that teachers have of pupils as they begin the school year. Baseline assessments made in Reception and National Test results at Key Stage 1 are collated and passed on from Year 2 to ensure that teachers are informed as pupils enter Key Stage 2. Each pupil is assessed regularly, using standardised tests. Pupils' ability in reading is recorded in both key stages. Other available data, however, such as the incidence of summer-born pupils in each class, is not yet made use of.

40. The weakness in assessment is the lack of a system to describe the build-up of pupils' skills in a range of subjects such as science, geography, history, music, information technology, or religious education, which might provide teachers with a better indication of how well pupils are progressing. In this respect, some of the criticisms reported previously still prevail.

41. Teachers set realistic, overall targets for what the cohorts of pupils can aim for over the next four years. They know the capabilities of pupils well but there is little in the way of formal predictions to set goals for pupils except in a new initiative in Years 5 and 6.

42. Teachers retain the pupils' work and collect appropriate samples in individual folders from year to year. These are cross-curricular, but are rarely annotated. They record each child's progress, and go a little way towards establishing what needs to be taught next.
43. Teachers' responses to pupils' work in marking, usually happen regularly and are satisfactory but the quality is inconsistent. In the best incidences the comments are positive and detailed, and areas for improvement are indicated clearly. In a minority of samples, the marking is not helpful or informative, and does not set targets for improvement.
44. Parental consultations are held twice yearly and annual reports provide parents with some useful information about their children's progress in the core subjects but they are insufficiently detailed in other subjects. Teachers do not set individual targets in reports for pupils to concentrate on and there is no opportunity for pupils to assess their own progress in reports.
45. Teachers keep records, such as individual education plans, for pupils receiving extra help with their education. However, these records often lack enough detail, are not sufficiently informative, and do not establish clearly a good basis for pupils to improve their standards.
46. The assessment co-ordinator has introduced some good elements of self-assessment by pupils, such as paired reading, group reading, proof-reading, the children's journals, and plenary sessions held by pupils. These are excellent methods of adding further quality to the school's knowledge of what it does and what it needs to do. They are not used in many classes and this good practice is not yet shared around the school systematically.
47. The results of National Tests are published as appropriate in the school prospectus and the Governors' Annual Report to parents. Parents are given information about what has been taught but they have asked, reasonably so, for more information in advance about what is going to be taught in order that they may support their children's learning more at home.
48. The school gives relevant and useful information to the main receiving secondary school, which uses it effectively to analyse and predict the Key Stages 3 and 4 attainments of the primary schools' cohort. This analysis is then usefully fed back to the primary school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. Relationships with parents have improved since the last inspection. The partnership with parents begins well before pupils enter the school, through the very good prospectus and the opportunity for prospective parents to visit the school before their children enter. Meetings are held for parents before the children commence their schooling and on the day after the children begin school the staff hold meetings for parents to discuss ways in which they can support children with their reading development. Parents are encouraged to remain with their children for the first few days in the Reception class and this helps the children to settle in well. This good start pays dividends in the fact that the school benefits from a large amount of parental classroom support throughout all classes. A good number of parents help in classes and on trips. Parents are generally well satisfied with most aspects of the school, and they are kept reasonably well informed about school life through newsletters and school reports, although a small minority of parents do not feel the information given to them on their children's progress is adequate. The inspection team concurs with this viewpoint. The reports to parents do not completely fulfil statutory requirements in that pupils' progress in the individual foundation subjects is not reported separately. Parents are not sufficiently aware of the standards their children are reaching or what level the pupils should be working at and more could be done to inform parents about these issues. Although all members of the staff know the pupils as individuals very well, school reports are not specific enough in reporting on pupils' personal development.

50. A significant percentage of parents takes the view that the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons, but the team's view is that opportunities are similar to those in most schools. The team does not agree with those parents who regard amounts of homework as inappropriate nor with those who state that the school does not work closely with parents. The school is always open to parents who have specific problems about their children's education and these are dealt with suitably.

51. The Parent Teacher Association is strong and active and raises substantial funds to supplement the school's resources. It acts as a focus for parental support and is a good vehicle for parental training on educational developments. A comprehensive home-school agreement is in place and this has received good support from parents.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection in improving those aspects of leadership and management that required attention. For example there has been some monitoring of standards and teaching practice by some co-ordinators, particularly in English and numeracy and some in science in Key Stage 1. These have resulted in better teaching in these subjects and contributed to a raising of standards in English and mathematics, particularly in Key Stage 1. Monitoring has also been informative in re-organising the science curriculum in lower Key Stage 2 so that content is more equably distributed across the key stage.

53. Overall, the leadership and management of the school are sound. Most of the school's aims are met but the pupils' technological skills are not as advanced as they might be, particularly in computer skills. Relationships in the school are very good and these are reflected in the very good work habits that have been established in most classrooms and the camaraderie amongst the staff and between the staff and governors.

54. The Governing Body undertakes its duties conscientiously and with an emphasis on personal links. It has improved the quality of its work since the last inspection by contributing more actively to the school development plan and taking a greater interest in curriculum matters. Whilst good links have been made in understanding the Literacy Strategy, generally the Governing Body is not yet sufficiently incisive in understanding the way the curriculum is managed in the school and how this is impinging on standards. Visits to the school by governors are frequent, but mostly informal. The links with individual staff have become less effective due to changes on both the Governing Body itself and amongst the staff, and individual links have not been kept updated. The Governing Body has good target setting, special needs, buildings and financial expertise. The Governing Body fulfils most of its statutory responsibilities but does not ensure that reports to parents fulfil legal requirements and some pupils miss the collective act of worship for music tuition and special needs classes.

55. The School Development Plan incorporates the views of parents and pupils informally but, as yet, there are no formal ways in which their views can be considered when the plan is written. The structure of the plan is generally good but there are no means within it to determine the relative success of specific initiatives nor planning beyond the immediate year. It is currently on target and the initiatives in the plan are appropriate for the school's current stage of development.

