

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **NESTON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Neston

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 110987

Headteacher: Mr I Coulson

Reporting inspector: Mr J D Eadie  
20191

Dates of inspection: 17<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> September 2001

Inspection number: 193426

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Burton Road Neston Cheshire
Postcode:	CH64 9RE
Telephone number:	(0151) 336 1662
Fax number:	(0151) 353 0992
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs L Hinks
Date of previous inspection:	April 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20191	J D Eadie	Registered inspector	Science Information and communication technology	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19430	E T Hall	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
19946	R Baker	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Art Design and technology	
18926	M T Ridout	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Mathematics Geography History	How good are the curriculum and other opportunities offered to pupils?
15011	M Wallace	Team Inspector	The Foundation Stage Music Physical education Religious education	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Neston Primary School is situated close to the centre of the small town of Neston. It serves a very mixed catchment area. There are 243 pupils in the school, of whom 23 are under the age of five in the Reception class. The school roll is falling, owing to local trends. Ten per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, a proportion that is broadly average. Virtually all pupils are of white British heritage and all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is similar to the national average. These pupils have a range of special needs, but the largest proportion have specific learning difficulties and three have statements of special need. There is a wide range of attainment on entry to the school and it is generally average.

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

Neston Primary school is a very good school. Standards being achieved are above average in English and mathematics and well above average in science. They are above average in most other subjects. The pupils are learning well because of the good quality teaching that they enjoy. There are many very good aspects to the teaching. The quality of leadership and management of the school is excellent. There is an atmosphere of purpose and thoroughness about all that is done in the school. The school gives very good value for money.

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

- The school has an excellent ethos. The excellent provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development contributes significantly to this, as does the provision for ensuring good behaviour. Behaviour is very good and the pupils' personal development is excellent. The pupils' attitudes to school are very good, certain aspects being exemplary. The personal support for pupils is excellent.
- The quality of teaching is good and learning is consequently good.
- The leadership and management of the school are excellent at all levels and the monitoring and evaluation that go on in the school are of very high quality.
- The curriculum is very well planned and this leads to above average standards, particularly in science, art, music and religious education. The curriculum is enhanced by an excellent range of extra-curricular activities.
- The pupils are given considerable independence, both in their learning and in their personal development.
- There are excellent links with parents. Parents are provided with excellent information, both about what is going on in school and about their children's progress.

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

- Time is not always used as effectively as it might be for teaching and learning.
- The records of what the pupils know, understand and can do are not clear enough to enable the teachers to plan as effectively as they might for future learning.
- The school development plan does not give a long-term view of the direction in which the school intends to go.
- The hall is too small to allow all aspects of physical education to be taught effectively and standards in this subject are not as high as those in most other subjects.

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

These areas for improvement should be read in the context of this being a very good school; they do not represent weaknesses, rather they are pointers to refine the very good practice already going on.

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in April 1997 and has made very good progress since then. The one key issue in that report concerning information and communication technology has been addressed effectively and standards of attainment in this subject are now satisfactory. Standards in the national tests have been rising, particularly over the last two years. There is an evaluative culture in the school which ensures continuing development and the school is very well placed to take the next steps forward.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	B	C	A	A
Mathematics	B	B	A	A
Science	B	A	A	A

**Key**

well above average    A  
 above average        B  
 average                C  
 below average        D  
 well below average   E

The results for 2001 show considerable improvement on previous years and the trend over recent years is upward. Statistics from the last two years show that the pupils are making good progress through the school and are achieving well. The judgements of the inspection confirm these findings. Very challenging targets are set for the pupils' performance and these targets were almost attained in 2000 and exceeded in 2001. Standards in the national tests for the pupils in Year 2 show good improvement in 2000 and the results for 2001 show further improvement. The children in the Reception class are making good progress and are reaching the expected levels of attainment in the areas of learning by the time they start the subjects of the National Curriculum. Standards are average in information and communication technology throughout the school. Standards are well above average in religious education and music throughout the school.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils' attitudes to school are very good, certain aspects being exemplary. They are eager to come to school and are enthusiastic once they are there.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in and around the school is very good. There has been one isolated exclusion in the past year, totally out of character for the school.
Personal development and relationships	The pupils' personal development is excellent and relationships at all levels within the school community are excellent.
Attendance	Levels of attendance are consistently above average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Very good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good, overall, and there is much teaching that is very good and excellent. English and mathematics are well taught and the pupils learn the skills of literacy and numeracy well. The teachers are very well aware of the needs of individual pupils in their classes and these needs are well met. A particular strength of the teaching is the way that the teachers use questioning to ensure that the pupils think and have to give reasons for their thinking. The resulting learning is very good as the pupils fully understand what it is they are learning. The teachers' management of the pupils is a further strength of teaching through the school. The learning environment created is calm and purposeful and enables the pupils to concentrate well.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a good quality, broad, balanced and relevant curriculum for the pupils. This curriculum is very well planned and is considerably enhanced by excellent provision for extra-curricular activities. There are occasions when time is not used as effectively as it could be in the day-to-day routine of the school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision is made for the pupils with special educational needs. Their needs are identified early and they are well supported, enabling them to make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent provision is made for the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Good provision is made for their cultural development. The provision for their personal development is excellent, overall, ensuring that the pupils are developing into extremely mature and responsible citizens.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares very well for its pupils, ensuring that they are safe and confident in the school environment. Assessment procedures are thorough, but records to show exactly what the pupils know, understand and can do are not always sufficiently detailed to be useful for planning for the next steps in their learning. Monitoring and supporting the pupils' personal development are excellent.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school has excellent links with parents and these links make a significant contribution to the pupils' progress.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides excellent leadership for the school and gives very clear educational direction. He has delegated very well and receives excellent support from the deputy and subject co-ordinators.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors play an excellent role in the management of the school. They are fully involved in all management decisions and have a very clear view of their role and how the school is developing.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There is a culture of evaluation in the school which ensures that everything that is done is monitored and evaluated excellently. The school knows exactly where it is, where it is going and how it should get there. The school development plan, although a very good document, does not take a sufficiently long term view of future developments.
The strategic use of resources	All resources are used very effectively. The school applies the principles of best value excellently. Levels of staffing, accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory. The school hall is not large enough to enable all aspects of the physical education curriculum to be taught effectively.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The quality of teaching and the high expectations set for their children.</li> <li>• The way the school is led and managed.</li> <li>• That the school helps their children become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• The school is approachable.</li> <li>• Their children enjoy school and make good progress.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Levels of homework.</li> </ul>

As will be seen in earlier sections of this summary report, the inspectors endorse all positive parental comments. However, the judgement of the inspection is that levels of homework are appropriate and that homework makes a valid contribution to the pupils' learning.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Standards of work seen in the inspection are above average. The pupils of all ability levels achieve well during their time in the school.

Strengths in standards achieved are:

- standards achieved in the national tests for eleven-year olds in 2001 are well above average;
- standards achieved in the national tests for seven-year-olds are above average in writing and well above average in mathematics;
- the improvements in the national test results over the last two years;
- standards in science are particularly good, both in the national tests and in the work seen during the inspection;
- standards in religious education, music and art and design are well above average by the time the pupils leave the school;
- pupils of all ability levels, including those with special educational needs and those who have particular gifts or talents make good progress.

An area for improvement is:

- standards in physical education, whilst satisfactory, are not as high as those in other subjects.

2. Evidence from the inspection is that standards in English and mathematics are above average by the end of Year 6. Standards in science are well above average at this stage. The results in the National Curriculum tests in 2001 were well above average in all three subjects. The results were the same when compared with schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. English, and particularly writing, has been a major focus of development in the school, resulting in the improving standards in this subject.
3. Inspection evidence shows standards to be above average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 2. In the national tests in 2000, although standards in mathematics were above average, they were below average in reading and writing when compared to all schools nationally. When compared to schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards were above average in mathematics, below average in reading and well below average in writing. The school had already put in place a number of procedures to address these weaknesses and the results for 2001 show a considerable improvement in reading, writing and mathematics.
4. Children join the school with average attainment. During their time in the Reception class they make good progress and reach expected levels in all areas of learning by the time they start the subjects on the National Curriculum in Year 1. A particular strength in their progress is their personal, social and emotional development where they reach well above expected levels by the end of the year. A number of children reach above average standards in their mathematical development as this aspect is well catered for in the Reception class.
5. Standards in English are above average in all aspects of the subject. Standards are above average in literacy. The pupils listen well, this skill being particularly well developed by the teachers of the Reception class and those in Years 1 and 2. As they go through the school, this foundation is built on well by the teachers encouraging the pupils to speak about what they are doing and to explain their thinking. Standards in reading are above average at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. The basic skills of word building are well taught in Years 1 and 2 and developed well further up the school into more advanced skills. Standards in writing are

- improving, owing to well-planned structures that the school has put in place to improve the pupils' progress in this aspect. The pupils make good progress in English.
6. Standards in all aspects of mathematics are above average and the pupils make good progress in this subject during their time in the school. A particular strength is the pupils' ability to use and apply their mathematical knowledge. The pupils throughout the school are confident to use their own and alternative strategies and to explain how they achieve answers. They have good knowledge of the four operations and of place value and their numeracy skills are sometimes used well in science and geography lessons. The pupils explore the characteristics of shapes from an early age and older pupils have a good knowledge of angles and calculations involving area, perimeter and volume. The older pupils show good levels of achievement in presenting and interpreting data in a variety of forms. This aspect is often well supported by the use of information and communication technology.
  7. Standards in science are particularly good, owing to the emphasis that is placed on the teaching of the subject through an investigative and experimental approach. The pupils' abilities in this aspect of science are well above average by the end of Year 2 and high by the end of Year 6. Due to the very good questioning techniques of the teachers, the pupils are able to explain well the scientific principles that they are learning. They have a good understanding of life cycles, for example, of butterflies, and are able to categorise materials by whether they are soluble or insoluble. They show good understanding of forces, being able to describe the action of forces that appear naturally in our environment.
  8. Standards of work seen during the inspection in music in Years 1 and 2 and art and design throughout the school are above average. Those in music in the older year groups and in religious education are well above average. The school places a high priority on the creative subjects and this is reflected in the standards being achieved. In religious education, the depth and quality of work is very good and the pupils' knowledge of other religions is very good. Standards in all other subjects of the curriculum are average. This represents an improvement in information and communication technology where standards were unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection and raising standards was a key issue in that report. Standards in some aspects of physical education, particularly gymnastics and dance, are not as good as those in other subjects. There are constraints on delivering the whole curriculum for this subject effectively due to the size and the timetabling of the use of the hall.
  9. All pupils make good progress through the school. The teachers are very good at meeting the needs of all pupils in their classes. For example, there is often extra support in lessons which is very well planned. This support is provided for the lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs and makes a good contribution to their progress. Higher attaining pupils and some who are gifted and talented, have been identified and are given appropriate and stimulating work to ensure that they make good progress relative to their abilities. The school has carried out a searching analysis of gender differences in national test results and has made every effort to ensure that these are eliminated. Very challenging targets have also been set for the pupils' attainment in the national tests. The expectation is that each child will progress at one and a half times the nationally expected rate. These targets were very nearly met in the tests in 2000 and exceeded in 2001.

