

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **PIUS XII CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Little Sutton, Ellesmere Port

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111357

Headteacher: Mr R Hughes

Reporting inspector: Mr M Newell  
10638

Dates of inspection: 14<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> January 2002

Inspection number: 194099

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Rossall Grove  
Little Sutton  
Ellesmere Port  
Cheshire

Postcode: CH66 1NN

Telephone number: 0151 339 6141

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Brian Kelly

Date of previous inspection: May 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
10638	Martin Newell	Registered inspector	Equal opportunities English as an additional language English Art and design Design and technology	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?
9352	Malcolm Weaver	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
3227	Don Hughes	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Geography Physical education	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
8263	Margaret Forsman	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
25441	April Dakin	Team inspector	Special educational needs Science History Music	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is situated in Little Sutton about two miles from Ellesmere Port in Cheshire. The majority of pupils live close to school, although a significant minority live outside of the school's catchment area. There are currently 185 pupils attending the school of which 101 are boys and 84 are girls. Assessment data shows that the attainment of children when they start school varies from year to year and is generally at an average level. Approximately 11% of pupils are eligible for free school meals and this is below the national average. The school population is almost all of white ethnic origin and no child speaks English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is 12% and this is below the national percentage with no pupil having a statement of special educational need. The school is one of 16 primary schools in the Ellesmere Port Education Action Zone.

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

This is a good school. The good quality of teaching and the very good attitudes pupils have towards work and school form a strong partnership that impacts significantly on the quality of pupils' learning throughout the school. Inspection findings are that standards currently being achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 are above average in English, mathematics and science and above average in geography at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils achieve well in relation to their ability in most subjects by the time that they leave school. This is helped by the good quality of provision and support for pupils with special educational needs. Behaviour is good and the quality of relationships is a particularly strong feature of the school. The school provides a good range of learning opportunities that add to the quality of pupils' learning. Good provision is made for pupils' spiritual development and very good provision is made for their moral and social development. These strengths, together with the very good leadership and management of the headteacher, help to create an effective learning environment where pupils' personal and social care is nurtured alongside their academic development. Taking all factors into account this is a school that is providing good value for money.

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

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average at the end of Year 2 and above average in geography at the end of Years 2 and 6. Given their ability levels, pupils are generally achieving well by the time that they leave school.
- The good quality of teaching ensures that pupils learn in an effective manner.
- The pupils' very good attitudes to school, the high quality of relationships and the good standards of behaviour impact significantly on the quality of learning.
- The school provides a good range of learning opportunities that add much to pupils' personal and social development.
- The school provides well for pupils with special educational needs.
- Very good provision is made for pupils' moral and social development and good provision for their spiritual development.
- The school has established a very strong partnership with parents.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership and management of the school.

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

- Standards in writing by the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning.
- Assessment procedures, analysis of test and assessment data, and the tracking of pupils' progress as they move through the school.

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory progress since the time of the last inspection. However, the recent appointment of the headteacher has seen an acceleration in the rate of improvement in the last few months and there is a very clear and accurate agenda for school improvement in place. The school is committed to achieving and sustaining high standards and this permeates the work of the school. The school now has appropriate schemes of work in place to support teaching and learning in different areas of the curriculum. Provision for art and design and design and technology is now at a satisfactory level. Good procedures are now in place for assessing the impact of major spending decisions on standards. The quality of teaching has improved and this ensures that in most instances the work that is set for pupils is sufficiently challenging and demanding. The role of co-ordinators, assessment procedures and the analysis of test and assessment data have improved since the last inspection, but the school recognises that there is room for further improvement in order for these initiatives to have their maximum impact on the raising of standards. In terms of the wider picture, many of the strengths identified at the last inspection have been maintained or improved. This is a school that is looking for improvement and committed to raising standards and, because of this, is particularly well placed under the leadership of the headteacher to continue its process of development.

### 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	B	B	B
mathematics	A	B	A	B
science	A	B	B	B

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

The above table shows that when the school's end of Year 6 results in 2001 are compared to all schools, attainment is well above average in mathematics and above average in English and mathematics. Inspection findings show that the current Year 6 pupils are on track to achieve average standards in English, mathematics and science although standards in writing are below average. This does not indicate a fall in standards from the previous year but reflects the fact that the present cohort of pupils has a higher percentage of pupils with special educational needs and approximately 25% of the year group have not spent all their educational lives at the school. The good quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 means that pupils are currently achieving well in relation to their abilities and inspection evidence indicate that standards are set to rise again in subsequent years. The school sets challenging and demanding targets in literacy and numeracy.

The good quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 again means that pupils are achieving well in relation to their ability. Inspection findings show that standards in English, mathematics and science are above average overall, although standards in writing are at an average level.

These results are an improvement on the 2001 test results where the cohort of pupils had a high level of pupil mobility and a higher percentage of pupils with special educational needs.

Standards in geography are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards in art and design, design and technology, history, information and communication technology and physical education are at an average level by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, with attainment in music at an average level overall with singing throughout the school of a good standard.

Assessment data shows that the attainment of children when they start school varies from year to year and is generally at an average level. The good quality of teaching and the good provision that is made for children in the Foundation Stage mean that children get a good start to their educational lives. By the time that children are ready to start in Year 1, attainment in personal, social and emotional development and knowledge and understanding of the world, exceeds the nationally recommended Early Learning Goals. Attainment in all other areas of learning is securely at the expected level with a minority of children exceeding the Early Learning Goals.

### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	The pupils have very good attitudes to school and take a full and active part in lessons and other learning opportunities that the school provides.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in class and around the school is of a good standard. Pupils show a good awareness of the needs of others.
Personal development and relationships	The school makes good provision for pupils' personal development and the quality of relationships throughout the school is of a very good standard. These factors help to create an effective learning environment.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance rates are in line with the national average. Pupils arrive on time and clearly enjoy coming to school.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

<b>Teaching of pupils in:</b>	<b>Reception</b>	<b>Years 1 – 2</b>	<b>Years 3 – 6</b>
Quality of teaching	Good.	Good.	Good.

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

The quality of teaching is good across the school overall and enables pupils to achieve well in relation to their ability. In the Foundation Stage a wide range of exciting and challenging activities are taught that provide children with the opportunities to learn through practical and investigative tasks as well as more formal and structured ones. In Key Stages 1 and 2 teaching in literacy and numeracy is currently of a good standard. Work is matched to the individual needs of the pupils and this means that all pupils, including the higher attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs, are currently making good progress.