56. The headteacher has taken steps to improve relationships with parents, a criticism at the last inspection, and most parents feel that they are made welcome and can approach the school with any problems they may have. In his two years in post, the headteacher has established a climate in which pupils, teachers and parents can work together to progress the pupils' learning. However, there has been insufficient focus in staff meetings on curriculum development, because too much time in them is given to administrative matters. However, this is partially off set by key stage curriculum meetings. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work together in a spirit of partnership and both are very effective classroom practitioners, setting good examples of classroom practice

57. Curriculum co-ordinators manage their areas of responsibility satisfactorily in most subjects and are particularly effective in numeracy and literacy, in which the analysis of standards and end of Key Stage performance has been good. In other subjects co-ordinators are less effective in knowing about the standards of work and in monitoring planning. Teachers' job descriptions are brief and do

not define in sufficient detail the work that co-ordinators should undertake. Not all members of staff have a copy of their own job description. As a result, systems are not clearly in place whereby co-ordinators account for the work they have undertaken. The staff handbook gives basic details about the school, but it is too brief.

58. Annual budget planning and day-to day management of finances are good. The school secretary has very good personal and technical skills and manages her dual role of secretary and finance officer calmly and efficiently. Grants such as those for special needs and booster classes are used clearly for their intended purposes. Disbursement of expenditure for equipment and consumable spending is not, however, based on best principles. Whilst some allocations are clearly linked to the School Development Plan and subject need, too often spending is allocated on a basis of precedent rather than prioritised need. Allocations to individual class teachers do not ensure best value in the long-term and there are no systems for co-ordinators to evaluate their spending.

59. Time is used to good effect but the pace of the afternoon is reduced in Key Stage 2 when pupils take an afternoon break and further time is lost as pupils prepare for play-time and in settling down afterwards. Total teaching time meets government recommendations in Key Stage 1 but it is 25 minutes per week below in Key Stage 2.

60. The staffing, accommodation and learning resources at the school are good overall. Members of the teaching staff have amongst them recognised qualifications to cover all aspects and subjects of the curriculum. Classroom assistants support the teachers well and have access to all the in-service training available at the school. There are co-ordinators for each aspect of the curriculum, including special needs provision. The school has very good links with a local teacher-training institution and gives the students very good support.

61. The classrooms are large, airy and more than adequate for the delivery of the curriculum. Easy access is available from each class to the playground and corridors and the school has adequate playing fields and playground areas. The space provided by the school in both the classroom and playground situations affords equal access to both boys and girls.

62. The shared music and library room is large and attractively furnished and the school hall is of a generous size giving good facilities for PE, drama and other activities. Inadequate arrangements are made for first-aid needs, which are currently being dealt with in the staff toilets. Cloakroom spaces are crowded. Resources to support the delivery of the curriculum are good for music and PE and satisfactory in other curricular areas.

63. The school has in place a suitable induction policy for newly qualified teachers and for new staff to the school. The provision for the induction of newly qualified teachers is good. They are provided with access to a range of in-service courses arranged through the local authority. They also have a ten per cent allocation of time away from the classroom to enable them to observe other staff teaching, for familiarisation with the school's systems and for further training. They have a mentor at the school, are observed teaching and given the opportunity to keep abreast of their lesson planning and record keeping.

64. The school aims to ensure equality of opportunity for all its pupils, irrespective of gender, and ethnic background and in the majority of situations achieves these aims, through sensitive leadership and management, although instrumental music provision during curriculum time and mixed-age classes present some problems in this regard.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

65. The school has made sound progress in addressing the issues of the previous report. In seeking to make further improvements the headteacher, staff and governing body should:

improve the quality of work in IT by:

- a) better strategic planning for the future work in the subject; (Paras 6, 118)
- b) creating a record system so that pupils' skill development can be tracked; (Para 118)
- c) developing the scheme of work so that it links more to work across the curriculum. (Para118)

ensure that there are better systems for tracking the progress of pupils with special educational needs by:

- a) improving the quality of the pupils' individual education plans by setting more precise targets and reviewing targets for individuals more regularly; (Paras 18, 24, 45)
- b) involving parents more in the individual education plans and in progress reviews;
- c) monitoring these pupils' acquisition of phonics and letter blends to better effect. (Paras18,24)

ensure that curriculum co-ordinators are more clearly aware of their roles by:

- a) ensuring that subject co-ordinators are provided with more detailed job descriptions which map out expectations of their roles more clearly; (Para 57)
- b) giving more co-ordinators opportunities to observe and support classroom practice and scrutinise curriculum planning. (Para 57)

improve assessment systems so that there is a better match of work to pupils' prior attainment in subjects, other than in English, by:

- a) improving the consistency of day-to-day assessment and its use in matching work to pupils' needs; (Paras 17, 18, 37, 40)
 - b) sharing and building on current best practice; (Para 46)
 - c) putting in place record keeping in mathematics, science and in IT; (Paras 40, 105, 112)
 - d) creating a manageable record of pupils' skills in the foundation subjects; ((Paras 143, 146)
 - e) improving the quality and consistency of marking and individual target setting. (Paras20, 43)
- ensure that the LEAs agreed syllabus is followed with reference to the study of faiths other than Christianity. (Paras 6, 121, 126)

improve the systems for allocating the budget to curriculum co-ordinators by:

- a) ensuring that they prioritise their requirements for resource acquisitions; (Para 58)
- b) ensuring that evaluations of spending are carried out at the end of the financial year.(Para 58)

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

Fulfilling statutory requirements by:

- a) ensuring that all pupils attend the collective act of worship unless legally withdrawn (Para 54) and
- b) improving the quality of written reports to parents so that they comply with legal requirements. (Paras 49, 54)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	77
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	41

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	26	42	30	2	0	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)		301
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		32

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR-Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		43