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

10. The attitudes, behaviour and personal development of the pupils are exceptional and a continuing strength of the school since the last inspection.

Strengths in the pupils' attitudes and behaviour are:

- attitudes to school are very good;
- the pupils' enthusiasm for lessons is excellent;
- behaviour is very good;
- the pupils' personal development and relationships throughout the school are exemplary.

11. Attitudes to learning are very good. The parents strongly agree with this and confirm that their children are eager to come to school. The pupils' enthusiasm for lessons is excellent and they

maintain concentration very well through the school day. This is a direct result of good teaching and interesting lessons. The pupils are open, hold their teachers in high regard and very willingly talk to adults about what they are doing. They display very good interest and involvement in the various activities they undertake. They work well independently, in pairs or in groups, sharing ideas and equipment purposefully. The pupils are very good listeners and contribute positively to short dialogues in lessons. For example, a growing understanding of the needs of their environment was very evident in a Year 6 personal, social and health education (PSHE) lesson. The pupils with special educational needs have very good attitudes to work and generally concentrate well on the tasks they are given.

12. Behaviour is very good. The pupils are orderly about the school and responsible with property. They are cheerful, courteous and respectful of the property of others. The pupils co-operate well with lunchtime supervisors. There is a good balance of small and large groups engaged in playground games. Play is good-natured, although a few pupils are boisterous and not always aware of those around them. All are familiar with the systems of rewards and sanctions. The pupils behave very well in lessons. Only very occasionally is restlessness seen. Sanctions are wisely used. Bad behaviour and bullying are absent from school life and unexpected. There has been one isolated exclusion in the past year, totally out of character for the school.
13. Personal development is excellent. The pupils assist willingly in the daily routines from the day they enter the school. These tasks are consciously widened through the year groups and co-ordinated into the PSHE programmes. The pupils are aware of those around them and willingly show initiative and take responsibility. For example, a young pupil, noticing another carrying resources, immediately bent his back, sturdily pushing every door open to their destination. Older pupils are seen to look after younger pupils about the school and at play. The pupils are actively involved in their own target-setting not only of their learning, but also of their conduct, as part of assessment. They think out good rules for their class at the beginning of the year. These they illustrate and place open to view on their classroom walls. All pupils enjoy the well-established award schemes for endeavour, good work and marked contribution to the good conduct of the school. These achievements are applauded wholeheartedly by their fellow pupils at celebration assemblies. The School Council is relatively new and developing good, responsible attitudes to decision making as a result of their fellow pupils' suggestions. The pupils enjoy taking part in assemblies, especially class-led assemblies. They listen respectfully to local clergy, representatives of charities or those who introduce schemes such as drugs awareness and making responsible choices. The personal development of the children under five in the Reception class is very good, owing to the high priority that the teacher places on this aspect of their development.
14. Relationships are excellent. The pupils have complete trust in staff and are proud of their school. Consequently, there is a natural rapport between pupils, and between pupils and adults, in sympathy with the happy and purposeful ethos of the school. All year groups have trips and visits. These occasions broaden the pupils' outlook on the world around them, sharing the activities provided and working together in a community spirit.
15. Attendance has remained consistently above average since the last inspection. Most pupils are early. The Breakfast Club is enjoyed by a growing number of pupils and is a good contribution to the welfare of the school. Lateness is minimal and largely confined to a very few families. The pupils are tidy and know where to put their things. They enter their classes eagerly and happily. Even the youngest, in their second week in school, are following this lead very well. Registration is prompt and effective, often accompanied by some very good innovations; for example, taken in a foreign language. The pupils clearly look forward to their lessons.

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

16. The quality of teaching is good, overall, with many lessons being very good or better. The consequent quality of learning is, therefore, good. The quality of teaching is very good in Years 1 and 2 and good in the Reception class and in Years 3 to 6.

Strengths in teaching and learning are:

- the quality of teaching is good, overall;
- the quality of learning is good, overall;
- skilful questioning techniques used by the teachers encourage the pupils to think about what it is they are learning and so to enhance their understanding;
- the teachers have high expectations, both of what the pupils can achieve and of how they should behave;
- the pupils rise to these challenging expectations and achieve well;
- the classroom management skills of the teachers ensure that there is a purposeful and workmanlike atmosphere in the classrooms, enabling the pupils to concentrate;
- the teachers' planning is well linked to curriculum documentation and ensures that the pupils' learning is progressive;
- the teachers plan well when there is extra adult help available, so that all pupils in their classes benefit.

Areas for development are:

- time is not always used as efficiently as it might be;
- some teachers are not confident enough in teaching information and communication technology and physical education;
- there are occasions when the phonic work done with pupils withdrawn from afternoon sessions is not sufficiently focused on their needs.

17. More than four out of five lessons observed during the inspection were good or better, with nearly one in three being very good or excellent. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. This good diet of teaching is having a significant impact on the learning and the progress of the pupils. There are no shortcomings in the teacher's knowledge and understanding of the subjects that they are expected to teach, except that there is some lack of confidence with some aspects of the curriculum for information and communication technology and for physical education. For example, there were a number of occasions during the inspection where the teachers missed opportunities to reinforce the planned learning with effective use of the computers in their classrooms.
18. The teachers' planning is very thorough and follows a common format. The teachers in parallel classes plan together and there is consistency that ensures progressive learning for the pupils. The teachers have particularly high expectations of what the pupils can achieve and of how they should behave. The high standards of discipline set ensure that there is a purposeful working environment in which it is easy for the pupils to learn. The high expectations and encouragement given ensure that the pupils of all ability levels try their hardest and they consequently achieve well. For example, in a science lesson seen in Year 6, the pupils were constantly being made to think about what they were doing and their understanding of forces was being enhanced considerably. The teachers have very good questioning techniques. In a Year 6 lesson in information and communication technology, the teacher was constantly asking the question "Why?" so that the children had to explain their thinking and the reasons behind it. Not only did this develop their speaking and listening skills very well, but it gave them much fuller understanding of the task they were doing.
19. The teachers plan well when there is extra adult help available in their lessons. These other adults know exactly what is required of them and which pupils they are expected to be working with. These clear instructions lead not only to the pupils with whom they are working learning well, but the teachers are then able to focus their attention on the smaller group remaining, who also learn well. Resources are well used in lessons to enhance learning. For example, in a history lesson there was a very good range of artefacts dating from the Second World War to bring this period alive for the pupils. There are occasions when time is not used as effectively as it might be. This is most noticeable during literacy and numeracy sessions which are sometimes too long for the material that the teacher has planned to cover. There are also times when the whole afternoon is given over to a topic when the time drags and learning loses pace.

20. All the teachers are well aware of the needs of all the pupils in their classes and make good provision within their planning, setting appropriate tasks for the various ability groups. The setting arrangements for literacy and numeracy make a major contribution to the effectiveness of the teaching for the pupils with special educational needs and ensure that the least able are well supported in the development of basic skills. During some afternoons the pupils with special educational needs are withdrawn from lessons for phonic work which is insufficiently focused on their needs.

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

21. The school provides a good quality and range of learning opportunities. Improvement since the last inspection is good. In particular the school has built successfully on national initiatives to review and update its provision and it has taken effective steps to improve the quality of provision in information and communication technology.

The strengths of curricular provision are:

- the curriculum is broad and very well planned;
- the statutory curriculum is considerably enhanced by the excellent range of extra-curricular opportunities;
- very good provision for pupils' PSHE;
- the strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills are very effective;
- all pupils have equality of opportunity and access to the full range of curricular opportunities;
- the links with the community and relationships with partner institutions make a very good contribution to the pupils' learning.

Areas for improvement are:

- lesson time is not always used as effectively as it could be in the planned curriculum;
- the implementation of topic studies, particularly in history and geography, does not always ensure sufficient breadth and depth in the pupils' work.

22. The quality and range of learning opportunities for the children under five are satisfactory. Satisfactory attention is given to the six areas of learning and the children experience a broad range of learning opportunities that are appropriate to their needs. The school is taking positive steps in its planning to develop further the Foundation Stage curriculum by building on the national framework of stepping stones towards the expected learning goals.
23. The curriculum for pupils aged five to eleven is good. The framework for the whole curriculum is very well planned. The school's policies for all aspects of the curriculum are regularly updated and reflect current requirements well. The school has successfully reviewed its schemes of work and updated its guidance for teachers to ensure that the statutory requirements are well met. The school continues to build successfully on national guidance for the teaching of literacy and numeracy, which results in a consistent approach to the teaching of the basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Good progress is being made in building on nationally used schemes of work to strengthen provision in all subjects. The school is successful in setting high expectations and placing a strong emphasis on making learning fun. The pupils are challenged to find things out for themselves and to explain the *how* and the *why* of their learning. A result is the very good standards attained in science at the age of eleven and in the pupils' confidence to explain their thinking in mathematics across the school.
24. The school's curricular framework includes an appropriate allocation of time for each subject. Whilst this analysis indicates that a suitable proportion of lesson time is given to each subject, the time available is not always used as effectively as it could be. For example, lessons in English and mathematics sometimes last for more than an hour, when the learning could be

accomplished in a shorter time. Similarly, in a number of other subjects where lengthy sessions sometimes result in a slowing of the pace of learning. In foundation subjects, the two-year cycle of topics is well considered, but shortcomings in implementing some aspects of the work lead to a fragmentation of learning experiences and to too little depth in the pupils' work. In geography, for example, topics do not always build sufficiently on the pupils' previous knowledge and understanding and insufficient emphasis is given to geographical terms. The pupils are, therefore, hindered in making comparisons between different regions and localities and in linking cause and effect.

25. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Generally, the pupils with special educational needs are included in all activities and have equality of opportunities with all other pupils. However, for a relatively small number of the pupils who are withdrawn during the afternoon sessions for additional phonic teaching this is not so, as their learning in the withdrawal session insufficiently compensates for the time lost in the subject being taught to the whole class. On occasions where individual pupils are withdrawn from classes for support by external agencies, the provision is good and the subject areas match those been taught to other pupils in the class. The school makes good use of all additional support to enhance the learning of pupils with special educational needs. The school's arrangements for the identification and support of pupils with special educational needs are thorough and meet the requirements of the national Code of Practice. Suitable individual education plans are in place. These are regularly updated and provide appropriate details of achievement and provision.
26. Very good provision is made for the pupils' personal, health and social education (PSHE). This makes a very strong contribution to the excellent relationships found in the school. The relevant programme covers appropriate aspects of sex education and personal relationships, and raises the pupils' awareness of the misuse of substances and the impact of drugs. The school is currently formalising its guidelines for PSHE and is developing a scheme of work to promote citizenship.
27. The curriculum is very considerably enhanced by the excellent range of clubs and extra-curricular activities offered to pupils. This provision includes a good range of educational visits, regular opportunities to learn musical instruments, a variety of sporting opportunities and most notably a good range of out-of-class activities for pupils right across the school. The pupils enjoy these activities and everyone has full and equal access to the full range of learning opportunities provided by the school. This is a strength maintained since the previous inspection. The school's provision is socially inclusive and this is reflected in the pupils' high level of interest and enthusiasm for school.
28. The contribution of the community to children's learning is good. Local clergy and the youth director from the local church share in assemblies and religious festivals, help with religious education or just chat to pupils. The pupils visit the local churches and present assemblies. A wide variety of other visitors has included a sea captain talking from his experience about geography, oceans and seas. All year groups have trips and visits covering a wide range of environmental, sporting and cultural experiences in the local community and further afield. The pupils in Year 6 enjoy the annual residential trip to Fairbourne and take part in a range of outdoor pursuits there.
29. The pupils have opportunities to take part in community leisure facilities 'Stepping out' during the summer holidays. Visiting artists and musicians run workshops for pupils. Representatives of charities and vocations heighten the pupils' awareness; for example, on drugs awareness in Year 6, a presentation on the working of the 999 service and the Fire service workshop of 'Smokebusters'. Fund raising has supported a wide range of charities in recent years; for example, LEPR, the National Children's Home, Action for Children, Barnardos, Christian Aid and the Indian Earthquake Appeal. A major feature of these charity collections is the annual fete organised by pupils in Year 6 which raises substantial sums each year.
30. The school has very constructive links with partner institutions. There are strong and active links through the pyramid of local primary schools and Neston High School to which most

pupils transfer. There is very good liaison at staff level; for example, some joint training, discussing curriculum co-ordination, sampling lessons, observing literacy hours and looking at special educational needs. One result is the pupil report format, common to all the primary schools. Others include opportunities for schools to support community activities; for example, a millennium pilgrimage to Ness Garden and an Arts Festival run by Neston High School.