Reading skills are taught in a direct and progressive manner as pupils move through the school. This impacts most positively on the progress that they make and the standards that they achieve. The school has rightly recognised the need for writing skills to be taught in the same manner and is already addressing this issue. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. Initiatives funded through the Education Action Zone (EAZ) are proving effective in providing teaching and tasks that challenge and meet the needs of the older highest attaining pupils in the school. The school makes good use of specialist teaching in subjects such as music and information and communication technology, which is impacting most positively on pupils' learning and achievement in certain areas of these subjects. There are some good examples of pupils' work being marked in such a way as to clearly outline what pupils need to do to improve. This good practice is not as consistent across the school as it should be.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school provides a broad and balanced formal curriculum. Pupils' learning is enhanced by the good range of learning opportunities that are provided through visits, visitors to the school, links with the community and partner institutions, initiatives funded through the Education Action Zone and the very good range and quality of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Good quality teaching and levels of support ensure that pupils make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good provision is made for pupils' moral and social development, good provision is made for pupils' spiritual development and satisfactory provision is made for their cultural development. This quality of provision impacts most positively on pupils' personal development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares well for its pupils and constantly seeks to meet the individual needs of the pupils and to recognise and celebrate their individuality. The school has recently introduced effective procedures to assess and track pupils' progress and to set targets for their academic achievement in English and mathematics and, to a lesser extent, science. These procedures need to be rigorously followed and monitored and refined where necessary. Effective procedures to assess and track pupils' attainment and progress in other subjects of the curriculum are not yet in place.
How well the school works in partnership with parents.	Very good. The school has established a strong partnership with parents that impacts most positively on the work of the school and on children's learning.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership and management of the school. He has set a very clear direction for school improvement. He enjoys the full support of the deputy, staff and the Governing Body. The role of curriculum co-ordinators is not sufficiently developed in all subjects to have its maximum impact on helping to raise standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The Governing Body is supportive, well informed, knowledgeable and is becoming increasingly effective in holding the school to account for the quality of education that it provides. All statutory duties are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school has started to put in place procedures to more effectively monitor teaching and learning and to analyse test data. The recency of these initiatives has not yet had sufficient time to have the maximum impact on raising attainment. The head, staff and governors have a good grasp of what the school needs to do to improve and these priorities are accurately outlined in the high quality School Development Plan.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Very good use is made of all available funds and grants to impact positively on pupils' attainment. Teaching and support staff are on the whole deployed well. The accommodation and resources are used in an effective manner to support and enhance pupils' learning. The principles of best value are applied well when purchasing goods and services. Financial planning is of a good standard.
The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources.	There are enough suitably qualified teachers and support staff for the demands of the curriculum and for the number of pupils on roll. The range, quality and quantity of learning resources are satisfactory with good resources in geography. The accommodation has a number of attractive features but the design and size of some classrooms makes effective learning more difficult in practical lessons such as science and design and technology.

## 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>• Parents feel that their children enjoy coming to school and that they make good progress.</li> <li>• Parents state that the school is a very friendly and approachable place and that they are always welcomed.</li> <li>• Parents believe that the school sets high expectations and that the quality of teaching is of a good standard.</li> <li>• Parents state that the quality of behaviour in the school is good and that the school is helping children to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• Parents are happy with the amount of work children are expected to complete at home.</li> <li>• Parents are most appreciative of the range and quality of activities that are provided outside of lessons.</li> <li>• Parents state that the school is well led and managed and that the school has established a strong and effective partnership with them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More information about how their child is progressing.</li> </ul>

There are very high levels of parental satisfaction and inspection findings confirm many of the parents' positive views of the school. The school provides good levels of communication with parents and pupils' reports, which outline how well pupils are doing, are of a good standard because they give areas for improvement as well as clearly showing how well a pupil is achieving.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The children's attainment when they start at the school varies from year to year and is generally at an average level. By the end of the Foundation Stage many children securely achieve the nationally recommended Early Learning Goals in communication language and literacy, mathematical development, creative development and physical development. In personal, social and emotional development and their knowledge and understanding of the world many children achieve standards above those expected for their age. The children benefit from consistently good quality teaching in all areas of learning and this ensures that children of all abilities make good progress. The teacher and support staff work very well together ensuring that the children receive a wide range of stimulating and exciting learning opportunities. As a result of the good quality of teaching and provision children are well prepared for the transition to the Key Stage 1 programmes of study when they start Year 1.
2. By the end of Year 2, on the basis of the 2001 end of Key Stage 1 National Curriculum test results, pupils' attainment is above average in reading, average in mathematics and below average in writing when compared to all schools nationally. When the school's results are compared to similar schools, standards are above average in reading and below average in writing and mathematics. Inspection findings show that standards in speaking and listening, reading, mathematics and science are above average and standards in writing at an average level. The difference between inspection findings and test results can be explained by the fact that the 2001 cohort of pupils had a higher percentage of pupils with special educational needs, many of whom had not spent their full educational lives at the school. Pupils of all abilities, including the pupils with special educational needs, are achieving well and making good progress in most areas. Although writing standards are at an average level, only a small percentage of pupils are on track to achieve beyond the level expected of seven-year-olds because pupils have not been taught the necessary skills over time to write stories and narratives that capture the attention of the reader and use an expressive vocabulary. The school is already addressing the issue.
3. By the end of Year 2 speaking and listening skills are a strength. Pupils listen carefully to instructions and to text that is being read. They listen well to the contributions of classmates and use a good level of vocabulary to talk about their work and own experiences. They are confident to engage in conversation with adults. Reading is another strength. Pupils have been taught a good range of reading strategies that help them to tackle words or understand text with which they are unfamiliar. They have a good knowledge of a wide range of authors and are able to use contents, index and glossary with ease. Pupils are provided with an appropriate range of writing tasks. Pupils use capital letters and full stops appropriately and handwriting is generally well formed. Pupils are beginning to write extended pieces of work but the writing lacks an expressive or adventurous vocabulary, or simply fizzles out after a lively opening. In mathematics, pupils have a good grasp of place value by the end of Year 2. Pupils talk confidently about the different methods they use to work out their answers to problems and explain their solutions well. Pupils accurately identify two- and three-dimensional shapes in different contexts and measure accurately. Many pupils collect and record data with the higher attainers interpreting the data and posing relevant questions in an effective manner. In science by the end of Year 2, pupils' skills in carrying out investigations are good and pupils explain their work with precise language and record

their findings using different formats well. Pupils have a good understanding of all aspects of the subject, including what is needed for a healthy lifestyle, constructing circuits, the properties of living organisms, and how forces affect movement.

4. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 is above national expectations in geography. The emphasis that the good quality teaching places on the development of geographical skills alongside knowledge helps pupils of all abilities to make good progress and to achieve well. Attainment in music is in line with national expectations, with attainment in singing above this level as a result of the specialist teaching that the pupils receive. Attainment in information and communication technology is in line with national expectations with pupils currently making good progress because of the input of specialist teaching. Progress over time has been satisfactory. In art and design, design and technology, history and physical education the quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and is on occasions good, which means that pupils of all abilities are making at least satisfactory progress, with progress often good in physical education lessons when pupils are provided with opportunities to practise and refine the skills that they are being taught.
5. By the end of Year 6, on the basis of the 2001 National Curriculum test results, pupils' attainment in mathematics is well above average and is above average in English and science when compared to all schools nationally. Standards in reading were at a stronger level than in writing. When compared to similar schools, attainment was above average in all three subjects. The inspection findings show that the present Year 6 standards are at an average level in English, mathematics and science overall, although writing standards are below average. The difference in attainment levels between inspection findings and test results does not indicate a fall in standards but reflects the fact that the present cohort of pupils has a higher percentage of pupils with special educational needs and approximately 25% of the year group have not spent all their educational lives at the school. Pupils of all abilities have made good progress overall in English and mathematics and are achieving well in terms of their ability. In science, pupils at Key Stage 2 make satisfactory progress. The school has recognised the need to ensure that certain units of work are revisited on a more frequent basis because, at times, too much time is having to be spent re-explaining previously covered work. This prevents progress from being stronger.
6. By the end of Year 6, pupils listen appropriately and are ready to take on board comments or contributions from the teacher or classmates before making their own contributions. They convey their opinions clearly and confidently although their vocabulary is not particularly expressive. In reading, many pupils read with suitable expression and show an appropriate understanding of ideas, themes, events or characters within the texts that they are reading. Pupils have sufficient skills to locate and use ideas and information. The weakness is in writing standards. Pupils often use appropriate grammar and handwriting is fluent and legible. However, the pupils have not been taught the necessary writing skills over time and in a progressive and systematic manner. This means that, although pupils are increasingly being provided with opportunities to write for a variety of audiences and purposes, at the moment they lack the skills to develop and sustain interesting and exciting pieces of writing with adventurous vocabulary that captures the attention of the reader. The school is aware of these shortcomings and is already addressing the issue through a structured approach to developing good quality writing skills and through initiatives funded through the Education Action Zone for improving writing standards for the highest attaining pupils.