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.2
National comparative data	5.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999 (98)	24 (27)	17 (22)	41 (49)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17 (18)	20 (20)	24 (19)
	Girls	16 (18)	16 (18)	17 (18)
	Total	33 (36)	36 (38)	41 (37)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (73)	88 (78)	100 (75)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20 (20)	20 (21)	24 (21)
	Girls	16 (18)	16 (18)	17 (18)
	Total	36 (38)	36 (39)	41 (39)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (77)	88 (79)	100 (78)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	1999 (98)	22 (20)	22 (19)	44 (39)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14 (13)	19 (16)	17 (16)
	Girls	18 (17)	17 (17)	18 (16)
	Total	32 (30)	36 (33)	35 (32)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (77)	82 (85)	80 (82)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17 (14)	19 (14)	17 (14)
	Girls	18 (17)	19 (17)	19 (17)
	Total	35 (31)	38 (31)	38 (31)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (80)	86 (80)	86 (80)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	301
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR–Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.2
Average class size	26.4

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	89

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	454797
Total expenditure	468005
Expenditure per pupil	1576
Balance brought forward from previous year	41480
Balance carried forward to next year	28272

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

301

Number of questionnaires returned

101

Percentage of responses in each category (rounded up percentages)

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	45	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48	45	5	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	56	2	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	42	14	2	2
The teaching is good.	48	44	4	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26	52	15	7	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	51	40	7	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	37	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	25	52	15	2	6
The school is well led and managed.	45	47	5	1	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	56	2	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	26	41	22	0	11

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

66. Pupils begin their schooling in the September preceding their fifth birthday and are introduced to full-time schooling on a gradual basis. At the time of the inspection 23 children were under the age of five. The Reception class, which caters for the under-fives, is staffed by a teacher and by two nursery nurses who spend half of each day in the class. There is also a number of regular volunteer parent helpers.

67. Attainment on entry is above average and by age five is above national expectations. Most children have had some pre-school experience. They settle in to school well.

Personal and social development

68. The children's personal and social development by the age of five is above expectations and they make good progress in this aspect of their development. Their good personal skills make a positive contribution to the purposeful atmosphere of the learning environment. They clearly enjoy being in school and concentrate and behave very well. The quality of interaction between adults and children and the management of the children in the classroom are excellent. Members of staff pay particular attention to the building of good relationships, co-operation and mutual support.

Language and literacy

69. By age five pupils have made good progress in language and their attainment is above expectations. Children are articulate and confident when speaking and listen very well. They have many opportunities to speak and listen in a variety of structured situations. The use of the role-play area is planned carefully to enhance further the children's speaking and listening skills. For example, children use glove puppets and a storyboard to act out familiar stories. A nursery rhyme die gives children the chance to sing well loved songs when they sing the rhyme depicted by the upturned face. The listening corner is planned well, and resourced effectively with headphones and tapes. Children are encouraged to explain what they are doing, reflect upon what they have learned and speak to the group. Planning for speaking and listening is very good. By the time they are five many pupils exceed national expectations in reading. Most can read, some fluently, and the children use a variety of decoding skills. Children discuss books in guided reading sessions and in whole class lessons. They are knowledgeable about book conventions. They know many phonemes and use these to identify and build words. Children write confidently for a variety of purpose and in different situations. The provision of a well-resourced writing corner reinforces this. Children use their knowledge of letter sounds and blends to support their writing.

Mathematical development

70. By the age of five most pupils achieve, and some exceed national expectations in mathematics. They make good progress in the subject. They count securely within ten, use appropriate mathematical vocabulary and order numbers correctly, using both ordinal and cardinal terminology. They use and practise these skills in practical situations, such as rolling a die, knocking down skittles and fishing for numbers. They keep scores in a number of ways. These activities are supported by sensitive adult intervention that makes a positive contribution to children's learning. Practical activities are always well planned and resourced to reinforce teaching objectives.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

71. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world are well developed and above expectations by age five. The children make good progress. They talk about journeys and use the role-play area well, currently a large vehicle, to make imaginary journeys. A map by the three bears' house and a journey on a wall display reinforce learning. An interactive science display teaches children about light and colour and the use of computers in every area of the curriculum means that they are familiar with the use of the mouse to control icons and manage the programs.

Physical development

72. The children make sound progress in their physical development and attainment by age five meets expectations. Children are confident and well co-ordinated. They can dress and undress for hall lessons with the minimum of help. They are beginning to use their bodies in movement in interesting ways and are becoming imaginative in their use of space. As yet they do not get out or put away the large apparatus in PE lessons. Children do not have access to large play apparatus or large construction equipment, such as building blocks. However, the provision of a safe outdoor play area currently under construction will enhance children's physical development and offer better opportunities for gross-motor development than is currently the case. Fine motor skills are developed through the use of manipulative materials, scissors, paint and writing implements.

Creative development

73. Children's creative development is enhanced through art, craft, music and imaginative play. They make sound progress in this aspect of their learning and attainment by age five meets national expectations. They had some involvement in the construction of the vehicle in the role play area, but no other instances of large modelling were seen. Children are taught to use equipment carefully and to follow correct procedures when mixing watercolours. Children learn the names of musical instruments, such as jingle stick or rainstick and are taught how to hold and play them correctly. They accompanied the story 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt' very effectively. Children know a number of songs and rhymes and sing in tune.

74. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good and is good overall. The teacher works hard to create an environment dedicated to learning. She marries successfully the demands of the early years curriculum with National Curriculum requirements in her planning, although there are too few opportunities for extended undirected play. The current involvement of the under-fives team in the Effective Early Learning project has resulted in a deeper focus on observation, sensitive adult /child intervention and a thorough review of early years documentation. This is a highly structured environment where thorough planning and preparation and a good use of resources ensure that all pupils make good progress in several aspects of learning.

75. Good progress has been made in addressing the concerns expressed in the last inspection report, although procedures to assess and record individual children's attainment to inform future planning are still underdeveloped. Standards are broadly similar, although the children's physical and creative skills now meet, rather than exceed, national expectations.

ENGLISH

76. Overall, standards are above average in both key stages and represent an improvement since the last inspection. Standards are good in listening, speaking and reading throughout the school. Standards in writing are good in Key Stage 1 and very good by the end of Key Stage 2.

77. In the 1999 Key Stage 1 National Curriculum tests the performance of pupils in reading and writing was well above the national average. Over the last four years, pupils' performance in reading has been above the national average, and in writing has been close to the national average. The performance of boys has been above the national average over the last four years, whereas the performance of girls has been well above the national average. When compared with similar schools, pupils' performance in reading and writing has been well above average.