31. Transfer to the next stage of education is very well structured. Year 7 tutors and the special educational needs co-ordinator from the High School come into school. There are meetings with staff and talks to the Year 6 pupils. The pupils enjoy sessions at the secondary school, meeting other incoming pupils and building up new friendships as they share short sample lessons together. The school has very well established links with Chester College to mutual benefit. Senior staff from the school offer expertise to the college. The school supports the college students on a regular basis, offering them the fullest in class experiences whilst at the school.
32. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is excellent. The headteacher is committed to ensuring that this aspect of development forms the bedrock of the school's work. Provision for cultural development is good.

Strengths of this aspect are:

- excellent provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development;
- good provision for pupils' cultural development;
- an excellent ethos permeates the whole school;
- very good planning and excellent leadership from the headteacher.

An area for improvement is:

- the pupils' everyday awareness of the range of ethnic cultures.

33. Spiritual development throughout the school is excellent. Assemblies are very well planned. They fulfil the statutory requirements for Christian worship and provide excellent opportunities to reflect, celebrate and appreciate the work of others. Opportunities for reflection and appreciation permeate all aspects of school life and contribute to the commendable ethos rarely seen in primary schools. Messages are constantly reinforced and pervade every aspect of school life, which makes the spiritual, moral and social development so strong and such a distinctive feature of the school. The headteacher is committed to this aspect and his sensitive and caring style is reflected strongly in the staff and pupils of the school.
34. Hard work is acknowledged and celebrated through the gold star awards. The pupils are made to feel special and their efforts appreciated and shared with others. Commendation awards celebrate personal qualities of kindness, politeness and consideration for others. The strong ethos has a positive impact on attitudes and behaviour throughout the whole school. In religious education lessons pupils considered everyone caught up in the American disaster, including the terrorists themselves. They wrote prayers asking God to forgive the terrorists who crashed the planes into the towers. They prayed for the rescuers and gave thanks and hoped for a better world.
35. The provision for the pupils' moral development is excellent. Clear messages are shared and discussed; for example, 'Getting it right and getting it wrong'. These are effectively reinforced and woven skilfully into all aspects of school life, which ensures that all pupils develop a mature understanding of their responsibilities. All classrooms have their own rules and these are debated and devised by the pupils. The School Council is successful and provides opportunities for discussion and debate. From the time they enter the school, the pupils are expected to behave sensibly, take care of resources and tidy up at the end of lessons. The very good behaviour in the school leads to an excellent level of moral awareness. Moral development is reinforced during circle time when pupils are encouraged to share their thoughts and discuss moral concerns

36. Provision for the pupils' social development is excellent. All pupils show high levels of sensitivity and awareness of others. Doors are always held open for visiting inspectors, pupils are always respectful and helpful and kind. During the inspection, as one visiting inspector was about to descend the stairs from a classroom, an eight-year-old said, 'I will come down the stairs with you in case you get lonely'.
37. Provision for the pupils' cultural development is good. An appreciation and knowledge of other faiths is strong in religious education. The pupils experience a wide range of visits and visitors such as the Wirral Christian Drugs Awareness group and the visit to the Council Chambers at Ellesmere Port. These all help to enrich the curriculum and help pupils develop an awareness and appreciation of the wider world. Local church leaders visit the school. Opportunities to develop the pupils' awareness of the range of other cultures are sometimes missed as there is not a high profile of these cultures in displays and books in the school, for example.

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

38. The school cares for the pupils very well. The school's procedures for the assessment and monitoring of pupils' attainment and progress are good. Since the time of the last inspection the school has further refined its assessment procedures.

The strengths of the school's approach to caring and assessment are:

- procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are very good;
- support for pupils' personal development is excellent;
- the rigorous analysis of test results;
- the well planned programme of standardised, national and school based tests;
- the strategic use of the evidence gained from tests to group pupils to set individual learning targets and to focus resources;
- the easy-to-understand records contained in pupils' individual profiles.

An area for improvement is:

- the records of pupils' attainment do not provide a clear enough picture of what individuals and groups know, understand and can do, to enable teachers to plan the next stage of learning as effectively as they might.

39. Procedures for ensuring child protection and pupils' welfare are very good. The pupils are secure in a warm, clean, and very well presented environment. All adults in school are aware of the strict criteria to be observed for child protection. The care provided when children join the school in the Reception class sets the tone for the secure environment felt by the pupils.
40. Procedures for promoting attendance are very good. Monitoring of absence is thorough. The secretarial staff sensitively contribute to the pupil's welfare in extensively enquiring of any unexplained absence and lateness, sorting out small concerns and caring for those who are unwell.
41. The policies and guidelines for promoting responsible behaviour are excellent. Staff have very high expectations of the pupils' self-discipline. The systems of positive rewards are extremely well structured to encourage good conduct from the day pupils enter the school. Occasionally, a few pupils have personal behavioural problems. These are a concern to staff and viewed with disappointment, but usually sorted out with time and patience. A refined range of strategies is used to support their individual needs, generally with rapidly improving results. Bad behaviour or bullying is not evident and is unexpected.
42. Procedures for monitoring and supporting the pupils' personal development are excellent. Staff work in harmony to build up the pupils' self esteem and ensure that they are supported extremely well individually. Very good management of pupils is established without raised voices, resulting in quiet industrious work. Good work and endeavour are fairly praised.

Pastoral care of the pupils is of prime concern. Parents realise this and enthusiastically support the staff as they help their children to become mature and responsible. They are extremely pleased that teachers expect their children to work hard and do their best. Topics for assemblies, pupils' monitoring roles and the personal, social, health and educational lessons are co-ordinated. They are skilfully used to promote responsible attitudes to work, behaviour, relationships and decision-making. Lunchtime supervisors work quietly and purposefully, stimulating good interactive play, especially with the younger groups. The pupils can readily and confidently share their thoughts with staff. The teachers take great care to ensure that each pupil leaving school at the end of the day is happy and safely welcomed by their parent or parent helper. The headteacher and staff are always happy to discuss any questions or concerns. Appointments can readily be made for more formal matters.

43. Assessment procedures begin with a baseline assessment that is implemented effectively at the beginning and end of the reception year. The information gained is appropriately used to move the children's learning forward. As part of the school's strategy to raise standards a well considered programme of regular tests is implemented across the school, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The results are used well to track pupils' progress through the school. The senior staff analyse test results to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' performance and make effective use of this information to focus resources. The information is also used well to guide target setting and to form teaching groups and sets.
44. The teachers make good use of the information provided in pupils' reports, individual attainment profiles and reading records to organise their classes at the beginning of the school year. They also maintain record books which clearly chart pupils' attainment in tests during the year. However, the day-to-day arrangements to provide a picture of what individual pupils, or groups of pupils, know, understand and can do, are less well developed and do not provide a clear enough picture. Some teachers are beginning to record assessments of pupils' achievements and areas of difficulty in their weekly evaluations of planning. This is a positive development, but it is at a very early stage. The best practice identifies what groups or individuals can or cannot do and this information is used well to adjust the programme of work. Overall, there was little evidence of the recording of assessments linked to the clear learning objectives identified in teachers' planning.
45. The school's assessment procedures for pupils with special educational needs are good and the register is well maintained and frequently reviewed. All aspects of the national Code of Practice for special educational needs are well addressed and the school's special educational needs policy is soon to be reviewed. Good use is made of the teachers' perceptions of pupils and these are supported by details about the achievements and progress of pupils; thus, there is consistent diagnosis of the pupil's learning difficulties. The support services provided by the Local Education Authority make a good contribution to the initial assessment of pupils and support the school during all the stages of assessment, including attendance at annual reviews. For those pupils with statements who are in receipt of additional teaching, the support teacher makes every effort to keep in contact with the class teachers.
46. The teachers' marking often plays a significant role in assessing pupils' knowledge and understanding, although practice is variable. The better examples include comments that make clear whether pupils have completed tasks well and explain what pupils can do to improve their performance. The good practice is most evident in Years 1 and 2. Across the school, the pupils are made aware of learning targets for the whole class, particularly in literacy and numeracy, and pupils have an appropriate understanding of their own individual learning targets in these areas.

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

47. Parents view the school very highly. This is evident from the extremely positive return of questionnaires and from comments made by parents spoken to during the inspection.

Strengths of these links are:

- parents have great confidence in all the school sets out to do;
  - parents are very pleased with what is consistently achieved.
48. The school successfully maintains very effective links with parents. Parents agree they are extremely well informed on all school matters. There are regular letters and a fine school bulletin, which carries interesting examples of pupils' work. There is a comprehensive school prospectus. The governors' annual report gives a clear indication of areas discussed, decisions taken and how they impact on the school.
49. Annual written reports are individual to the pupil, very well detailed and evaluative. These are complemented by information on the curriculum and additional material to highlight target setting though the year. The pupils add their own assessment and targets. Parents are encouraged to add comments and a growing number are doing so. There are many opportunities to talk to teachers throughout the year, together with the open days and consultation evenings. Consultation evenings are viewed as extremely fruitful by parents.
50. There are very good links between the school and parents of the pupils with special educational needs and the school makes every effort to resolve any difficulties arising out of the statementing process. Individual educational plans are provided for all pupils above Stage 2 on the school's special educational needs register and are made available and fully discussed with parents.
51. The contribution of parents to children's learning at school and at home is very effective. Home/school reading records are well used by many parents. A few parents expressed concerns regarding levels of homework. The inspection team found the levels and quality of homework are satisfactory and compatible with that of other similar schools. A good number of parents assist in school with a variety of roles; for example, cooking, hearing pupils read and actively supporting group sessions. Many more help with trips and visits. Their loyalty is valued and planned for. Parents look forward to the opportunities for attending a variety of school events and assemblies. However, these are curtailed by the size of the school hall.
52. The Parents' Association is enthusiastic and pro-active for the good of the school. All parents are automatically members and invited to attend planning meetings. A wide variety of events such as Christmas and May Fairs, Children's Discos and Barbecues are successfully promoted, both for fun and fund raising. Funds raised are used for significant additions to school resources, as a result of close co-operation with the headteacher and senior staff. The school is particularly appreciative of the association's sponsorship of computer leasing.