7. In mathematics by the end of Year 6, pupils have a secure understanding of number and place value and use this to multiply and divide whole numbers. Pupils use this knowledge to solve number problems and use an appropriate range of mental methods of computation. Pupils identify the properties of more complex two- and three-dimensional shapes and accurately calculate the area of regular shapes. Pupils are secure in their knowledge and use of bar charts and fractions but are less secure in the creation of line graphs or in using percentages and ratios. In science by the age of 11, pupils recognise the need for a fair test and record their findings in an appropriate manner. On the whole, pupils have a secure knowledge of life processes and living things, materials and their properties and physical processes but sometimes struggle to recall previously covered work in detail. This prevents them extending their knowledge and understanding further by building on prior attainment.
8. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 is above national expectations in geography. Pupils have a good understanding of life in other countries and are able to locate countries and major cities throughout the world. Pupils use geographical language well and have a good understanding of map symbols and using different keys. This depth of knowledge and skills is acquired through good quality of teaching that ensures that all areas of study are taught in sufficient depth and that pupils of all abilities make good progress. Standards in music are at the nationally expected level but above this level in singing because of the specialist teaching that pupils receive. Attainment in information and communication technology is at an expected level, with pupils currently making good progress because of the good quality specialist teaching they receive. Progress for pupils of all abilities has been satisfactory over time, as the use of specialist teaching has been a more recent innovation. Attainment in art and design, design and technology, history, and physical education is at the nationally expected level. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and this ensures that pupils of all abilities make at least satisfactory progress over time. Where teaching is good within individual lessons, pupils make good strides in the acquisition of skills, knowledge or understanding.
9. Pupils with special educational needs at both key stages make similar overall progress to their classmates in relation to their prior attainment. They make good progress in literacy and numeracy and in their personal and social development. Improved expertise, good identification of pupils at an early age and better support and teaching have ensured that progress is now better than that found at the last inspection. The additional and well-organised support given by the special needs co-ordinator makes a very good contribution to their progress.
10. The school is one of 16 primary schools that form part of the Ellesmere Port Education Action Zone. The school takes part in a number of initiatives that are funded through EAZ and these are increasingly adding much to the quality of pupils' learning. One such initiative provides direct teaching input to the older highest attaining pupils in the school. A structured and well-organised programme aimed at developing pupils' writing skills, although in its early stages, is already proving effective and evidence indicates that the programme is helping to improve standards in this area of the curriculum.
11. This is a school that is striving to improve standards. The school works well towards the challenging targets that it sets itself in literacy and numeracy. Any difference in the trend in results over time when compared to the national picture can be explained by the fluctuating number of pupils with special educational needs and the level of pupil mobility. There is no significant difference in attainment between boys and girls that cannot be explained by natural ability. All the staff at the school work together very well and show a constant readiness to reflect on how they teach and support pupils in order to secure improvement in their performance. The quality of teaching is good overall in

most subjects throughout the school and this and the very good attitudes that pupils show to work and school form a strong partnership that impacts significantly on pupils' learning and achievement. The high levels of commitment and determination shown by the headteacher and the teaching and support staff indicate that this is a school that is particularly well placed for further continued improvement.

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

12. Pupils' attitudes to the school are very good. All pupils, including the youngest children in the Foundation Stage of learning and those with special educational needs, enjoy coming to school and show interest and enjoyment in learning throughout the range of school activities. There is an atmosphere of concentration in the school from the Foundation Stage onwards and all tasks and activities are undertaken purposefully and with a sense of pride. Pupils are always ready to ask and answer questions. All these factors make a significant contribution to the quality of pupils' learning and to the good progress that they make. Pupils' attitudes to school have become even stronger since the time of the last inspection when they were judged to be good.
13. The overall good standard of behaviour identified in the previous report has been maintained. No bullying, racism, sexism or other oppressive behaviour was seen during the inspection. Discussions with pupils show that they are very confident that should bullying ever occur it would be dealt with swiftly and fairly. There are very minor behavioural problems in the upper end of Key Stage 2, which accrue mainly from the large numbers in the classes and the confined classroom spaces. The vast majority of pupils are polite and friendly and follow instructions carefully. Playtimes and lunchtimes are pleasant social occasions with pupils playing together in a most mature and sensible manner. There have been no exclusions during the last twelve months. Pupils with special educational needs behave well and have good attitudes to work in class. Teachers manage pupils with emotional and behavioural needs well through positive praise and setting work to meet their needs. Pupils show growing confidence and self-esteem when their contributions are asked for and valued. This is particularly noticeable in withdrawal classes. Teachers have high expectations that class rules are followed and, for the most part, pupils respond appropriately in class.
14. Pupils have very good relationships with staff and with one another. Pupils are kind and considerate towards one another and they show respect for teachers and visitors alike. In class, pupils are very attentive and concentrate well. They listen carefully whilst their classmates are talking and show a willingness to help others and an eagerness to share ideas and resources.
15. The school makes good overall provision for pupils' personal development. Pupils involve themselves in all aspects of the life of the school as a community. The reward system that the school operates encourages pupils to work towards their own goals and acknowledges their achievements. Pupils respond well and with maturity to the range of responsibilities that they are asked to undertake. Opportunities for pupils to develop responsibility are increasing. Pupils take responsibility for routine tasks during the school day and initiate fund raising events. Older pupils act as 'buddies' for the youngest children during their first term at school and as hosts at the parish Christmas event. Pupils in Year 6 elect representatives to liaise with the local council on Road Safety. When provided with opportunities to carry out investigative or problem solving tasks, the pupils respond well, with some pupils carrying out further independent study and research at home and then sharing their findings with classmates. The opportunities for pupils' personal development have been maintained at a level similar to that reported in the previous inspection report.

16. The level of attendance is satisfactory; it is in line with the national average and is similar to that found at the last inspection. There has been some more recent improvement and during the last autumn term the level of attendance rose to slightly above average, but inconsistency between classes indicates several pupils have more than average time off without explanation. Overall, parents are fully well aware of the procedures to be followed in the event of absence or lateness and are keen to follow them. The majority of pupils arrive punctually and lessons start on time.