78. In the 1999 end of Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests, the percentage of pupils attaining the expected level and above was close to the national average. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher level was above the national average. The school's results were close to the average for similar schools. The performance of girls is consistently better than that of boys. The school has identified the differences between the performance of boys and girls and has made a good start in addressing the issue.

79. Pupils make good progress in their learning through both key stages. The work of one-third of pupils in Years 5 and 6 has improved dramatically in recent times.

80. Pupils in both key stages show good listening skills. They usually listen to one another and to their teachers carefully, sometimes intently, and respond appropriately to the instructions that they are given. In Key Stage 1, pupils display a good vocabulary when they volunteer the fact that other words for '*early evening*' are '*dusk*' and '*twilight*'.

81. In Key Stage 2, pupils are able to adapt their speech to suit formal and informal occasions. For example, pupils sharing poetry with their peers, show good standards of presentation by reading clearly and expressively and by being aware of the needs of their audience.

82. Standards in reading are good in both key stages. Most pupils, including those with less ability, enjoy reading books. Many read well, confidently and with good expression. Many pupils know about the works of different authors, but have limited access to the school library because timetabled peripatetic music lessons prevent its use as a library for two days each week. As a result, many pupils have more limited opportunities to take books home to read or to experience special library lessons. The school is attempting to remedy this by daily reading sessions after lunch in each class, but this is insufficient.

83. Key Stage 2 pupils can discuss and compare texts and authors, and describe characters. Pupils with less ability in reading in Key Stage 1 use appropriate strategies, such as picture clues and generally Key Stage 1 pupils adopt an approach based on the teaching of phonics. Their knowledge of this strategy helps them well when they meet difficult or unknown words.

84. In Year 1, pupils learn swiftly because the teacher matches tasks well to the needs of each pupil. In Year 2, pupils make good responses in identifying phonemes such as '*er*'. When one pupil identified '*verse*', another suggested '*universe*,' and a third followed up with '*university*'.

85. Key Stage 1 pupils show satisfactory standards in their reading reference skills. They are able to use simple indexes to locate and use information for their studies. Many Key Stage 2 pupils use skimming and scanning techniques when searching for information in non-fiction books. They can talk with understanding about the features of reference books such as a glossary, contents, and index, and can explain their purpose. However, pupils have a limited understanding of the classification of books in libraries or of how to search for particular books. Pupils have made books about Ancient Egypt, which are of high quality. These books contain contents pages, a glossary and pen-portraits of the authors, and are well presented.

86. In Key Stage 2, pupils understand how to use a dictionary to seek out the meaning of words and help with their spelling. They learn new spellings regularly and teachers test and record their progress assiduously. Teachers focus upon the improvement of pupils' spelling and extend the vocabulary with well-chosen words such as '*beautiful*', '*saucily*', '*melodious*' and '*anonymously*'. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils use dictionaries and thesauri effectively to enrich their good written work.

87. Throughout the school pupils improve upon their standards in handwriting to perfect a joined, regular style of cursive writing which enhances the quality of their work in many subjects. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils write with a pen in a fluent, neat script.

88. Standards in literacy are good in other subjects, such as in the poetry about the '*Blitz*', the work of television reporters on the 1960's, the research to build a geographical glossary or the analysis of the meaning of the word explorer. In Year 3, pupils struggle to pronounce words like '*vapour*' but know that '*it is like steam*'. In withdrawal groups, pupils with special educational needs concentrate on the use of language in a way that helps them to understand other knowledge better.

89. Standards in writing are good by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils write stories, and poems, which show much individuality and demonstrate their ability to handle the conventions of writing effectively. They can, for example, write in complete sentences, using capital letters, and full stops. Able pupils can use inverted commas to denote speech effectively in their writing. Pupils use personal writing to savour events and feelings and share them with their readers. In Year 6, pupils understand that onomatopoeia occurs when '*the sound of a word echoes its meaning*'.

90. In the best writing in upper Key Stage 2, pupils write that '*strange flashes of lightening pound the sky*' or that '*wild winds skitter*'. They deal with the process of language almost as a scientific experiment with words. Their poetry is sometimes stark, tightly controlled, has a sparse beauty, and is peopled with a resonant vocabulary.

91. Pupils with limited ability do well. Although their writing has small spelling errors, their handwriting is good and the content interesting. They learn challenging words such as '*oppressed*', '*coarse*', '*slurred*', '*frigate*' and '*stanzas*'.

92. Pupils are able to draft and redraft their writing. They know the importance of adjectives and adverbs in giving their writing interest and colour. By the end of Key Stage 2, about half of the pupils have an extensive vocabulary. They use powerful words such as '*omnipotent*' and '*despair*'. They write gripping introductions, such as '*No, no, my insides shout. But on the outside I am silent and motionless*'

93. Pupils write well for a range of purposes. Persuasive writing about the attractions of a visitor centre or a class reader, and creative writing about myths and legends are compelling in their different ways.

94. The quality of teaching is good in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching in

Years 3 and 4 is good and in Years 5 and 6 it is very good. Some teachers encourage pupils to evaluate their written and spoken work and that of their peers through, for example, paired reading, group reading, proof-reading and their journals. Teachers use fine writing from a good range of authors to inspire their pupils. The teaching of literacy is almost consistently good throughout the school, and the pupils' literacy books are active, working documents. Many teachers ensure that pupils evaluate the achievements made in lessons by holding plenary sessions at the end. This strategy proves very effective in driving standards up.

95. Pupils' attitudes to learning are keen and eager. Their behaviour in lessons is often exemplary, and this plays a very important part in creating a positive ethos for learning.

96. The subject is led well by an able and dynamic co-ordinator, who plans, monitors, evaluates and guides the work of the school in an exemplary way. Classroom assistants provide effective support in classes throughout the school.

97. Arrangements to improve pupils' research skills or to enhance independent learning through either the school library or through regular, guided use of the Internet are limited.