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

53. The quality of leadership and management of the school is excellent. The headteacher provides very clear direction for the school and receives excellent support from his deputy and curriculum co-ordinators. The members of the governing body have an excellent grasp of their responsibilities and the strengths and areas for development for the school. There is an evaluative culture in the school which ensures that all that is done is monitored and checked for validity.

Strengths in leadership and management are:

- excellent leadership of the headteacher;
- delegation to staff with management responsibilities and the excellent way that they fulfil their roles;
- excellent contribution of the governing body to the management of the school;
- excellent monitoring and evaluation of all that is done in the school;
- an excellent shared commitment to improve;
- excellent financial planning and the use of all monies available to the school;
- the excellent application of the principles of best value.

Areas for development are:

- the school development plan covers a fixed three year term;
  - the school hall is too small for some aspects of physical education to be taught effectively.
54. The quality of leadership and management by the headteacher and key staff is excellent. The headteacher gives very clear leadership to the school and is very ably supported by his deputy. Subject co-ordinators and the Foundation Stage co-ordinator have been given considerable responsibility for raising standards in their own subjects. They have taken on this role very well and each contributes significantly to the shared commitment to improve. There is effective communication between subject co-ordinators in terms of cross-curricular links and the development of literacy and numeracy skills. For example, the focus on the development of writing skills in English is also seen in a number of subject areas where extended writing is encouraged and is having a positive effect on standards. The school has an ethos of striving for excellence that is very much at the heart of everything that is done in the school. Standards in this area have been maintained since the last inspection.
55. The governors provide an excellent level of support and their role has developed since the last inspection. An improvement is that they now have a good strategic view of the direction of the school. They work very effectively with the headteacher and staff and play a strong role in shaping the future direction and work of the school. Owing to the time they give to the school they have a very clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Although governors do not have responsibility for particular curriculum areas, there is a 'governor of the month' who takes an interest in all areas during his or her month 'on duty'. This very good initiative helps to involve the governors fully in the aims and future development of the school.
56. Provision for the pupils with special educational needs is good. The school's overall response to the requirements of the national Code of Practice for special educational needs is good. The role of special educational needs co-ordinator is well defined and understood by all staff. The school has a well-structured special educational needs register and all the teachers are clear about the schools policies. All specific funds for special needs are spent wisely, with care being taken to ensure best value.
57. The school's monitoring and evaluation of its performance are excellent. The Senior Management Team and subject co-ordinators monitor learning very effectively. This monitoring is well planned and clearly aimed at raising standards. It has resulted in improved teaching and learning since the last inspection. Curriculum co-ordinators do not at present have opportunities to monitor teaching, but this is planned to start in the future. Some very good analysis has been carried out of results in the national tests in order to plan for improvements. This analysis is being effective in providing the school with areas for development. For example, the school's analysis has shown areas of weakness within writing and some gender imbalance, which it has already addressed.
58. The school development plan is a useful document in planning for future developments. It is very clearly set out with national and local initiatives as well as the areas for development established by analysis within school. All staff, governors and parents have an input into areas for development and a very careful overview is kept of the whole process of forming and monitoring the plan. However, the plan currently runs for a fixed three-year term. Although it is a dynamic document, with changes being made each year in the light of the previous year's developments, as time moves on in the plan there is no long-term view being taken in sufficient detail.
59. The school governors and the headteacher make excellent use of all the specific grants available to them. They also seek additional funding or sponsorship wherever they can find it. Day-to-day management of finances is very efficient within school, although, at present, a manual system is used. The school also benefits from having bought in the services of a bursar who gives an added dimension to strategic budgetary planning. Finances are very clearly linked to educational priorities both in the school development plan and in the day-to-day management of the budget. The school office is run very efficiently, exuding calm, and releasing the day-to-day administration from the shoulders of the headteacher and other teachers.

60. There is an adequate staffing complement for the school. The teaching and support staff are well-qualified and are suitably experienced. There is an excellent usage of staff in the school and staff are strategically placed with particular groups of pupils to maximise their effective use. For example, the team in Years 1 and 2 has recently been strengthened to address standards at this age. The much improved results in the national tests in Year 2 this year showed the effectiveness of this initiative. There are three support staff who work well with a range of classes and groups of pupils and provide very good assistance to the teachers. There is a strong ethos of teamwork between all staff that ensures that the school's objectives and targets are met.
61. All members of the school staff have clearly defined roles and responsibilities and these are known and understood by all. There is an excellent commitment to performance management and to professional development. All teachers are required to work towards their targets. The induction of new staff into the routines of the school is very good, as are the mentoring systems and the commitment to the provision of time for support and training.
62. Funds have been excellently used to enhance the school environment and to provide resources, including additional staff to support the setting provision for literacy and numeracy. Resources are at least adequate in every subject. Resources are excellent in music with an outstanding range of instruments available for pupils to use. Resources are good in English and mathematics and satisfactory in science. They are also good in art and design, design and technology, history, geography and religious education. They are adequate in physical education and, while a newly equipped computer suite is planned, resources for information and communication technology are currently inadequate. Excellent use is made of the school's resources in music and good use is made of all resources, except for those for physical education where satisfactory use is made, and in information and communication technology where the use made of computers has weaknesses.
63. The school's accommodation is adequate and there is now less pressure on space because of the fall in the school roll. The school environment has been considerably enhanced over the last two years through the changes made to the playground and the addition of an attractive pergola and a gazebo. There are also seats and areas for the pupils to explore and play. Additionally, an area in the school, which in the past housed the old school hall, has been cleverly converted into a central library of some distinction. All classrooms and corridors are well decorated with imaginative displays of the pupils' work. Thus, the school presents a picture of a vibrant, working environment.
64. The school hall is too small and does not adequately provide a space for all the school to meet or for pupils to undertake parts of the physical educational programme. Thus, while the teachers do the best they can with the space, the delivery of the National Curriculum for physical education is compromised.
65. The school buildings and extensive grounds are very clean and well maintained. Rooms and corridors are well decorated and the building is kept in a good state of repair. The building is clear of graffiti, but the poorly drained sports field does present some difficulties with mud coming into school. The school site manager and his staff work hard to maintain a school environment that is attractive as possible.
66. The school has established very good financial procedures that are based firmly upon the principle of best value. Taking into account all relevant factors, the school provides very good value for money.

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

In order to continue to move the school forward and refine the very good practice already going on, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) ensure that time is always used effectively, both in lessons and in the day-to-day routine of the school (paragraphs 19, 24, 89, 110, 124);
- (2) improve records to show exactly what each pupil knows, understands and can do at any given time, so that the teachers can always plan most effectively the next steps in the pupils' learning (paragraphs 44, 89, 99, 107);
- (3) continue to improve the school development plan so that it always takes a longer term view (paragraph 58);
- (4) in conjunction with the local education authority, consider how the present accommodation can be improved so that there is adequate space to deliver the curriculum for physical education effectively (paragraphs 8, 64, 135, 136, 138).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	68
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	47

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	18	34	13	0	0	0
Percentage	5	26	50	19	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	243
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	24

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	66

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.4
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	19	19	38

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	18	19
	Girls	16	18	19
	Total	33	36	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (90)	95 (85)	100 (95)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	19	18
	Girls	17	19	19
	Total	35	38	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (88)	100 (95)	98 (93)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	21	30	51

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	18	20
	Girls	29	26	30
	Total	45	44	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (78)	86 (80)	98 (94)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	18	21
	Girls	29	26	30
	Total	46	44	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	90 (84)	86 (84)	100 (97)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	244
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*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)	12.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.9
Average class size	24.3

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

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	67

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	548,134
Total expenditure	517,443
Expenditure per pupil	1,869
Balance brought forward from previous year	30,042
Balance carried forward to next year	60,733

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	275
Number of questionnaires returned	97

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	33	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	62	34	3	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	51	3	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	53	16	2	1
The teaching is good.	70	27	1	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	43	6	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	74	22	3	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	33	2	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	51	41	8	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	64	34	1	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	39	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	39	47	7	2	4

## **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**

68. There is one Reception class in the Foundation Stage. At the time of the inspection, the children had been in school for less than two weeks and this was the first time these children had attended school for the whole day. The class is adequately staffed with one qualified teacher and a nursery nurse in the Reception class. Most children attend playgroups before they come to school. Children and parents are very well prepared before the children start and the children are able to make a smooth transition into full time education. Assessment procedures are thorough and children are assessed at the beginning and the end of the year.
69. The curriculum is based on the nationally agreed six areas of learning and provides children with broad and balanced experiences. Lower and average attaining children make good progress in their learning, some children advancing up to four steps in the areas of learning. Higher attaining children make satisfactory progress, but could make better progress with more challenge. Almost all children achieve the level expected by the time they enter Year 1. The indoor area is spacious and provides a stimulating learning environment with adequate resources. The outdoor area is new and as yet under-developed. Since the last inspection, there has been no significant development in the early years provision.

Strengths of the Foundation Stage are:

- the quality of relationships;
- opportunities for independent learning activities;
- the creation of a secure, happy learning environment;
- very good teaching in personal, emotional and social development.

Areas for improvement are:

- more challenge for higher attaining children;
- greater focus on communication, language and literacy;
- more learning opportunities in the outdoor area.

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

70. The children's personal, social and emotional development is given a high priority and progress is very good. By the end of the year, all pupils achieve attainment that is well above what is typical for children of this age. Teaching in this area of learning is very good. The teacher creates a very positive environment, where all children are valued and expected behaviour is clearly identified. The children enjoy coming to school and settle into school routine rapidly, because the teacher is very well organised, provides a range of activities and makes learning fun. Co-operation skills are well developed. The children are sensitive to each other; for example, helping each other with the tricycles.
71. The children show very good levels of responsibility, because the teacher ensures that all children have opportunities to do jobs. The teacher provides many opportunities for children to develop independence and initiative; for example, using clipboards and completing the many letter, number and animal hunts. The children show very good levels of concentration. They record their sad and happy memories. Clear explanations and expectations of behaviour and procedures effectively help pupils enjoy learning and school.

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

72. Scrutiny of work indicates that standards are average, all children being likely to achieve the expected levels by the end of the Reception year and higher attaining children progressing to National Curriculum levels. Teaching is good, overall. All children listen well to their teacher and other adults and follow instructions. They enjoy listening to stories and rhymes and are

encouraged to share conversations. The teacher uses questions skilfully to encourage children to develop their vocabulary and confidence. Role play in the home corner encourages children to discuss and plan ideas with each other; for example, three children plan a tea for others. All children have a positive attitude to books and they know that books communicate meaning and print goes from left to right. They all handle books carefully. Higher attaining children talk with growing confidence about the stories and can talk about their favourite books.