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

17. During the week of inspection, teaching was good or better in almost 9 out of 10 lessons. Examples of good or better teaching were observed in every class and by specialist teachers in music and information and communication technology and by teachers funded through the EAZ. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Teaching is good in literacy and numeracy overall across the school, although the school has recognised the need to ensure that writing skills are taught in a more direct and progressive manner in order to have a bigger impact on raising standards. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is of a consistently good and, on occasions, very good standard and this ensures that children of all abilities make a good start to their educational lives. Specialist teaching in subjects such as music and information and communication technology is presently making a significant contribution to how well pupils are learning in these areas of the curriculum. There are strengths in teaching in geography, some aspects of science, and physical education. This good quality of teaching, together with the very good attitudes to school and work that pupils have, makes a significant contribution to the quality of pupils' learning and how well pupils achieve. The quality of teaching has improved since the time of the last inspection and the readiness of all staff to reflect critically on how they teach indicates that the school is well placed to continue to improve.
18. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is consistently good and at times very good and this, together with the very positive attitudes that pupils have to learning, ensures that children of all abilities make good progress. The tasks that are set within lessons have a good balance between those with a practical and investigative thread and those with a more formal structure. The teacher and support staff work together very effectively and all capitalise on every opportunity, whether it is in role-play, creative development or in building up children's confidence and independence to challenge children's thinking and learning. The level of questioning is very good and this impacts most positively on the development of children's communication skills. Good use is made of ongoing assessment information to make sure that the tasks that are set are closely matched to the individual needs of the children. As a result of all these factors, the children thrive in an attractive stimulating learning environment and are well prepared for the next stage of their education by the time that they start in Year 1.
19. The school has introduced the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies in an effective manner, which is having an increasing impact on the standards that are achieved. The shared text that is often read at the start of a lesson is well chosen and captures the interest and attention of the pupils. Teachers often provide good role models for reading; whether reading 'Little Red Riding Hood' or more complex texts they read with great expression and fluency, stressing the importance of punctuation. The pupils pick up on this and, as a result, their animated reading style hooks the attention of the rest of the class. Lesson objectives are usually shared with the class and this makes pupils fully aware of what they are to learn in the lesson. The best

teaching re-visits these objectives at the end of the lesson and uses the opportunity to assess how successful the lesson has been or if there is a need to modify future planning. A strength of teaching in literacy is that pupils are being directly taught reading skills in a progressive and rigorous manner. The pupils at Key Stage 1 are taught a range of strategies to help them tackle unfamiliar words and phrases, taught the importance of expressive reading and taught how to locate information quickly and accurately. This good teaching makes a significant contribution to the good standards in reading that are achieved. The skills continue to be taught well at Key Stage 2 with specific teaching of higher order reading skills, such as skimming and scanning. Teachers are increasingly developing pupils' ability to read beyond the literal level and to use skills of deduction in more complex texts. The school is currently teaching writing skills in a more effective manner than has been the case over time. Pupils are being provided with specific guidance on how to write newspaper reports, how to write in the first person, how to write a summary of books, such as 'The Silversword' or 'Robinson Crusoe', and how to write persuasive texts. A particularly effective lesson was seen for the higher attaining pupils, taught by a teacher funded through the EAZ, where the pupils were putting together a multi-media presentation about the impact of bullying. The pupils were directly taught the importance of expressive and evocative language to put across a viewpoint to strengthen their case. These initiatives are clearly having a positive impact on helping to raise standards but the recency of the initiatives means that they have not yet had sufficient time to have their maximum impact on raising standards. There are still occasions, for example, when pupils' work fizzles out after a lively start or not all pupils are able to sustain an argument or persuasive piece of writing with an expressive vocabulary. Inspection evidence, however, clearly indicates that standards are set to rise if the good and at times very good teaching of specific writing skills continues.

20. The National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced in an effective manner. The pupils clearly enjoy the mental agility sessions at the start of the lesson where they are expected to give rapid-fire answers to the questions that are asked. Pupils respond particularly well when the tasks are challenging and demanding. The basic skills of numeracy are taught well across the school and learning is reinforced and enhanced when pupils are asked to put these skills to the test in other subjects, such as science and geography. In the best teaching, pupils are asked to examine different ways of solving problems, or pupils are set investigative and problem solving tasks that really challenge their mathematical thinking. Teachers have good subject knowledge and this enables them to deal with any misconceptions in an effective manner. Initiatives funded through the EAZ and initiatives, such as 'Springboard', together with the valuable contribution of support staff, are all making an important contribution to how well pupils achieve and the good strides in learning that pupils of all abilities make. The quality of teaching in science is good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory with good features at Key Stage 2. Teaching ensures that pupils are provided with sufficient opportunities to learn through practical and investigative tasks alongside the systematic development of their scientific knowledge. Teaching is at its best when pupils are expected to think things through for themselves and to use their scientific knowledge to predict or to explain why things happen as they do. An area for development lies in the fact that at times there is not a high enough expectation placed on the older pupils as to the amount of detail in which they are expected to record their work. This impacts adversely when it comes to revising for test and assessments because the necessary level of detail is not always present.
21. Satisfactory use is made of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning in other subjects of the curriculum. Some good examples were observed in literacy, science and geography. When this is the case, it adds to the

quality of pupils' learning and the progress that they make. There are, however, other opportunities missed. The school makes most effective use of specialist teaching in information and communication technology. This good quality of teaching ensures that pupils are now being systematically taught the necessary skills and knowledge across all elements of the subject. Standards are currently improving at a good rate. However, over time the pupils have not consistently had appropriate access to computers or to this level of teaching, and teaching has been satisfactory. The school also provides specialist teaching in music. This teaching is often of a high standard because of the skills, enthusiasm and verve of the teacher. The teaching promotes a real sense of fun, enjoyment and occasion in the pupils and they respond in an excellent manner. The area for development is that overtime the emphasis has been on singing and performance and the school recognises that there is a need to ensure that compositional skills are taught in a more systematic manner and to develop the subject knowledge of non-specialist teachers. There are some strengths in the teaching of geography where geographical skills are taught well alongside pupils' geographical knowledge. In physical education, teaching is often good because the pupils are taught the necessary skills in a direct manner and are then provided with sufficient time to practise and refine these skills. This impacts positively on how well the pupils learn. Teaching in history, art and design and design and technology is satisfactory with some good features which helps to ensure that pupils of all abilities make at least satisfactory progress over time.