98. Teachers have insufficient guidance about assessment or what pupils have done in other classes because there is no subject portfolio of assessed work.

99. In Years 2 and 6, teachers' assessment of pupils' work for the national tests is accurate when compared to the pupils' actual test results. Throughout the school, although marking is usually helpful, pupils have sometimes been unable to improve the standard of their written work because marking does not identify weaknesses sufficiently or set detailed, individual targets for improvement.

MATHEMATICS

100. The attainment of the pupils in the 1999 national tests in both key stages is well above the national average when compared with similar schools as well as with all schools nationally. The number of pupils at the end of both key stages who achieve the higher levels is also well above the national average. Since the previous inspection report, results in Key Stage 1 have fluctuated from being above national average to below, whilst in Key Stage 2 attainment has been consistently well above the national average. No clear evidence was found during the inspection to explain this fluctuation in Key Stage 1 because both the quality of teaching and pupils' attitudes to their work are good.

101. Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that attainments in Key Stages 1 and 2 are in line to be above national averages, overall, by the end of Years 2 and 6 and represent an improvement since the last inspection report. Pupils in both key stages are currently making good progress. In Year 2 pupils are beginning to develop an understanding of place value involving hundreds, tens and units. They can add and subtract single-digit numbers from a two digit number and can count in twos and tens. They can use their knowledge of doubles to help with subtraction and they appreciate the function of zero. They also know the basic shapes and the number of sides they contain and they can record information and data using block graphs. In Year 6 pupils generally have a secure knowledge of place value and can multiply and divide whole numbers and decimals by two digit numbers. They can recognise equivalent fractions and correctly order fractions in size and are developing a rapid recall of multiplication facts. Throughout the key stage pupils successfully create graphs and pie charts. One of the strengths of teaching within the school is the opportunity pupils are given to carry out investigative work within lessons as well as through other activities. Pupils' ability to problem-solve, make mathematical decisions and reason are sound.

102. The quality of teaching throughout the school is good overall. In Year 6 and the lower end of Key Stage 1 all lessons observed were very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed in the teaching of mathematics throughout the school and teachers are confident in teaching the subject. The training undertaken by the school staff before and after the implementation of the numeracy hour has helped teachers to develop their knowledge and understanding of mathematics, and this has been reflected in the way lessons have been planned and the curriculum delivered. Numeracy is taught well. A significant strength within the teaching of mathematics is the high quality of questioning by teachers, both as a form of revision and in assessing pupils' understanding of on-going work.

103. Nearly all lessons observed proceed at a brisk pace and pupils are informed of the lesson objectives and given a clear indication of the teachers' expectations regarding the tasks they have to undertake. Resources to support the lesson are well organised, appropriate and accessible to the pupils. The resources constructed and assembled by teachers in the two classes containing the youngest pupils are both innovative and appropriate. They are a significant factor in heightening pupils' interest and in encouraging learning. The pupils' attitudes to mathematics and their behaviour in lessons are good across the whole school and very good in Years 5 and 6. Pupils show enthusiasm and enjoyment and apply themselves well to their assignments.

104. Throughout Key Stage 1 mathematics is taught to the whole class with activities being matched to meet the needs of groups within the classroom. Within Key Stage 2 a setting system for three lessons each week for Years 3 and 4 is in place and for two lessons each week for Years 5 and 6. This means that pupils are taught for those periods in groups where it is judged that pupils of equal ability have been placed and for the remaining lessons of the week are taught in classes where there is a wider range of ability. The school has been successful in the delivery of the curriculum and in the good results being obtained in the national tests by the end of Key Stage 2.

105. The planning for mathematics is sound. Teachers plan in year group meetings where they discuss the delivery of the curriculum and share ideas and expertise. The school has in place a system for recording coverage of the curriculum but not a system for recording pupils' attainment and progress. Although the teachers are knowledgeable about the pupils in their care, the lack of records is a disadvantage to teachers who have to take charge of classes when there is a change in teaching staff during the school year, as has happened in three classes recently.

106. Leadership and management of the curriculum are in need of further development. There has been some monitoring of the delivery of the subject and classroom observations have been carried out. The co-ordinator for Key Stage 2 has access to all the planning. The temporary Key Stage 1 co-ordinator for Key Stage 1 has the qualifications and the skills to make a significant contribution to the delivery and has been included in training initiatives.

SCIENCE

107. In the past four years the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level or above in science at the end of Key Stage 2 has consistently been better than the national average percentage. The girls in the school have mostly outperformed the boys over this period of time. In the most recent national tests in 1999, the percentage of pupils gaining both the expected and higher levels was close to the national average. The teachers' own assessments indicated more favourable national comparative performance. Against similar schools, as judged by free school meal percentages, the percentage of pupils reaching at least the expected level were below average but average for the percentage reaching the higher level. In the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 teacher assessments of pupils' attainments, the percentage of pupils achieving the national expectations for age seven were very high in comparison with both the national average and the average for similar schools. However, they were below average in both respects for the percentage of pupils attaining the higher level. Pupils' current attainment in science indicates that

about three-quarters of the pupils are in line to obtain the expected levels by the end of both key stages and about one quarter to exceed them. Attainment is broadly in line with the previous report.

108. The school's scheme covers the National Curriculum Programmes of Study, including experimentation and investigation, in both key stages and pupils are making sound progress throughout the school. Key Stage 1 pupils understand the basic requirements that plants need to live and they can name the main parts of a plant. They appreciate that there are living things and things that have never been alive. They learn through their senses that different materials have different textures and show good qualities of observation in these activities. They learn about simple electrical circuits and draw labelled diagrams to show their understanding. They understand that magnets can attract some materials but not others and they can tabulate their findings.

109. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils understand about the sources of light and can indicate where shadows will fall when the source of light is from a particular direction. They learn about the constituents of different types of foods and about a healthy diet. They pursue in greater depth the conditions for growth. They carry out simple fair tests, for example finding out which type of paper is the strongest or how surface area is a major factor in the evaporation of water. They understand about solids, liquids and gases and appreciate that air is a mixture of gases.