73. The children take books home every day and parents comment in their reading diaries. Books for the children to take home are all at the same level; higher attaining children would benefit from more challenge in the books available. There are good opportunities for children to write lists and notes; for example, they write an invitation to Elmer's party and make lists of the food they will eat and the games they will play. Scrutiny of last year's work shows good progress from emergent writing to writing several sentences by the end of the year. Hand writing skills are developing well and children practise writing lower and upper case letters. Children are beginning to recognise letters in lower and upper case because the teacher makes learning fun; the children hunt the letters around the classroom. Higher attaining pupils can write their own name; average and lower attaining children are beginning to use emergent writing.

### **Mathematical development**

74. Standards of work seen are average. Teaching is good and children are likely to achieve the expected levels of learning by the end of the Reception year. All children achieve very well in this area of learning. Good progress is made, because the teacher provides a wide range of activities to promote mathematical understanding and constantly challenges children in all areas of their mathematical development. Counting skills are good, because children are given many opportunities to count; for example, the number of children present during registration. They were challenged to estimate how many children are present and they give realistic guesses.
75. All children count confidently and average attaining children are able to touch count up to eleven. Their ability to recognise shape is well developed. They recognise circles and squares and average attaining children identify circle and square shapes around the classroom. Higher attaining children recognise the smallest, middle size and the largest elephant; they are able to estimate accurately how many elephants will fit into a given area. Capacity work is well developed, because the teacher plans interesting activities. Most children can produce a repeating pattern; lower attaining children need more support with this activity. Learning is reinforced with number songs such as 'Five little frogs'.

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

76. Standards of work seen in this area of learning are average. Teaching is good and children are likely to achieve the expected levels of learning by the end of the Reception year; all children achieve very well in this area of learning. Children use construction materials very well. For example, higher attaining children make a truck for Elmer; they attach the wheels successfully and ensure that the truck is the right size for the elephant. The teacher provides regular opportunities for children to use the computer and children confidently use the mouse, using programs to support their work in mathematics.
77. The children benefit from visits to Ness gardens and every opportunity is taken to develop awareness of transport and vegetation. Photographic evidence indicates good awareness of different locations; children collect postcards for Barnaby Bear's journeys to different countries. There are good opportunities in the classroom for children to use their senses; for example, the very good range of musical instruments encourages children to develop their sense of touch, hearing and sight. The children enjoy exploring the different sounds and handling the instruments. The children have appropriate opportunities to plant bulbs and beans; they observe the plants growing and draw and write about them. The children develop an awareness of other religions and cultures. They paint their hands with Hindu patterns and higher attaining children write simple sentences about Jesus on the cross. Average attaining children write about Jesus helping people who have hurt themselves.



## Physical development

78. Standards of work seen are average. Teaching is satisfactory and children are likely to achieve the expected levels of learning by the end of the Reception year; all children achieve satisfactorily in this area of learning. The children have two structured physical education lessons each week to promote their physical development. A new outdoor area provides opportunities for outdoor play, but learning opportunities and use of this area are currently under-developed. There are insufficient opportunities in this area to develop and extend physical skills. The majority of children dress and undress themselves. They learn to look after their clothes, because the teacher gives them clear guidelines and instructions.
79. Lessons are well organised and the children are developing an appropriate awareness of space. The children are beginning to use their imagination as they respond to music and move like a tortoise, an elephant or a swan. Higher attaining pupils move rhythmically, rocking like elephants in time to the music. Spatial awareness is developing well and children balance along the bench and negotiate obstacles, creeping under the frame. The lessons provide appropriate opportunities to balance, jump and travel. There are insufficient opportunities to use language and extend movement vocabulary. The children show well-developed co-ordination as they use pedal cars and tricycles. They achieve very well in fine motor skills, because they are encouraged to improve their manipulative and fine motor skills with a range of appropriate activities. They use pencils, crayons, scissors and paint brushes effectively and with confidence. Hand-eye co-ordination is well developed through matching and positioning shapes, decorating and sticking.

## Creative development

80. Standards are average and the quality of teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory. All children are on course to achieve the expected level of attainment by the time they enter Year 1. The children enjoy an appropriate range of experiences in art and design, music, story and imaginative play. They have opportunities to experience a range of materials. They use sponges to print a repeating pattern and glue to create simple collage pictures. The children paint a picture of themselves, using the primary colours. There are very good opportunities for children to explore and handle a wide range of musical instruments. They enjoy singing and are beginning to sing alongside older pupils in assembly. They confidently sing a range of songs from memory, such as 'Five little frogs'. The teacher's voice is very good and this is a good role model for the children who copy her very clear enunciation of words and sounds.
81. There are appropriate opportunities for children to use their imagination in the role-play home corner and when responding to the music 'Carnival of the Animals' in the physical education lesson. Children develop competence and confidence because the teacher provides opportunities for them to use their imagination, designing and writing invitations and cards for Elmer the elephant. The teacher skilfully encourages children to use their imagination guessing what is in the 'Feelie' bag; they suggest a range of things, confidently communicating their thoughts and ideas.

## ENGLISH

82. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress. Standards on entry to school are at national averages in English, but, by the end of Year 2, they are above the national average. Good progress is maintained in Years 3 to 6 as a result of an effective implementation of the literacy strategy in which groups are set by ability. Standards vary year-on-year, but rose in English last year and are currently above national averages. Throughout the school, the pupils with special educational needs make good progress, as a result of the good support they receive. The quality of teaching of English is good. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, particularly as the school, because of its monitoring, has made a good response to the variable trends in standards.

Strengths in the subject are:

- the above average standards at the end of Years 2 and 6;

- the good quality of teaching;
- the introduction of setting into the literacy hour;
- the good subject leadership and the long- and medium-term planning;
- the excellent new library provision.

Areas for improvement are:

- the use of time in lessons which are over an hour;
- the day-to-day assessment and marking.

83. By the age of seven, the majority of pupils attain good standards in speaking and listening as the result of good teaching and carefully planned activities. The teachers place a strong emphasis on providing the pupils with good models of speech and frequently introduce the pupils to new words. For example, in a Year 1 art lesson, the pupils were introduced to the word 'viewfinder' and, in a Year 2 English lesson, the pupils were able to define a 'phoneme'. The pupils listen well to their teachers and are keen to speak in front of others when supported by imaginative teaching that involves them creatively. For example, in a Year 1 class, the pupils were able to find a number of rhyming words which end in the letter 'g'. In Year 2, the pupils confidently demonstrated good speaking and listening skills when discussing punctuation and how it helped to make sense of what was being read.
84. Attainment in reading at the end of Year 2 is above the levels expected nationally, with some higher attaining pupils achieving well. The pupils in Year 1 benefit from the good grounding they have received in the Reception class, consistent homework and from the wide range of opportunities for pupils to read not only during the literacy hour, but on many other occasions when working in other subject areas. The teachers hear pupils read regularly and during the literacy hour ensure that the pupils learn letter sounds and how to blend. They set the pupils challenging tasks and use resources well. For example, in Year 1, letter fans were used to good effect when the pupils were asked to locate missing vowel sounds from three-letter words. Good teaching in Year 2 builds on the pupils' learning. For example, the highest attaining pupils are expected to know how to break a word down when faced with a new word and to re-read the sentence to get the meaning. Consequently, the higher attaining Year 2 pupils read accurately with good expression. Many of the pupils use a full range of other strategies; for example picture and contextual clues. The majority of the pupils in this year cope well with simple storybooks. Some pupils with special educational needs are still developing a sight vocabulary.
85. By the end of Year 2, most pupils attain standards in writing which are above national averages. In Years 1 and 2, the teachers' high expectations result in good quality writing. The teachers show good subject knowledge and introduce the pupils to a range of different forms of writing. Well-structured lessons, which use the support available well, ensure that the pupils make good progress in constructing sentences. Handwriting skills are well established and letter shapes are generally well formed and spelling is good. For example, the higher attaining pupils in Year 1 confidently write sentences with good use of adjectives, good spelling and emerging punctuation. In Year 2, pupils were able to write in sentences when asked to write an account of how they would organise the May Fair. When writing poetry they use rhyming couplets.
86. By the end of Year 6, the pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is generally above national averages. The teachers have high expectations, use a lively approach and ask searching questions which demand an answer. As a result, the pupils talk confidently and use a wide range of vocabulary during discussions. In Years 3 to 6, there are good opportunities for the pupils to participate in debates and presentations. For example, in a Year 3 class, the pupils held a lively and constructive discussion on the use of full stops as a result of the teacher's comments on the lack of full stops in recent homework. In a Year 4 class, the pupils listened intently to the story of 'Tumbleweed' and then discussed how to describe the main character in the story through the use of adjectives. Again, in Year 5, the pupils showed good appreciation of the humour in the story about a 'Cat who kills mice'. Year 6 pupils showed a good understanding of dramatic phrases; for example, 'Panic seized me'.

87. The good reading patterns established with the younger pupils are continued through the school as the teachers provide good opportunities for the pupils to read. As a consequence, by the end of the Year 6, many pupils are reading above the expected level. They express well considered preferences for authors and different types of books. The pupils confidently contribute to discussions relating to the plot or characters in books by a wide range of authors, including a number of modern authors such as Roy Castle, Joni E Tada, and D. King-Smith. There are planned opportunities for pupils to read and talk about books in a critical way. The range of texts studied throughout the key stage is enhanced by the variety of books in the library. Poetry, newspapers and magazines are all used and the majority of pupils read with suitable expression and intonation.
88. By the end of Year 6, the pupils' writing skills are above national averages. There are variations in standards within this key stage, particularly in Years 4 and 5 where some of the pupils find it difficult to extend their writing. The teachers work very hard and, by focusing their effort on the development of writing skills, standards are rising. Lessons are carefully planned for the pupils set by ability and, as a result, the pupils develop good use of language. For example, in Year 3, the pupils wrote a description of a musical box and used phrases such as 'it glistens with sunlight' and in Year 4, higher attaining pupils are beginning to learn to use similes and metaphors. The teachers frequently challenged pupils to vary their writing style well to suit a given purpose. In these situations, the pupils show that they can use punctuation and include speech marks and other forms of punctuation in their writing. They can spell complex words and record their feelings, demonstrating a good use of grammar. The pupils in Year 6 expressed their opinions well when they wrote about a blocked bridle path. Good teaching encourages them to plan and structure their writing and to use short descriptive phrases. For example, when writing a story about space one described the moon as 'a balloon, floating high in space'. The teachers make good use of guided reading and news items to develop ideas. The pupils in Year 6 wrote good argumentative pieces about 'A third runway for Manchester Airport' and showed good writing skills when asked to prepare a project on a topic of their choice or to report on a residential experience. In many other subject areas, older pupils demonstrate that they can write extensively about a topic, particularly in religious education and history.
89. In Years 3 to 6, the use of time during the lessons is generally well planned, but, on some occasions, the pupils' attention wanes when tasks are continued for too long. While the teachers assess the pupils' work well and keep good records there is less attention to day-to-day assessment and, sometimes, marking does not focus on how the pupils can improve. Opportunities to use information and communication technology to enhance pupils' learning in English are beginning to be used more extensively.
90. Throughout the school, the pupils show very good attitudes to English and enjoy discussing and debating. All pupils work hard and apply themselves. There is very good celebration of pupils' written work on display. The teachers actively use these to motivate the pupils to improve. The school has greatly improved the space allocated to the library which is now inviting and attractive. The pupils and the teachers make very good use of this well-organised facility.
91. All teachers are aware of the targets set by the school for the improvements in English. Excellent management of staff and resources together with good subject co-ordination, a very good scheme of work and the very good setting arrangements within the literacy hour ensure that these targets are met.