22. The quality of teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs is good overall. Teachers work hard to keep pupils motivated and involved and to ensure that their needs are met within the classroom. The quality of teaching within withdrawal classes for older pupils is good and sometimes very good. Relationships established within these classes are helping pupils to build up their confidence and self-esteem, and enable pupils to be heard in a supportive environment. For example, during a literacy lesson, pupils with special educational needs listened empathetically and talked animatedly about how they felt about bullying at a previous school and the peer group pressures put upon them in daily life. The very good relationships established between teachers and pupils of all ages are helping those pupils with emotional needs to feel part of the school community and to behave with respect and consideration for others. Individual education plans are usually used well to inform teachers' planning. For example, in a numeracy lesson, pupils' literacy needs were well met when the teacher placed an emphasis on reading key numeracy vocabulary, such as 'multiplication' and 'division', by splitting words into segments to make them easier to read. This process is helping pupils to access test papers independently and to gain a greater understanding of word problems. In another class, pupils with additional needs are supported by key vocabulary being provided for writing about their science observations. In another class, pupils learned the names of parts of the skeleton because they were paired with more able children, who talked to them about what they had learned. Support staff make a valued and valuable contribution to how well pupils learn and often provide sensitive yet astute and incisive support. Occasionally, staff could take a more active role in supporting pupils during whole class introductions when pupils are not always sure what is being taught, This is the exception rather than the norm. The contribution made by initiatives funded by the EAZ for pupils of all abilities, including the higher and lower attainers, is good and at times very good. Tasks in areas such as literacy, numeracy and science are imaginative, well planned and taught and make a significant contribution to the quality of pupils' learning.
23. Teachers often provide good verbal support for pupils within lessons and handle any misconceptions skilfully and sensitively. There are some good examples of pupils' work being marked in a constructive manner, which leads to improvements because what is

needed to improve is clearly stated or comments make clear why a piece of work is of a good standard. This good practice is not consistent across the school. The quality of relationships across the school is very good. Pupils respond well to the enthusiasm and care of their teachers. Pupils are keen to do well in their lessons and show good levels of interest and motivation. The school is currently seeking to extend the opportunities that are provided for pupils to set targets for their own learning. This is appropriate in enabling pupils to take a greater responsibility for how well they learn. A high percentage of parents are happy with the quality of teaching, the progress that their children make and the amount of homework that is set. Inspection findings support these very positive views of the parents. Overall, the good quality of teaching and the pupils' positive attitudes are making an important and significant contribution to the quality of pupils' learning and to the good progress that pupils of all abilities are making.

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

24. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided by the school are good in the Foundation Stage and throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. At the last inspection weaknesses were identified in a lack of schemes of work to support teaching and learning in a number of subjects and provision for art and design and design and technology. The school has addressed these issues well and the school now provides a well planned and constructed range of learning opportunities for all pupils that adds to the quality of pupils' learning and to the progress that they make.
25. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum for pupils of all ages and meets all statutory requirements, including those for collective worship. Appropriate policies and schemes of work have been introduced to support the teaching of all subjects of the National Curriculum. The strategy for teaching numeracy is effective and impacts positively on pupils' learning. Literacy teaching is also effective overall, although the school recognises the need to ensure that writing skills are taught in a more systematic and progressive manner. All curriculum subjects make a positive contribution towards pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development. The quality and number of after-school activities is high and enriches the learning opportunities. The curriculum is further enhanced by the good range of visits and visitors for many subjects and by the degree of specialist input into a number of subjects.
26. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and, as a result, pupils make good progress towards the targets of their individual education plans. Pupils of all abilities have equality of opportunity and equal access to all aspects of the curriculum. The school operates effective procedures for early identification and intervention for pupils with special educational needs. The school also identifies and provides for higher attaining pupils through the Education Action Zone initiative. There is good support in both classes and withdrawn groups. There is a good multi-professional approach to providing for pupils with differing needs. Pupils' needs are often met through withdrawal from lessons, which are jointly planned by the special needs co-ordinator and class teachers. This joint planning ensures pupils' access to a broad and balanced curriculum is not compromised. Other withdrawal, to take part in additional reading activities through the Educational Action Zone Reading Champions scheme, for example, is effective and helping to raise standards. Good individual education plans are provided at present for all pupils on the school's register of special educational needs. All pupils have equality of opportunity to learn and make progress and are involved in the many school activities that take place at lunchtime and after school.

27. The curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage is good. Planning is based on the six key areas of learning and successfully promotes the Early Learning Goals. The good quality of curriculum provision ensures that children are provided with opportunities to learn through investigative and practical activities as well as more structured and formal tasks. Teaching staff have a good understanding of how young children learn and manage the learning environment very well, factors which impact most positively on how well children learn.
28. The curriculum for Key Stages 1 and 2 is supported by effective schemes of work for all subjects, which lead to detailed medium term planning. Some of these programmes are too recent for the impact to be felt in full but are still giving clear direction to the subjects and promote progression in pupils' learning as they move through the school. The headteacher and senior management team have introduced an appropriate curriculum map for the whole school, which summarises the topics to be covered in each subject.
29. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal social and health education and is dedicated in recognising the importance of this area of the curriculum. The school ensures that this aspect of the curriculum is covered in a sensitive and supportive manner. Much is incorporated in the religious education curriculum and in addition the school makes good use of the 'Health for Life Programme' and the 'Heartstart' initiative, which add to the quality of provision that is made for pupils' health and social education. Pupils are well supported by the school nurse who works regularly with all classes and provides appropriate sex and drugs education.
30. The curriculum is richly enhanced by a wide range of after school clubs and activities for pupils to develop their abilities through sport, music and exceptionally through a Spanish language club for pupils in Years 1 and 2. This indicates an improvement since the last inspection. The activities that are provided are well attended and appreciated by the pupils and, as well as extending pupils' musical, physical and language skills, add much to pupils' personal and social development. The school also plays host to a privately run after school care facility which provides a good range of activities for the pupils of working parents.
31. The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, with particular strengths in social and moral development. The school presents a deeply caring and reflective ethos and there is a common understanding among all adults and pupils.
32. The provision for spiritual development is good. Adults and pupils have a mutual respect that underscores the sense of community in the school. Within the curriculum, teachers seize upon opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own lives and the world in which they live. Teachers are sensitive to opportunities for spiritual development through the personal and social curriculum and urge pupils to reflect on how their actions impact on the lives of others. In response, pupils show no embarrassment or hesitation in expressing their thoughts and feelings. Pupils listen well to music and show imagination, sensitivity and appropriate feelings in their response.
33. The school very effectively promotes pupils' moral development. The school rules are directly derived from the Mission Statement, which was written after discussion between adults and pupils. Therefore, the school community has agreed expectations and pupils follow them. The pupils have frequent opportunities to discuss issues and demonstrate good understanding of the impact of their behaviour on others. Involvement in a 'Good to talk' project provided valuable discussion about tolerant

listening. Older pupils explained sensitively how peer pressure and bullying could hurt others. They demonstrate a very good appreciation of right and wrong and are given clear guidance from all adults.