110. Little science teaching was observed during the inspection because the upper Key Stage 2 lessons took place outside the inspection period and similar content was being taught in all lessons in lower Key Stage 2. Overall, however, the quality of teaching is mostly sound in both key stages. In the best teaching, good use was made of plants so that pupils could identify and label the various parts and understand their functions. There was a good balance of imparting information and pupil activity. Questioning was of a good quality and sought precision in pupils' answers. Pupils' existing knowledge was used well to further the course of the lesson. In Key Stage 1 the work required of pupils is occasionally undemanding and lacking in rigour as, for example when pupils merely colour in a bowl of fruit or make statements about the type of movements they like. In the one observation that could be made of science in Key Stage 1, the teaching was satisfactory.

111. Pupils in both key stages have good attitudes to their work. They show good levels of interest in what is being discussed and use their time effectively in lessons. Their work is generally neat and well set out.

112. The co-ordinator has carried out some monitoring in Key Stage 1 and this has brought about some improvements in standards but she has not monitored classroom practice in Key Stage 2. However, in discussion with staff, modifications have been made to the science curriculum to avoid overload in lower Key Stage 2. Resource levels for the subject are satisfactory. The absence of a record of key skills makes it difficult for staff to build on pupils' existing knowledge and understanding, and in Key Stage 2 similar expectations are made of all pupils across a two-year age spread. This is offset somewhat by the arrangement of a two-year programme for each part of the key stage and by setting arrangements in the latter part of Year 6. Nevertheless, not enough attention is being given to stretching higher attaining pupils in both key stages.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

113. Attainment is in line with national expectations by the end of both key stages and there have

been some slight improvements since the last inspection. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils can use a simplified word-processing program and operate peripherals such as the mouse and the printer. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are able to use a word-processor to enter, save, amend and retrieve data, generate computer graphics and access information held on CD-ROM media. Pupils in both key stages use spreadsheets to model or record data, and use programmable toys in measuring distances and angles, to a limited degree.

114. Throughout the school, some, but not all pupils can use information technology to support their learning in literacy, with varying degrees of success. In upper Key Stage 2, pupils have produced good word-processed stories in the style of a famous author. These pupils are also able to carry out the basic functions of a word-processing program, such as changing the font and size of characters. Pupils do not use information technology regularly enough to extend and support their learning in other areas of the curriculum. There is little difference in the attainment of boys and girls and overall pupils make sound progress in both key stages.

115. Pupils' progress is satisfactory in both key stages, as is the progress of pupils identified as having special educational needs. More able pupils have used meteorological information obtained from the Internet to build datasets on the weather at the school's weather station. This is, however, a relatively isolated example of the use of information technology across subjects.

116. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour in lessons are good in both key stages. They listen attentively to instructions, concentrate well, and handle resources with care.

117. The overall quality of teaching in both key stages is satisfactory. Teachers have either had or are going to have sufficient in-service training to keep abreast of developments in information technology. Staff training is urgently needed to maximise the use of new equipment when it is purchased.

118. The school's long-term information technology planning is weak. The lack of an information technology development plan means that there is insufficient focus upon the development of the subject and the further improvement of teaching standards. The scheme of work does not provide enough guidance to teachers for the use of computers in every subject. Teachers do not as yet keep portfolios of pupils' work to assist in the moderation of assessment and the monitoring of individual or group progress. The procedures for assessment are unsatisfactory. There is currently no system for the assessment of pupils' work, and teachers are unclear about the individual progress pupils make, apart from sometimes keeping checklists of what they have done.

119. Hardware resources are satisfactory and software resources are good, except that access to the Internet is quite limited. The provision of listening centres in every classroom is beneficial to pupils' learning. The computers with CD ROM facilities are occasionally used by pupils to good effect but are not sufficiently accessible to pupils for individual research in a library setting.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

120. Standards are broadly in line with local expectations in both key stages and as such are similar to those at the time of the last inspection. Pupils in both key stages are making sound progress in the subject. In Key Stage 1, pupils recognise the name of Jesus' disciple Peter, and know immediately that his full name was Simon Peter. They understand that when Jesus talked to his followers about '*fishing for people*' he was talking metaphorically. They know the name of the New Testament, and understand that the word '*disciple*' applies to Jesus' special friends and followers. However, Key Stage 1 pupils have yet to learn about objects associated with other world faiths. For example, they do not know about the festival of Divali or Rangoli patterns, or that the Kippah is a cap worn by Jewish men when entering the synagogue. They do not know what the Torah is or where it is kept in a synagogue. In this aspect, the school does not follow the spirit of the locally agreed syllabus.

121. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have a good understanding of Christianity, but a much more limited understanding of other World faiths, such as Judaism, Buddhism and Islam. Pupils have a good knowledge of the traditions and rituals associated with Christianity, such as why baptism is important to Christians. In Year 6, some pupils do not understand the basic principles of the teachings of John the Baptist, but others do and can write that '*people are baptised because it washes their sins away and it makes them Christian*'.

122. Pupils become increasingly aware of issues associated with human existence. In Key Stage 2, for instance, through a particularly well focused discussion about the Parable of the Master and the Servants, pupils were able to consider various moral issues, such as envy being a vice. They draw a perceptive analogy between the Master and God, in that some people may be Christians all their lives but some may only be converted late in life. Nevertheless, God loves them all equally and forgivingly.

123. In analysing the Parable of the Talents, pupils are encouraged by the teacher's skill and confidence to talk about trust and faith, and they make them a reality in the classroom. They interpret talents in physical terms, but the teacher guides them sensitively to a greater understanding of the parable's depth of meaning. These activities all assist in developing pupils' knowledge about themselves. Girls show a greater maturity than boys in discussions. '*Boys think they cannot cry and are embarrassed by their emotions.*' All share and consider these thoughts and develop their emotional maturity as a result.

124. The overall quality of teaching is sound. Where teaching is effective, lessons are well organised and well timed. Teachers help pupils to reflect upon life, to develop a greater understanding of themselves, and use humour to improve that understanding. In both key stages pupils are often given time each day for quiet reflection in class. During such times, pupils come to terms with themselves, with their beliefs, with their feelings and with their aspirations. These times are special. They contribute strongly to a sense of calm in classes and around the school.