## **MATHEMATICS**

92. The standard of attainment in mathematics is above average throughout the school. The pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well in all aspects of the subject. This reflects the results of the most recent national tests. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

Strengths in the subject are:

- above average standards for pupils aged seven and eleven;
- the pupils enjoy mathematics and they are encouraged to think mathematically;
- the good quality of teaching and learning;
- good subject leadership and management;
- the positive impact of the National Numeracy Strategy on teaching and learning ;
- the pupils' attitudes to their learning and their very good behaviour.

Areas for improvement are:

- to improve records, so that they clearly show what pupils know, understand and can do;
- to ensure the consistent use of information and communications technology in all classes.

93. By the age of seven, the pupils have a very good knowledge of addition and subtraction facts to 10 and make increasing use of mental strategies to find answers. They confidently check their answers, using a number line or square, but many use mental strategies well. Most of the pupils have a secure knowledge of place value to 100, can order numbers up to 100 and recognise number sequences and patterns. The pupils become increasingly adept at doubling, halving, counting in 2's, 5's and 10's in ascending and descending order and predicting the next number in the sequence. In the lessons observed, the majority were gaining confidence in explaining their methods for adding a single digit to a two-digit number. The pupils gain a good understanding of number patterns and are urged to use appropriate mathematical language in regular mental starter sessions. At this early point in the school year the pupils in Year 1 can calculate one more or less than a single digit number and work out subtractions within 10, mostly by using 'fingers' or 'multilink' cubes to support counting strategies. The pupils in Year 2 have a developing knowledge of shapes. The majority can sort and name a range of 2D shapes, including pentagons and hexagons, and they are beginning to describe properties such as the number of sides, angles and vertices.
94. By the age of eleven, the pupils can solve challenging computations, using the four operations. Many work accurately with numbers greater than 1000 and they develop a clear knowledge of fractions and successfully simplify them. The pupils understand the relationship between fractions and percentages and many are confident in calculating percentages. Most have a good understanding of decimal notation. The pupils gain a good knowledge of measurement, many can calculate perimeter and area accurately and the higher attaining pupils have a particularly good knowledge of angles and lines of symmetry and can describe the properties of a range of shapes. The pupils collect information and learn to draw a variety of graphs and can interpret graphical information well. The pupils cover the full range of mathematical topics between the ages of seven and eleven. The good emphasis on practical approaches, the correct use of mathematical terms, the frequent use of probing questions by the teachers and the setting of challenging work ensure that most pupils achieve well.
95. The pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive and their behaviour is very good. This is a direct reflection of skilled teaching and has a very positive influence on the standards achieved. Pupils of all abilities respond positively to well-organised lessons in the certain knowledge that their teachers value them and their efforts. Occasionally, in those lessons where the level of expectation drops, or the pace and direction of learning slows, the pupils' attention waivers and the quality of learning is not as good. The majority of older pupils show a good capacity to work independently and clearly enjoy the challenge of the subject.
96. The quality of mathematics teaching is good throughout the school. The teaching is most consistent and effective with the five to seven year olds where the rate of progress is improving. The teaching of the seven to eleven year olds is more variable, ranging from satisfactory to very good. Across the school, the teachers have a consistent approach to the teaching of numeracy. They successfully build on the National Numeracy Strategy and effectively ensure that the 'mental starter' part of the lesson is both lively and challenging. The good use of questions enabled five and six year olds to explain different methods of addition. For example, one child added 6 and 9 by saying 6 add 10 is 16 and then take away 1. There are numerous examples of teachers asking challenging questions and urging the pupils to think quickly and to have confidence in explaining their methods. This boosts their confidence and often promotes a sense of fun.

97. The teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and the well-planned whole-school framework for the subject supports them well in the planning of lessons. The result is that pupils acquire appropriate mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding. The teaching of basic number skills is good. Most teachers use a good range of methods to promote learning and they manage learning well. Good levels of interest and concentration are fostered, as shown by the pupils in Year 4 who investigated how many two- and three-digit numbers could be made from the digits 0 – 9. The pupils quickly used their own systems to arrange the digits and order their collections of numbers. However, progress faltered where the pupils were unsure about what was required when making three digit numbers and exploring multiples of ten. Whilst expectations for the lesson were high, the time allowed was insufficient for the pupils to consolidate their learning. The management of time and the extent to which the work was matched to different pupils' learning needs were key factors in determining the success of several of the lessons seen, in moving the learning forward.
98. Several particular strengths distinguish the very good teaching seen in Year 1 and Year 5. These teachers have very good levels of subject expertise, they set high but achievable expectations and provide very clear direction for learning. Their questioning techniques are skilful and rigorous and they use them effectively to engage all the pupils in thinking mathematically. Lessons are well paced and great care is taken to ensure that all pupils participate in answering questions and that no one dominates. A particular feature of very good teaching is the care taken to assess and adjust the course of learning for pupils of different attainments and needs. This was evident in the different ways the task was presented when slower learning pupils in Year 5 worked to identify odd and even numbers and to recognise multiples of three. The methods of working were well chosen to suit the pupils' capabilities and this enabled them to make very good progress. Similar features were evident when pupils in Year 1 investigated methods of subtraction.
99. The quality of the curriculum is good. The school's planning for the subject has been effectively updated to further strengthen the teaching of numeracy. This framework provides good guidance for teachers and ensures appropriate breadth and balance across all aspects of the subject. The good range of learning activities is relevant to pupils' learning needs and the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school successfully ensures that all groups of pupils participate fully in the learning programme. Boys and girls often work together and the learning needs of pupils of differing abilities, including those with special educational needs, are well considered. The organisation of pupils into ability sets is having a positive impact on standards as learning is becoming more closely matched to the pupils' needs and this enables them to achieve well. There are good arrangements to monitor pupils' progress in mathematics. However, the teachers seldom record assessments of pupils' achievements against the clearly defined learning objectives included in their planning. As a consequence the level of knowledge and understanding of individuals and groups is not always clear enough. The school makes very effective use of the performance data provided by a well-planned programme of tests to group pupils, set targets and to ensure that the planned curriculum is sufficiently challenging.
100. The school has effectively managed a period of staff absence and successfully maintained good leadership and management of the subject. The senior staff have maintained a clear educational direction for the subject. This is clearly reflected in the consistent teaching of numeracy and the pupils' enjoyment of the subject. Appropriate areas for development are identified and form part of the school's strategy for improvement. The subject is well resourced, but although suitable use is made of information and communications technology to reinforce and extend pupils' learning in some classes, this is not yet an established feature of the mathematics programme in all classes.

## **SCIENCE**

101. Standards in science are above average by the time the children leave Year 2 and are well above average by the time they leave the school. This reflects the results of the most recent national curriculum tests. The pupils make very good progress as they go through the school.

Pupils of all ability levels, including those with special educational needs, generally achieve very well. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

Strengths in the subject are:

- the above average standards achieved by pupils at the age of seven;
- the well above average standards being achieved by pupils by the time they leave the school;
- the excellent quality of experimental and investigative work being done;
- the good quality of teaching;
- the good quality of learning;
- the very good pupils' attitudes and behaviour;
- the very good leadership of the subject.

Areas for development are:

- there are insufficient detailed records to show exactly what it is that each pupil has learnt;
- insufficient use is made of information and communication technology.

102. Throughout the school, the quality of teaching is good. This good teaching has not yet had as great an effect in Years 1 and 2 as the team in these classes has recently been strengthened. The teachers are very good at planning to deliver each topic through an investigative and experimental approach. The teachers in parallel classes plan together to ensure that all pupils are receiving the same opportunities and that the teachers' individual strengths are being used. For example, in lessons seen with pupils in Years 3 and 4, the teachers had devised a series of investigations on shadows. The learning of the pupils was good in these lessons as they were able to experiment with a variety of effects.
103. The teachers are also very good at asking questions to encourage the pupils to explain their thinking in depth. For example, in a lesson in Year 6, where the pupils were investigating experimentally the upthrust provided by water, the teacher first of all gave the pupils their head and asked them to hypothesise on the likely outcome when objects were weighed in air and then in water. A variety of hypotheses was suggested, all with good reasons. After the experiment had suggested that objects weigh less in water than in air the teacher pursued the likely reason with excellent questioning. After a number of pupils had suggested possibilities, one explained the effect by comparing it to the water being like a hand supporting the object so reducing the weight. This showed considerable depth of understanding having been learnt through both the experimental approach and the questioning skills of the teacher.
104. The experimental and investigative approach works very well, partly because of the teachers' very good management of their pupils. They set very high standards, both of expected behaviour and of the work that they expect their pupils to achieve. The very purposeful atmosphere created in the classrooms ensures that the pupils concentrate very well. The pupils are also expected to organise themselves and their resources to a significant degree. This independence gives them a very responsible attitude towards their own learning. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, the pupils were experimenting with bulbs, wires and batteries to light the bulb. After completing the task, many groups carried on to try a variety of other experiments which they made up for themselves, so extending their learning.
105. The pupils thoroughly enjoy their lessons and work hard and with enthusiasm. The excellent relationships in the classes contribute to this enthusiasm and the pupils' desire to try their hardest for their teachers. They share equipment very well; for example, in a Year 5 lesson where the pupils had a range of forcemeters with which to weigh a variety of objects, these were shared with no animosity or 'grabbing'. The pupils are highly motivated and this, along with their other very good attitudes, leads to increased levels of learning and greater rates of progress.
106. The subject is very well led, with the co-ordinator having produced a very clear scheme of work, annotated with very helpful suggestions of how the various topics might best be approached. This ensures that the teachers are confident and can, therefore, assure the best

possible learning for the pupils. The co-ordinator carries out regular monitoring of the pupils' learning by collecting samples of work.

107. There are two relative weaknesses in the subject. Although regular tests are carried out to establish the pupils' levels of knowledge and understanding, there are no clear records to tell the co-ordinator or others in management exactly what it is that each pupil has learnt and understood. The lack of these records sometimes means that the pupils do not start a topic at the most appropriate place, sometimes covering work that they have already understood and sometimes leaving a small gap in their learning. Although information and communication technology is used to reinforce learning in science, there are occasions when the computers are not used when they could be.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

108. Standards in art are above national expectations by the end of Year 2. By the end of Year 6, these standards are maintained. All pupils are making good progress and some individual pupils make very good progress, particularly in skills of drawing and sketching. Overall, this represents good progress since the last inspection as weaknesses have been addressed.

Strengths in the subject are:

- the above average standards, particularly in drawing and sketching;
- the good quality of teaching and good teacher knowledge;
- the good observations made by pupils;
- the way the teachers allow the pupils to experiment;
- the very good extra curricular provision.

Areas for improvement are:

- the support offered to inexperienced staff;
- the use of time in lessons which last a whole afternoon.