34. The provision for social development is very good. The school successfully encourages pupils to learn the skills of social interaction, for example, through the after-school club and also gives them the opportunities to employ them. Pupils regularly work with adults from outside the school through the broad extra-curricular programme. Co-operation between pupils and outside visitors was a feature of the Key Stage 1 'Homes' project and Key Stage 2 'Fairground Day'. The oldest pupils make an annual visit to the local Council Chamber to learn about local government from the Mayor. Pupils are given and respond well to opportunities to support charities, such as the Romanian Christmas boxes and Cafod. Teachers act as very good role models for their pupils and play a significant part in establishing the sense of the school as a social community.
35. The provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory and improving. Study of other world faiths is covered in the religious education programme. The school makes good use of resources for these topics and others from the local multi-cultural loan scheme. Special events, such as the recent Samba workshop, provide first hand stimulus to pupils. There are occasions when teachers make use of opportunities to develop awareness of other cultures, for example, in geography, history and dance. European culture is well covered in art and music. New initiatives are planned but at present there is a lack of planned development for pupils' appreciation of the diversity of other non-European cultures.
36. The quality of links with other primary and secondary schools, effectively supported through the Education Action Zone, is good. These findings reflect an improvement on those found at the time of the last inspection. The Reception class teacher meets parents of each child new to the school to discuss their children's ability, their strengths and any particular needs. The Education Action Zone provides for an Early Years Link worker to support this work effectively, either visiting children's homes or advising on educational games to aid children's individual learning. Teachers from Ellesmere Port High School have visited the school to observe the teaching of literacy and numeracy and some teachers from Pius XII School have made a return visit to observe how art and design, and geography are taught.
37. Local businesses and companies also give effective learning support, with a focus on science processes and design and technology to further develop pupils' awareness of the use of levers and pulleys. As a result of the many good links to other schools for music and sport, and to businesses, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

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

38. This is a caring school in which the well being of its pupils is a priority. Procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are good overall. This largely reflects the findings at the last inspection. The headteacher and staff know pupils well and very effectively promote high self-esteem amongst all pupils. Pupils know they are valued and respected and demonstrate their respect for teachers and adults in school. There are good procedures for monitoring children's play and for collecting them at the end of playtimes, enabling a calm but positive influence for pupils to make a good start to their following lessons.
39. Procedures for child protection are satisfactory. The headteacher is the named person responsible for child protection and has received training in the last two years. The school follows satisfactory reporting procedures, although midday supervisors and the newly qualified teacher have not yet received formal guidance in monitoring any potential issues. Confidential records are stored securely and satisfactory links are held with the Police and social services. The headteacher is vigilant regarding the health and safety of the pupils. He has ensured that concerns identified at the last inspection have been resolved and has more recently received a copy of the 'School risk assessment' to ensure that all essential concerns have been dealt with. Only minor issues are evident in school at present and all electrical equipment has been tested. The headteacher and governors are concerned, however, over the uneven condition of paving slabs around the school building perimeter and have clear plans in hand for resolving this concern in conjunction with building refurbishment.
40. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. No judgement was given in the last inspection report. The school secretary monitors registers, but class registers do not always contain an accurate record of when reasons for absence are given by parents, resulting in registers not giving clarity between authorised and unauthorised absence. Close links are held with the educational welfare officer and Education Action Zone for supporting the school in seeking to improve the level of attendance and together they have had success recently in improving the overall attendance.
41. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are good. This reflects the findings at the last inspection, demonstrating that the procedures are being maintained well. The positive behaviour policy is well understood by staff and, although there are no written rules, pupils all have clear identification of what they and staff expect, and this works very effectively. There is a wide range of awards for pupils' good behaviour and achievement in their learning that has a positive impact on pupils' self-esteem and encourages pupils to value others. The school was free from inappropriate behaviour and bullying during the inspection and when correction is needed in classes and assemblies, it is done effectively without disrupting other pupils.
42. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good and are founded upon good relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils of all ages demonstrate that they are secure with staff and visitors.
43. Procedures for assessing pupils' academic performance in mathematics are good and those for English and science are satisfactory. Teachers now have a manageable system for making notes of significant improvements made by pupils and use these to inform reports to parents at the end of each academic year. Pupils are formally assessed using standardised tests at the end of Year 2 and 6. Cheshire tests in

reading, mathematics and verbal reasoning are used to group pupils, and to identify pupils with special educational needs, and the most able. Clear targets are set for these pupils and pupils are given additional support where necessary.

44. The school, under the leadership of the headteacher, is increasingly carrying out more detailed analysis of test and assessment data and using the information to target areas for improvement. The school is aware that more detailed analysis of data collected could be used to raise standards further. Portfolios of pupils' work are currently being developed in each subject to allow staff to observe expected levels of attainment and as a monitoring tool. This process needs to become embedded in school practice so that all teachers have a good grasp of exactly what is needed for pupils to achieve at a particular level. The area of weakness in this aspect of school life is that the procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress in the other subjects are not as strong and effective as those for English, mathematics and science.
45. Good procedures are in place to assess children's attainment on entry. Teachers make effective use of this information and use it well to guide and inform curriculum planning, to identify pupils with special educational needs and to set targets for improvement. The staff in the Reception class monitor children's responses well and record them clearly in individual portfolios and this enables them to assess and track children's personal as well as academic progress.
46. The headteacher, special needs co-ordinator and teachers monitor the progress of pupils with special educational needs in literacy and numeracy effectively and regularly. All targets set with individual education plans are specific, measurable, usually attainable and relevant. There is good movement up and down the register, as pupils' needs change. Additional support from the educational psychologist and other agencies, which has been provided through Educational Action Zone monies, has been used well to provide additional information and support for pupils with the greatest needs. The personal development of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties is monitored well through their individual education plans.

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

47. Parents have high regard for the school and value the support and teaching given to their children. This represents an improvement since the last inspection and confirms that the school has worked hard to improve links with parents. Of the returns made to the questionnaire, a small number of parents indicated they would value more information regarding the progress that their children make. The inspection team judge that pupils' progress is sufficiently reported upon in children's end of year reports. No other significant concerns were raised.
48. Links with the parents are very good, resulting in a very positive response from parents to becoming involved more effectively in the life of the school. Parental involvement in the work of the school is good overall and contributes well to pupils' learning. Three parents have been trained as 'Reading Champions' to support teachers in listening to children read, whilst ten parents develop a large number of 'Story sacks' for use both in class to support teaching, and for pupils to take home. The sacks are well planned, containing a range of books, educational games, pictures and toys all related to a specific topic or theme in individual sacks. This is good and was seen being used effectively in the Year 1 class during the inspection. Other parents assist with netball on a regular basis and another occasionally with football. The parents involved are keen to use their talents and speak highly of the school and value the opportunity that they have

for contributing to the pupils' learning. Good support is also given financially to further equip the school with resources. On completion of the infants' playground, a large outdoor climbing and adventure playground will be bought from the generous donation made by parents, to enable younger children to benefit fully from outdoor adventure play activities.

49. Parents value the frequent and informative letters and newsletters issued by the school, enabling them to be kept well in touch with school activities and other information. Parents feel that they receive sufficient information regarding the themes and topics their children are to cover during each term, with additional information provided on a noticeboard in the Reception class. This is supported well, following the initial induction evening, by two consultation evenings in the autumn and summer. Teachers are readily accessible to parents, which further ensures good communication. Parents support the mass celebration at church, parent assemblies and concerts presented by the pupils. Pupils' end of year reports provide good information of pupils' learning, including some pointers for improvement.
50. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are given good information about how their children are progressing through regular meetings and discussions. They are given additional information from the special educational needs co-ordinator on how the individual education plan is formed and used. This is good practice. Each plan states clearly how the parents should be involved in helping their children at home and many parents consider and use this advice. Information for parents within the special needs policy is clear.
51. The contribution that parents make to their children's learning at home is also good, with most parents supporting their children's academic and social development well. Many pupils expressed their enjoyment of reading, commenting that a wide range of family members listened to them read. Parents value the homework diary and see it as an effective means for maintaining the two-way communication within the school.