125. Teachers plan insufficiently for pupils to visit synagogues, mosques, and churches of different denominations as part of their lessons. The vicar is a regular visitor and conductor of assemblies. A Bermudan woodcarver and a Ghanaian storyteller have also supported learning through in-house visits. Pupils in Key Stage 2 can identify the similarities and differences in different Gospel stories, and show empathy when they listen to such tales.

126. The artefacts used to assist religious education are only satisfactory. The school has not yet developed a resource of artefacts of high quality to illuminate the main World faiths, which might

enable pupils to be taught about concepts such as reverence and tolerance.

ART

127. Attainment at the end of both key stages is better than national expectations and the good standards reported previously have been maintained. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils use materials and tools confidently and record their ideas in different ways. They print, using a variety of techniques, are beginning to mix colours and work in both two- and three-dimensions. They are beginning to be aware of the work of different artists and have experience of working in similar styles.

128. Only one art lesson was seen in Key Stage 2. Evidence is, therefore, based on display, on talking to the subject co-ordinator and pupils and examining the scheme of work. Pupils in all classes work on the same theme each half-term. There are examples of printing using different materials and techniques to produce a variety of effects and pupils make good progress in their ability to manipulate tools and materials and to select colour. Some good observational drawing was seen in a Year 3/4 class. There are good quality displays featuring the work of artists of different periods, accompanied by pupils' interpretations of the paintings.

129. Pupils make good progress throughout the school. They enjoy art work and talk about it enthusiastically. It is evident that most pupils tackle their work carefully, building on previously learned skills.

130. Insufficient lessons could be observed to judge the quality of teaching at either key stage. However, work on display throughout the school indicates that teachers in both key stages have good knowledge of the subject and the ability to teach a good range of skills.

131. The co-ordinator took over responsibility for the subject at the beginning of this term and has had no opportunity as yet to influence practice. The scheme of work is detailed and takes account of all aspects of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study, thus ensuring coverage of each strand. Arrangements for the assessment of pupils' work are unsatisfactory. Pupils keep sketch-books, and samples of observational drawing are kept by teachers. However, work in sketch books is often poorly presented, is undated and there is no evaluative comment to help pupils to learn or to improve. No record is kept either of coverage or attainment in other aspects of the subject. A few photographs record particular topics.

132. There have been visits to art galleries, and a secondary art teacher spent time in school last year working with pupils. A wood carver worked with Year 6 pupils to design and carve a millennium tree which is displayed in the school entrance hall, and this is of good quality.

Design and Technology

133. From observations made in two lessons, one in each of the key stages, as well as an examination of teachers' plans, discussion with pupils and a scrutiny of work, it is judged that pupils make satisfactory progress in developing design and technology capability throughout the school. Attainment is in line with national expectations. The curriculum is adequately broad and balanced with designing, making, and evaluating tasks all represented in the school's policy and implemented in practice. These findings are in line with those stated in the previous report.

134. In Key Stage 1 pupils gain skills in using construction materials of various kinds. They design, make and evaluate objects such as a head covering for 'Barnaby', the class bear. In discussion pupils in

Year 2 are able to demonstrate that they realise that boats have one major feature in common, that is to travel across water despite their many designs and features. In Year 6, pupils have adopted a more systematic approach to planning and developing designs. They pay greater attention to detail, with clear labelling and explanations included and materials listed. They are quite innovative and this is illustrated when the sugar lumps, the material chosen to build a bridge, start to melt and the solution is to spray the whole construction with a hair spray.

135. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are good. They discuss and listen to each other's ideas. Some good co-operative work is observed, especially in Years 5 and 6 where the groups agree the boundaries within which they are going to work and who is to be responsible for each element of the project before attempting the task. Their enjoyment of the subject is illustrated in the way that the pupils want to work to the last possible minute of the lesson before clearing away the equipment and materials quickly and efficiently.

136. The quality of teaching observed is good. Teachers prepare their lessons carefully and ensure that resources are available to meet the requirements of the pupils. Aspects of other areas of the curriculum, especially geography and mathematics, are integrated into the design and technology lessons and pupils' knowledge of shapes and measures, as well as their skills in map reading, are being reinforced and developed through the practical and investigative work in the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

137. Attainment in the previous report was judged to be average and generally satisfactory in relation to the pupils' ages and abilities. These standards have been maintained and pupils make satisfactory progress by the end of both key stages.

138. In the Reception class and Year 1 pupils are beginning to understand the need for a map and are able to draw a plan of the route they follow when searching for the hiding place of 'the bear'. In Year 2 pupils are developing their awareness of the difference between hills, mountains and valleys. They are able to explain the difference between the physical and human features on a map and how an island differs from the mainland. In Year 4 pupils consider what is happening in the locality and assemble a list of arguments for and against developments, while in Year 6 some very good research work is carried out by the pupils, resulting in them learning about different types of environments.

139. Pupils' attitudes towards geography and their behaviour in classrooms is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. The planning of lessons and the organisation of geographical activities in Key Stage 1 around the story of 'Granny Island' is a significant factor in helping to motivate and keep pupils interested in the work. Pupils throughout the school take a great deal of care over their assignments and the presentation of work is good. Some very good collaborative work, especially in Years 5 and 6, was observed. The pupils shared information and the challenges that they presented themselves with resulted in group work of a high standard.

140. The quality of teaching within Key Stage 1 is good, whilst in Years 4 to 6 teaching is satisfactory overall. However, teaching standards range from unsatisfactory to good within Key Stage 2. All lessons have clear targets identified in the planning and are generally conducted in an interesting and challenging manner, with pupils fully involved throughout the lesson. Where a lesson becomes unsatisfactory, it is the result of a lack of challenge and an over-long introduction, combined with a slow pace of delivery. Consequently pupils become disinterested or uninvolved in the lesson and progress becomes unsatisfactory.