109. The pupils enjoy art and approach the subject with enthusiasm. The teachers' planning ensures that all pupils are suitably challenged and effectively supported so that they achieve well. The quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is very good because of good planning, the very good use of the learning support assistants and because the pupils are given very good opportunities to use their imagination. The teachers have good subject knowledge and use skilful prompts to encourage pupils to make observations in response to questions. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, the pupils were asked to look at objects through a cardboard viewfinder as if they were photographing them. The pupils offered suggestions as to how close they should be to the object or at what angle they should look at it and one pupil give a detailed account of what he had done. In one Year 2 lesson, the pupils were given a choice of pictures cut from magazines and asked to imagine what is around the picture and to sketch in these imaginary parts. The pupils show good attitudes, become motivated and enthusiastic for the subject when presented with such tasks.

110. In Years 3 to 6, the teaching is good and ensures that the pupils make good progress particularly in drawing, sketching and colour mixing. A very good feature of the teaching is that in many lessons the teachers provide very good opportunities for pupils to learn skills by experimentation. In Year 3, the pupils undertake experiments with a range of materials to make sculptures. They explore shapes by using art straws, wire and wood and actively learn which sorts of shapes are strong and how materials can be joined to make a sculpture. However, in some lessons, art sessions are too long for pupils to maintain interest and this means that time is not always effectively used. The teachers make very good use of the local environment to stimulate the pupils' interest and to extend their knowledge about different types of art. The teachers' good planning helps the pupils to make links between various types of art and design. The pupils in a Year 5 class demonstrated very good knowledge about Victorian art having looked at the patterns of William Morris and drawn their own design on fabric. This work was followed up by a visit to a local Victorian church to sketch the shapes

on the altar, pews and gravestones so that these shapes can be used to produce a further set of designs. Through this good planning the pupils' knowledge and understanding of how artists develop ideas and how current styles affect their work is actively established. The pupils in Year 6 show good attention to detail when asked to investigate the work of Mackintosh and to produce a piece of work using his ideas and techniques. They show that they have learnt how to cut shapes from paper by folding and that they know about surfaces, textures and patterns. They demonstrate good use of brush strokes and a sound knowledge of mixing primary colours.

111. The teachers encourage pupils to assess the quality of their own work and that of others. With the younger pupils, the teachers help pupils know what to look for when assessing the quality of a piece of work. By the end of Year 6, the pupils analyse the strengths and weaknesses of a given piece of work very well.
112. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and she is keen to provide support and advice for colleagues wherever required. The curriculum is broad, balanced and well planned to maximise opportunities for cross-curricular links. Displays in and around the school are used well to celebrate pupils' artistic and creative achievements. Good use is made of visiting artists to develop new techniques and there are several examples of work undertaken in this way around the school. The pupils are beginning to use computers to draw images and to use clip-art to provide illustrative graphics.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

113. In all classes, design and technology is alternated on a half termly basis with art and design. In the single lesson observed, the teaching was excellent and the standards reached by the pupils were above national expectations. Scrutiny of past work suggests that standards of work are above national expectations, particularly as the design processes are very well undertaken. The work seen suggests that the standards noted in the last inspection report have been maintained.

Strengths in the subject are:

- the above average standards;
  - the well-structured format for progressively developing the pupils' understanding of design elements;
  - the good subject leadership and the long- and medium-term planning.
114. Evidence from scrutiny of work shows that in Years 1 and 2, the pupils learn to assemble construction kits and make models of other vehicles. The teachers pay very good attention to ensuring that pupils develop an understanding of the use of materials and how they can be cut, joined and shaped. All pupils are encouraged to draw their designs, list materials and show how they construct the article. At this early age, the teachers focus on the importance of recording the design process. As a consequence in Year 2, the pupils are involved in designing and making a lighthouse, where most pupils confidently draw what they are to make, experiment through making a prototype and show considerable confidence and independence in cutting, shaping and gluing paper and card.
  115. In Years 3 to 6, the pupils are provided with a range of opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding through the use of a wider range of tools and materials. In Year 6, the quality of both design and finished products are above national expectations, even for some pupils with learning difficulties in other areas of the curriculum. In Years 3 and 4, the pupils design a wide range of photo-frames of different sizes and shapes, using a range of materials, including feathers, cellophane, wire and various thicknesses of card. When designing puppets, the pupils use a variety of fabrics. All pupils carefully follow a design brief and most pupils produce a range of ideas, choosing to take one to the final design and make stage. This good work is continued in Years 5 and 6 when the pupils design a moving vehicle, a fairground ride and a beach hut. Two of these designs demonstrate the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the use of cogs, cams and motors. The design of shelters in Year 6 shows a good acquisition of design and technology skills.

116. The co-ordination of design and technology is good. The co-ordinator has planned a very good series of forms for the teachers to follow when teaching pupils the design process, which are progressively more demanding. These forms, together with good teacher knowledge and the high expectations of what pupils can do maintain standards in this subject.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

117. The standards achieved in geography are satisfactory throughout the school. This judgement is based on the scrutiny of work completed by a sample of pupils over the last school year, an evaluation of teachers' planning and records, plus discussions with teachers and groups of pupils. It was not possible to reach a secure judgement on the quality of teaching as no lessons in geography were taught during the inspection. This is because the school's curricular plan does not include geography in the present term.

Strengths in the subject are:

- the pupils have very positive attitudes to the subject;
- they gain a sound knowledge of the locality;
- the older pupils organise their research well and take pride in their work.

Areas for development are:

- geographical knowledge and skills are not always progressively developed;
- the use of lesson time sometimes results in topics being studied in too little depth.

118. By the age of seven, the pupils have a developing knowledge and understanding of the local environment and can identify both natural and human features. They draw simple maps and take care to annotate their drawings of local journeys and to denote features on a map of "Katie Morag's Island", for example. The pupils confidently name the countries of the United Kingdom and are beginning to make comparisons between town and country life. By following the journeys of "Barnaby Bear" the pupils begin to learn about other countries.
119. Between the ages of seven and eleven the pupils further develop their map reading skills and knowledge of the local area. For example, they consider whether the High Street should be closed to traffic, canvas local peoples' views and make good use of their mathematical skills to present their findings from surveys. The pupils identify positive and negative features of the local environment and through the study of life in an Indian village, they have good opportunities to make simple comparisons with life in this country. The older pupils consider the uses of water but have only limited knowledge of physical processes, such as the development of rivers and have only limited understanding of terms such as estuary and erosion.
120. Throughout the school the pupils make satisfactory progress. They have very positive attitudes to work and discuss their work with enthusiasm. The older pupils in particular achieve good levels of independence when researching topics and they organise their work well.
121. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. The school has adapted its curricular programme to reflect the study units provided by a nationally recommended scheme of work. The framework of topics, over a two-year cycle, provides a suitable basis for progression in pupils' learning. However, the scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils indicates that topics are not always covered in enough detail to provide pupils with sufficient depth and breadth in their geographical knowledge and understanding. When talking about their work, the pupils sometimes lack confidence in using geographical terms and making links between topics. For example, the older pupils clearly achieve well and recall a lot of general information about particular studies, but they seldom draw on previous knowledge to discuss similarities or draw conclusions.

## **HISTORY**

122. Between the ages of five and seven the pupils achieve satisfactory standards in history and, by the age of eleven, standards are good. The younger pupils make satisfactory progress and the older pupils, between the ages of seven and eleven, make good progress. The pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

Strengths in the subject are:

- the pupils are keen to learn and show interest in their work;
- the pupils gain a sound knowledge of local history;
- the older pupils achieve good standards and are developing effective study skills.

Areas for development are:

- the learning experiences are sometimes fragmented;
- insufficient use is made of information and communication technology

123. By the age of seven, the pupils have an appropriate understanding of chronology and can place events in their own experience in sequence. They develop knowledge of how things change over time by finding out about events such as the Fire of London and learning about the work of Florence Nightingale. The pupils can describe how hospitals have changed and talk about the conditions Florence Nightingale worked to improve. Between the ages of seven and eleven, the pupils develop a basic knowledge of the different groups of invaders and settlers who occupied Great Britain in the early periods of our history. For example, the pupils' knowledge and understanding of Roman culture was enriched by their study of Chester. The pupils gain confidence in ordering events in history by sequencing them on a timeline. The older pupils have a good knowledge of Greek society and aspects of culture, including literature and art. They know that our society is based on democratic principles developed by the Greeks.

124. The pupils are keen to learn and they have very responsible attitudes, especially when asked to work together. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. In the lesson seen with the youngest pupils, the teaching was good because the teacher's careful preparation, good subject knowledge and her skill in linking the learning to the pupils' own experience helped them to become "history detectives". The pupils used a range of sources including artefacts, pictures and video to discover differences in a day at the seaside today and a hundred years ago. They named the clothes "Barnaby Bear" might pack for his holiday today and quickly identified differences in how people dressed for the beach a hundred years ago. This lesson built very effectively on the scheme of work. Good teaching was also observed when pupils in Year 5 and their teacher dressed in role and enacted a series of lessons. The quality of learning and the response of the pupils was very good. Where teaching was satisfactory the planning reflected high expectations, but, in some cases, the learning was not closely enough matched to the pupils' current skills and the shortcomings in managing activities resulted in variations in the rate of learning. For example, younger pupils gained a great deal from tasting wartime rations, but had little opportunity to record their observations or find out more. Overall, teaching is well supported by the scheme of work, but topics are not always studied in enough detail and the pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to make links between the units of work studied. Insufficient use of information and communication technology is made to help with research.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

125. Standards in information and communication technology are satisfactory at both the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when the only key issue concerned standards in information and communication technology. The pupils make satisfactory progress in information and communication technology through the school, although there are occasions where the subject is not as well used as it might be to support work in other subjects.

Strengths in the subject are:

- improvement since the last inspection;
- the very good pupils' attitudes to the subject and their very good behaviour;
- the very good quality of teaching where the subject is taught to a class, as in Year 6;
- very good leadership of the subject;
- very good planning for future development.

Areas for development are:

- the computers in classrooms are presently underused;
- there are insufficient resources for the subject.

126. By the time the pupils leave the school they have satisfactory skills in most aspects of the subject. For example, they can use a word-processing program to alter a passage in literacy from the first to the third person. They create very attractive cards, using a variety of text and images. They have used the Internet to find information and also to send and receive e-mails. For example, when the pupils go on holiday, the older ones sometimes take 'Gilbert Bear'. An e-mail had been received from a teacher in Namibia, addressed to Gilbert giving information about her daily life in that country and how they would find it different.
127. Work was seen in earlier year groups showing good use of spreadsheets to present information in graphical form and also to experiment with different variables. There is also good use of specific programs to support work in other subjects such as mathematics. Standards in communicating and handling of information is at least average. However, standards in control technology and modelling are unsatisfactory. For example, there was no evidence of sensors linked to computers being used.
128. The pupils are enthusiastic when they have opportunities to use the computers. They take turns very well and discuss their work very maturely. They can be trusted to get on with their task without the teacher having to intervene, so enabling the teacher to concentrate on the rest of the class. Behaviour is very good, the pupils never taking advantage of the independence that they are given.
129. Information and communication technology is only taught as a specific subject in Year 6 and one lesson was seen here. This lesson was very good, the challenging task being made even more challenging by the teacher constantly asking the question "Why?". This not only made the pupils think, but also made them justify their thinking and give good reasons for it. The resultant learning and understanding was very good.
130. The subject is very well led and the co-ordinator has very good plans for future development. The falling roll in the school will give the school extra space in September 2002, which they plan to use as a computer suite. This has been planned for some time and the school is carrying forward an appropriate sum to equip this room. This is much needed as there are, at present, insufficient computers to enable the subject to develop further. This inadequacy is sometimes further accentuated by the underuse of the computers in some classrooms. There are sometimes lengthy periods when the computers are not being used at all. With the present inadequate number of computers, unless they are planned to be used for almost all of the school day, the pupils' learning is hampered.