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

52. The headteacher provides very good leadership and management of the school. In the short time he has been at the school he has set a very clear educational direction for the work of the school and his efforts and leadership are greatly valued and appreciated by staff, governors and parents. He has quickly, astutely and accurately assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the school and has already started to put in place initiatives and procedures that are beginning to impact on the quality of education that the school provides. The headteacher shows a committed and determined approach to raising and then sustaining high standards. He is well supported by the deputy headteacher and the headteacher has delegated appropriate roles and responsibilities to the deputy headteacher to enable her to take a full and active part in the management of the school. The head and deputy meet on a regular basis and discuss issues pertinent to school improvement. These are then discussed with the staff at full staff meetings. This process helps to ensure that all staff are fully involved in the decision making process and they greatly value the fact that their views and opinions are listened to before decisions are agreed and implemented and become embedded in school practice.
53. The headteacher has put procedures in place to monitor the quality of teaching and learning through lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and through the scrutiny of teachers' planning. The LEA adviser has also carried out lesson observations. These

procedures have applied mainly to teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy. The recency of the initiative means that there has not been sufficient time to have its maximum impact on raising standards. Co-ordinators have only had limited opportunities to monitor standards across the school, but the headteacher has drawn up a timetable to provide co-ordinators with time away from their class teaching duties on a rolling programme to do this, starting with the core subject co-ordinators. Apart from in geography, few opportunities have been provided for co-ordinators to monitor teaching and learning in the foundation subjects. The headteacher has rightly identified the whole issue of monitoring standards as a major area for development within the school. A similar picture emerges with the analysis of test and assessment data. The headteacher has implemented procedures to more rigorously analyse test and assessment data, to track pupils' progress and to set targets for individual pupils and year groups. This practice has not been a feature of school life in the past and so has not played a significant role in improving standards. As a result, over time, the school has not been able to ascertain if individual or groups of pupils are achieving as well as expected, if there are significant differences in attainment between boys and girls, how pupil mobility impacts on attainment and if pupils of all abilities make the progress of which they are capable. Despite this, inspection evidence indicates that the school is setting challenging and demanding targets for literacy and numeracy and staff show a steely determination to achieve these targets. As procedures for data analysis and target setting become firmly entrenched in practice then these too should make a meaningful and important contribution to the standards that pupils achieve.

54. The school development plan is a good quality document and is seen as a working document in which the priorities for development are accurately and clearly stated. The plan is seen as the vehicle for improving standards and the quality of education that the school provides. The priorities for development have appropriate time scales are clearly costed and the success criteria link directly to improving standards. Everyone at the school is provided with an opportunity to contribute to the plan and this ensures that staff and governors as a whole share responsibility for achieving the stated targets and heightens their awareness of what needs to be accomplished. The plan shows that, under the leadership of the headteacher, the school has a very secure grasp of its strengths and what needs to be tackled to improve.
55. The school provides good opportunities for the professional development of both the teaching and non-teaching staff. All staff have attended numerous in-service training courses over the last two years, with training showing a marked increase over the last 9 months. Training has been geared very much to the needs of individual members of staff and to the needs of the school. This has impacted positively on the quality of teaching and on the quality of pupils' learning in subjects, such as history, geography, and information and communication technology, as well as in literacy and numeracy. Plans are in hand to improve teachers' subject knowledge in music. The headteacher is seeking to ensure that all members of the staff have clear job descriptions that outline their roles and responsibilities within the school in a concise manner. The school has responded very well to the national initiatives for performance management and all teachers have targets linked to raising standards in writing.
56. The school benefits from an effective Governing Body that is becoming increasingly effective in holding the school to account for the quality of education that it provides. Governors have visited the school at work on many occasions, with some governors observing lessons or supporting teaching and learning in the classrooms. Parent governors are often to be seen in school helping to put together story sacks, which are much valued and appreciated by both staff and pupils. The school has instigated the initiative of linking governors with both classes and subject co-ordinators and the early

evidence suggests that this is heightening governors' awareness of the standards and the provision that the school makes. The Governing Body is kept very well informed by the headteacher and has become increasingly involved in target setting procedures and discussing test and assessment results. This is good practice as it provides governors with a secure insight into how well the school is achieving. Governors play a full and active part in discussing and debating policies before they become embedded in school practice. The quality of relationships between staff and governors is very good and this adds much to the sense of community that is a strong feature of the school.

57. The school has made satisfactory progress since the time of the last inspection, with a much more accelerated rate of improvement since the appointment of the present headteacher. In terms of the key issues that were identified at the time of the last inspection, the school now has in place appropriate schemes of work to support teaching and learning in different areas of the curriculum. Provision for art and design and design and technology has improved and is now at a satisfactory level. Good procedures have been put in place for assessing the impact of major spending decisions on standards. The role of co-ordinators, assessment procedures and the analysis of test and assessment data have improved since the last inspection, but the school recognises that there is room for further improvement in order for these initiatives to have their maximum impact on the raising of standards. In terms of the wider picture, the quality of teaching has improved and many of the strengths identified at the last inspection have been maintained or improved. This is a school that is looking for improvement and committed to raising standards and because of this is particularly well placed under the leadership of the headteacher to continue its process of development.
58. The leadership of the special educational needs co-ordinator is very good. She has ensured that the quality of provision is good and meets all needs. Although part time, she has ensured that the time she gives to the school is of high quality in terms of support and organisation. The headteacher, co-ordinator and teachers work as a team alongside other professionals to make the provision work effectively. Training in behaviour management and specific learning difficulties has improved the quality of the provision.
59. Financial planning is of a good standard. Specific grants are used in a very effective manner to help advance and enhance pupils' learning. The initiatives that are funded through the EAZ are providing very good value for money in advancing pupils' learning in areas such as the development of writing skills, science and design and technology. The school has a relatively high budget carry forward for the previous financial year but this money has already been earmarked for much needed building improvements, particularly to the external fabric of the building. The day-to-day finances and administration of the school are run in a most effective and pleasant manner by the two school secretaries who provide valuable and valued support to the headteacher and help the school to run in a smooth manner. The school makes appropriate use of information and communication technology to assist in the administration of the school.
60. The finance committee of the Governing Body meets on a regular basis and plays an active and important role in setting and monitoring the budget. The school has not had a recent audit of its finances but inspection evidence indicates that finances are managed in an efficient and effective manner. The school pays good attention to long as well as short term financial planning and recognises the impact that a rise or fall in pupil numbers may have and takes account of this. The headteacher and governors are keen to evaluate the impact of any major spending decisions and, with this in mind, link initiatives, such as the cost of specialist teaching, increasing support staff and the

purchase of additional resources, directly to the impact that they have on standards and the quality of pupils' learning. The headteacher pays much credence to the principles of best value when purchasing goods and services; whether this be services that are bought back from the Local Education Authority, building improvements or resources, he is keen to ensure that the school gets the best possible deal and that the impact is reflected in the quality of pupils' learning. Good use is made of the available accommodation, learning resources and, in particular, specialist teaching in music and information and communication technology. These factors impact positively on the quality of pupils' learning. Good use is also made of the kind and generous amounts of time that parents and friends of the school are willing to give up to support the work of the school. This again adds to the quality of life within the school as well as strengthening the community feel that pervades the life of the school.