141. The curriculum co-ordinator has ensured that a policy for teaching geography and a scheme of work, as well as a curriculum map, are in place in an effort to ensure that all aspects of the subject are being adequately covered. Monitoring of the delivery of the curriculum has started with some classroom observations taking place and this needs to be developed further. Assessment of pupils' work and recording of their progress are in need of development.

HISTORY

142. Attainment is in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages and corresponds to judgements made in the previous report. Although no history lessons were observed in Key Stage 1, from a scrutiny of pupils' work and from classroom display, it is clear that by the end of the key stage pupils are aware of everyday life in the past and have a developing understanding of chronology. They have some knowledge of the life of famous people. In Years 1 and 2 pupils have studied the story of Christopher Columbus and have learned about explorers. Pupils use books and other resources to support their learning. They make satisfactory progress in the subject.

143. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils show an understanding of past periods and societies. In work on Britain since 1930, they have used first-hand anecdotes from a grandfather and books and artefacts, such as ration books, as sources of evidence in their study. Pupils were seen to make good progress in an oral lesson, where they presented the facts of a major event from the 1960's as if for a television broadcast. Here they showed an ability to identify the important points in a text and to present these in a coherent and interesting way. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2, although similar expectations are made of all pupils in the work provided in mixed-age classes.

144. From the small number of lessons observed the quality of teaching is good and occasionally very good. Lessons are well planned with clear objectives. Pupils work both independently and collaboratively. In these good lessons, a brisk pace is maintained, teachers have high expectations and pupils are challenged and enthused.

145. Throughout the school pupils enjoy their work, listen attentively and behave well. They show good levels of interest and concentration.

146. The co-ordinator took over responsibility for the subject immediately before the inspection. The detailed scheme of work, organised in a two-year cycle of themes to take account of mixed-age classes, is currently under review. However, whilst the scheme of work offers guidance on coverage, the previous co-ordinator did not have opportunities to monitor planning and has no release time to observe classroom practice. There are no arrangements for the on-going assessment of pupils' work to influence future planning, and no portfolios of work or summative assessment to demonstrate what pupils have learned. Evidence in the pupils' books is thin and the quality of work in them does not match the quality of work seen in lessons.

147. The subject is allocated a sum of money each year but this takes no account of current need.

The school borrows books and artefacts from the Cheshire library service for each study and has no central resource of its own, although there is a limited number of text books in classes and other material is stored in the small school library. Visits are made to places of interest to support learning.

148. The provision of a revised cohesive scheme of work has answered concerns expressed at the last inspection but there is as yet no systematic assessment or recording of pupil achievement. The present system of funding is unsatisfactory.

MUSIC

149. Standards of music meet expectations by the end of Key Stage 1, a little lower than previously reported, but are better than national expectations by the end of Key Stage 2. This is mainly due to the large number of pupils who have individual lessons in school time for woodwind and brass and to the effective use of the music co-ordinator. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils can sing tunefully and accompany songs with untuned percussion. They can listen to music and make appropriate responses in dance to the tempo and dynamics. By the end of Key Stage 2, a significant number of pupils can read music and understand accepted musical terminology. The school band rehearses together regularly and plays to a good standard for the pupils' ages, sometimes accompanying the singing in assembly. In lessons they can compose and record their work in graphic scores of varying complexity, but generally the pupils are at an early stage in undertaking this kind of work. Overall pupils make sound progress in Key Stage 1 and good progress in composing and performance in Key Stage 2.

150. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good. They are interested in, and enjoy, their lessons. They have good listening skills. They select instruments sensibly for their group compositions, respect them. They share them amicably and work together effectively as they negotiate decisions about their compositions.

151. Overall the quality of teaching is good. It is sound in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2, especially in lessons undertaken by the music co-ordinator, who has particular musical expertise. This is used well to effect compositional, ensemble and singing work, some of which is conducted as extra-curricular activities. Better use could be made of the recorded music played in assembly to acquaint pupils with different composers and how music can create particular moods.

152. The scheme for the work is well structured and is complemented by a published series that gives good guidance to the generalist class teachers. There is a good variety of untuned percussion instruments and these are of good quality. Amounts of tuned percussion instruments are satisfactory.

Physical education

153. The pupils' attainment in PE is in line with expectations by the end of both key stages. This represents slightly lower standards by the end of Key Stage 1 than those previously reported. By the end of Key Stage 1 the pupils can balance along upturned benches and walk in different directions along benches, for example sideways and backwards. They know how to land correctly by flexing their knees when jumping off benches. They are suitably confident at height when working on

trestles. In dance, they can twirl and twist in their movements, replicating the movement of leaves being blown by the wind. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils demonstrate attainment in line with end of key stage expectations in games lessons. They know and can interpret the basic rules of netball and football and exhibit suitable skills in passing with their feet and hands. However, there is an over emphasis on single sex activities. Some good quality work was observed in dance in Years 5/6 in which pupils moved with great sensitivity to the mood of the music.

154. Pupils in both key stages make sound progress in PE. They have good work attitudes and are well behaved. They co-operate well in groups and team games and play fairly. They observe and listen well when skills are demonstrated in the activities they are to undertake and, as a result, the pace of learning is usually brisk. In Key Stage 2 pupils handle the equipment with care and good technique.

155. The quality of teaching is mostly good in both key stages. Lessons have a clear focus and build on what pupils have done before by reference to a published scheme. Resources are used to good effect and small items of equipment are got ready in advance. Apparatus is sometimes set out before a gymnastics lesson begins. This practice, however, restricts learning opportunities. For example, in Key Stage 1 pupils are not being taught how to carry apparatus correctly and a further disadvantage is the much reduced amount of space to carry out preliminary activities. Occasionally, some activity time is lost as pupils queue for turns on the apparatus. Teachers give clear instructions about what the pupils are to do and make good use of personal demonstration and pupil evaluation. This improves pupils' performance, for example correct landing techniques in Key Stage 1 and the quality of passing in games in Key Stage 2.

156. The accommodation for PE is good. The hall is of a good size and has an excellent wooden surface. Field space is adequate and an enclosed swimming pool enhances the overall provision. Resource provision for the subject is good.