## **MUSIC**

128. Standards of attainment are above average for pupils' in Years 1 and 2 and they make good progress in their learning. The pupils in Years 3 to 6 attain standards that are well above what would be expected for pupils of this age and they make very good progress in their learning. High standards are achieved, because music has a very high profile in the school. Throughout the school, the pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their learning. Improvement since the last inspection is good and the school has continued to build

on the good standards. The school has increased the range of multi-cultural percussion instruments.

Strengths in the subject are:

- the above average standards achieved by pupils aged five to seven;
- the well above average standards achieved by pupils aged seven to eleven;
- the very good quality of teaching;
- the very good quality of learning;
- the high focus of music within the school;
- the subject knowledge and skill of the headteacher ensures very high standards in the school band;
- the enthusiasm and ability of the subject co-ordinator provides a very good role model;
- the pupils' very good attitudes to their learning and their very good behaviour.

An area for improvement is:

- to continue to increase opportunities for the use of information and communication technology.

129. The quality of teaching is good for pupils' in Years 1 and 2; it is very good for pupils' in Years 3 to 6. In some lessons, it is excellent. In a good lesson, six-year-olds developed a competent understanding of dynamic levels and they understood how the use of dynamics can enrich music. They have a good knowledge of instruments and how to hold and play them, because they are given access to a wide range of instruments from the time they enter the school in Reception. The pupils arranged the instruments in order from the quietest to the loudest because the teacher used questions very well and this contributed to effective learning.
130. Excellent teaching in Year 6 contributes to the high standards of composition work and level of performance. The pupils worked very well in small groups to create a musical composition to suit the mood of given lyrics. Higher attaining pupils incorporated a melody and recorded their compositions on manuscript paper, using musical notation. Average and lower attaining pupils all successfully produced an impressive composition in a short time. There are very good links with information and communication technology as pupils use keyboards well. The pupils develop very good knowledge and awareness of performance skills, because the teacher constantly refers to this aspect. Evaluation and appreciation of music is very well developed and pupils suggest ways to improve their own and others' performance. The pupils demonstrate control and accuracy when they play a four beat rhythm, using egg shakers to accompany music played on the conga drums. Teaching was excellent because the pupils were given clear guidelines and constant challenge to improve their work and the work of others. The teacher's subject knowledge and excellent use of a range of instruments contributed to the exciting and stimulating lessons. Appreciation skills are very well developed throughout the school because the teachers use questions well; for example, eight-year-old pupils show good knowledge of instruments and identify their effective use in the Carnival of the Animals.
131. Considering that pupils have been in school for less than two weeks, singing is very good. Real joy is evident in singing in assemblies. The teacher is a very good role model and enthuses the pupils to give of their best. The pupils sing 'Shine Jesus shine,' and 'You are my brother,' with clear diction, very good awareness of pitch and rhythmic accuracy. The singing is of a high quality because the teacher constantly guides pupils and gives appropriate teaching points to improve performance. All pupils sing competently in unison and two parts. During hymn practice, the pupils are encouraged to repeat increasingly complex clapping rhythms; they manage this successfully and relish the challenge of more difficult rhythms.
132. Although the band was not observed during the inspection week, a pre-inspection visit indicated the very high standards achieved by this group, led by the headteacher. A significant number of pupils belong to the band and their performance is impressive. They perform in a range of concerts locally and with other schools. There are excellent

opportunities for pupils to receive peripatetic tuition in a wide range of musical instruments. The pupils achieve high standards in examinations; for example, three pupils achieved grade 4 and several achieved grade 3 in flute.

133. Resources are excellent and teachers make good use of them to develop skills. The extra-curricular clubs are very well attended and make a valuable contribution to the quality of music within the school.
134. The combined enthusiasm and subject knowledge of the co-ordinator and headteacher contribute to the high profile of music within the school and the high standards achieved. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is enhanced by the contribution of music in the school.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

135. Standards in physical education are typical of what would be expected for pupils in primary schools. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Although standards are average, achievement is not as good in physical education as it is in other subjects and standards could be much higher. The school has made no significant progress to improve standards since the last inspection four years ago.

Strengths in physical education are:

- the enthusiasm and hard work of the co-ordinator to improve the range of the curriculum;
- the developing links with partner institutions and sporting bodies;
- the pupils' good attitudes to their learning and their very good behaviour;
- the wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities.

Areas for improvement are:

- the school hall is too small to teach physical education to the older pupils;
- standards that pupils achieve are not as high as in other subjects;
- the quality of the teaching is not as good as in other subjects;
- the pupils miss lessons when inclement weather means that outside activity is not possible.

136. Teaching is good, overall, in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory, overall, in Years 3 to 6. The quality of teaching is better in gymnastics than in games for junior pupils. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 perform well with a partner, creating a matching and mirroring sequence containing jumps, balances, cartwheels and rolls. The teacher provides a clear framework for evaluation and opportunity to comment on the work of others and suggest ways to improve it. The pupils know they should hold a balance for three seconds, because the teacher reminds them of this. The quality of the work is not as good as would be expected because the hall is too small and the limited space does not allow pupils to extend and explore space. When a whole class stands in a space they have only about a square metre of space each; this is insufficient to develop awareness of space fully.
137. Clear teacher demonstrations in a Year 6 football lesson ensured that pupils developed the skills of passing, trapping and shooting. The games lessons do not always provide opportunities to evaluate and comment on how to improve their performance. Older pupils know and can explain simple defence and attack strategies, because these are reinforced in the extra-curricular activities. The clubs are very well attended and teaching effectively supports learning. Short tennis is taught to older classes by a professional tennis coach and many higher attaining pupils progress to competitive matches with other schools. All pupils have a clear understanding of the importance of activity on maintaining a healthy lifestyle and they can talk about the effect of exercise on the body.

138. In Years 1 and 2, the pupils know why they need to warm up prior to activity, because the teachers uses questions well to check the pupils' understanding of this aspect. The pupils know how to lift and carry apparatus well and are aware of safety aspects. Limited space means that teachers direct where apparatus is to be placed and pupils do not have the opportunity to develop spatial awareness and estimation skills that would develop with a larger space. The pupils move carefully around the hall and are sensitive and aware of others. Teachers have good control and are well organised. In the better games lessons, good demonstrations of throwing and catching skills contribute to improved performance in a class of seven-year-olds. The pupils know and can explain what they need to do to send and receive a ball from a partner successfully.
139. A strength is the extra-curricular provision and clubs such as tag rugby, netball, short tennis, athletics and Kwik Cricket make a valuable contribution to the provision. The school has good links with the local secondary school and older pupils help support the netball club; the result is that the pupils attending receive a good level of tuition and guidance and this contributes to improving knowledge and skills in games. The pupils benefit from the many inter-school tournaments. The playground and field are adequate spaces, but the surface of the playground is uneven in places. The pupils benefit from the residential trips when they have opportunities to experience canoeing, rock climbing and orienteering.
140. During the inspection two games lessons for ten-year-olds were cancelled because of inclement weather. Younger class was using the hall and no learning about physical education was substituted for the cancelled lesson. It is normal practice to teach other subjects if the lesson is cancelled, due to inclement weather. Extra lessons are sometimes given but this is at the discretion of the class teacher and there is no guarantee that time lost learning about physical education will be caught up.
141. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and keen to raise the profile of physical education within the school. She has made a good contribution to extending the provision

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

142. Throughout the school, attainment in religious education is well above average. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress in their learning during their time at school. All pupils develop very good attitudes and achieve very well in religious education and it has a high focus throughout the school. Improvement since the last inspection is good because planning has been improved and teachers are more confident in their delivery of the subject.

Strengths in the subject are:

- well above average standards for pupils aged seven and eleven;
- consistently very good teaching throughout the school;
- consistently very good quality of learning;
- very good planning;
- excellent subject leadership by the headteacher;
- the pupils' attitudes to their learning and their behaviour.
- the contribution to the excellent spiritual, moral and social development within the school.

Areas for improvement are:

- ensure that religious education is represented in visual displays in all classrooms and around the school;
- make more use of information technology.

143. Throughout the school, the quality of teaching is very good. The pupils understand the essence of Christianity and other faiths extremely well for their age. The teachers plan interesting lessons that engage pupils' interest and stimulate quality discussion about religion, religious symbols, customs and fundamental belief. For example, in a lesson on Judaism

lower attaining pupils in Year 6 know and explain the story of Moses and the events leading up to the exodus of the Jews from Egypt. Average attaining pupils explain the events and the significance for the Jewish people today. Higher attaining pupils explain clearly the festival of Pesach and the Passover. In a very good lesson, the teacher talked with knowledge and enthusiasm about the contents of the Seder meal and the significance of the foods included in that meal. The pupils' knowledge of the exodus story was very good and they were able to ascertain why certain foods were chosen and their significance for the Jewish people. The teacher used questions skilfully and pupils made their own deduction about the significance of the food. For example, pupils explained that the lamb bone signified the sacrificial lamb that was used prior to the Passover and the salt water represented the tears of the Jewish slaves in Egypt.

144. The teachers have good subject knowledge and a commitment to teaching it well. They devise interesting ways of making pupils think. Question and answer sessions are used well to make links between learning about religion and learning from religion. The teachers' enthusiasm for the subject is reflected in the pupils' spirited response. This was evident in an excellent lesson for seven-year-olds. The pupils were introduced to a range of different bibles. The pupils have a very good understanding of the significance of messages contained in the bible for their age; this was reinforced strongly with a story about the Good Samaritan and the emphasis on the quality of kindness. The teachers encourage the pupils very well to think for themselves and produce their own ideas. The work is appropriate for all abilities and lower attaining pupils are well supported by classroom support assistants and carefully produced resources and word banks. The pupils produce their own simple Bibles, effectively illustrating and describing their own messages. These show a clear understanding of basic messages. For example, one pupil wrote: 'I want people to be kind, helpful, and happy. I want people to think of others and not push or shove. I want people to sit next to me at dinnertime. I want people to say please and thank you and not to be unkind to each other.'
145. A strength of religious education is the way it contributes to the excellent spiritual, moral and social development evident in the school. Very good lessons contribute to quality thinking and applying simple messages to everyday situations within the school and the wider world. The pupils show very well developed respect, consideration and compassion for others rarely seen to such a degree in primary schools. The pupils become totally engrossed in problem-solving assignments, considering how to make the world a better place.
146. The subject co-ordinator has excellent subject knowledge and is passionately enthusiastic about religious education. Because of this, planning is very well considered and resources are used effectively to enrich lessons. The teachers have gained subject knowledge and expertise, so the subject is very well taught and the pupils are appropriately challenged. Resources are well labelled and easily accessible for all staff. Visitors, such as local church people, visit the school to talk about Christianity and Judaism; there are also visits to the local church, though, at present, to no places of worship of other faiths.