61. The school is adequately staffed by appropriately qualified teachers with good support from five classroom assistants, two of whom are also appropriately qualified. A classroom assistant working part-time in the school as special educational needs co-ordinator is adequately qualified to fulfil her role of responsibility. Good quality additional support is provided by four other adults who are individually qualified to teach literacy booster classes for able pupils, information and communication technology, music and swimming.
62. The classroom accommodation is satisfactory overall and reflects the findings of the last inspection. There are, however, a number of concerns over the quality of the buildings and outdoor play area. A major 'Refenestration' programme has been agreed for the replacement of windows, rotting timbers to walls and fascia boards at roof level. Following this programme, the area immediately surrounding the building and infants playground is to be resurfaced in order to replace the uneven paving slabs and provide more appropriate walk ways during poor weather. Arrangements for a secure outdoor play area for children in the Foundation Stage are already well advanced. Additionally, there are concerns with the size and shape of classrooms, which have a detrimental impact on pupils' learning, in particular for performing practical work in science, art and design and design and technology. The classrooms also have insufficient storage space for teaching resources. The school has a number of good sized open plan resource areas that are used well for supporting after school activities, art and design and focused help to individual pupils. In addition, the school benefits from a good sized hall and a large grassed sports field. The school's resources are satisfactory overall and good in geography. Resources are enhanced well by the use of loan service resources, particularly to cover subjects such as music, history and art and design in particular. The ratio of computers to pupils is now in line with the national average.

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

63. In order to further improve standards and the quality of education that the school provides, the Governing Body, headteacher and staff should:

### **1. raise standards in writing by:**

- continually and consistently providing opportunities for pupils to write for a variety of audiences and purposes;
- systematically and progressively teaching the necessary writing skills that will enable pupils to write sustained, extended pieces of writing by the time that they leave school that pay sufficient attention to detailed description or narrative, characterisation and expressive language;
- ensuring that opportunities are fully exploited to enhance and extend pupils' writing skills in other areas of the curriculum.

*(paragraphs 2, 3, 6, 19, 25, 76, 78, 81, 94, 106, 111, 115, 123)*

### **2. improve procedures for the monitoring of teaching and learning so that they have their maximum impact on helping to raise standards by:**

- ensuring that co-ordinators are provided with appropriate opportunities to support, monitor and evaluate teaching across the school in the subjects that they are responsible for, so that good practice can be disseminated and any areas for improvement tackled;
- the regular and rigorous scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning.

*(paragraphs 53, 82, 95, 101, 107, 117, 122, 129, 134)*

### **3. improve procedures for assessing pupils' attainment, for target setting and for tracking pupils' progress by:**

- ensuring that the analysis of test and assessment data in English, mathematics and science is used in a rigorous manner to track pupils' progress by gender, year group, and pupil mobility and to set appropriate and challenging targets for pupils to achieve;
- developing appropriate procedures to assess and track pupils' progress in other subjects of the curriculum;
- developing annotated and levelled portfolios of pupils' work that provide an accurate guide for teachers and pupils as to what is needed to achieve a particular level;
- ensuring that the marking of pupils' work is used as an opportunity to clearly outline what pupils need to do to improve or why a particular piece of work is of a good standard.

*(paragraphs 23, 43, 44, 53, 47, 79, 82, 86, 89, 94, 95, 101, 107, 111, 112, 116, 117, 122, 129, 134)*

In addition the school should consider including the following less important weaknesses in the action plan:

- continue to examine ways in which to improve the quality of accommodation to enable practical activities in subjects such as design and technology, art and design and science to be carried out in a more effective manner.

*(paragraphs 13, 62, 93, 101, 107, 128)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	33
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	22

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	4	24	4	0	0	0
Percentage	3	12	73	12	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. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR-Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		185
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		21

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR-Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		23

#### 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	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

%
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#### Unauthorised absence

%
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School data	4.8
National comparative data	5.2

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	20	17	37

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	18	19
	Girls	17	17	17
	Total	36	35	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (92)	95 (96)	97 (96)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	19	20
	Girls	17	17	17
	Total	36	36	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (92)	97 (88)	100 (88)
	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	14	11	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	13	13
	Girls	10	9	11
	Total	22	22	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (88)	88 (91)	96 (97)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	13	13
	Girls	9	9	11
	Total	21	22	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (88)	88 (94)	96 (100)
	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	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	185
Any other minority ethnic group	

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.6
Average class size	30.8

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

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	96


*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

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

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

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

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

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	339987
Total expenditure	330924
Expenditure per pupil	1838
Balance brought forward from previous year	20673
Balance carried forward to next year	29736

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	185
Number of questionnaires returned	39

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	44	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	72	25	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	64	36	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	54	46	0	0	0
The teaching is good.	74	23	3	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	62	23	15	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	82	15	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	79	15	3	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	61	36	3	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	82	15	3	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	74	23	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	74	23	3	0	0

## **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**

64. The provision for the children in the Foundation Stage is good and there is evidence of improvement since the last inspection. The children in the Reception class are provided with a good quality of education that successfully prepares them for the demands of the National Curriculum when they start Year 1. Very strong teamwork exists between the teacher and the two support staff and good management by the co-ordinator ensures that children are provided with a range of very well organised and structured activities that promote good progress in children's learning.
65. The children's attainment on entry varies from year to year but is generally at an average level. By the end of the Reception class, the children achieve the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, creative development and physical development. In personal, social and emotional development and their knowledge and understanding of the world they achieve standards above those expected for their age. Children are confident in their relationships with their classmates, teachers and other adults and participate eagerly in the many activities planned for them by the teacher. They listen attentively and concentrate and persevere well with their tasks, both in and out of their classrooms. They work conscientiously individually, or as members of a small group, and demonstrate very good behaviour in a supervised or unsupervised situation.
66. The quality of teaching in the Reception class is consistently good and sometimes very good. The teacher and the support staff co-operate very well to provide a safe, secure and very caring environment for the school's youngest pupils. They have worked together very successfully to plan and implement a broad and balanced curriculum, which is geared to the nationally recommended Early Learning Goals for children of this age. The teacher plans very carefully to ensure the individual needs of all children are met. As a result, children thrive in this caring and well-focused learning environment. High expectations of children's performance, allied to constant praise and encouragement from all staff, enable the children to develop confidence and a feeling of security. Very good liaison is encouraged and achieved between the Reception teacher, who is co-ordinator of the Foundation Stage, and the senior management team. Baseline assessment is carried out in an effective manner and the information is then used to guide and inform curriculum planning so that the needs of individual children are met. Day-to-day monitoring of children's progress and attainment is carried out carefully, and the teacher and support staff note all aspects of social and academic development. Accommodation and resources at the Foundation Stage are satisfactory and the completion of the designated secure outside area will further develop and enhance the children's physical development. Children with special educational needs are well supported by the well-planned additional support that they receive and all make good progress.

### **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

67. Children of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and attain standards above those expected nationally by the end of the Foundation Stage. This is because of the good and at times very good quality of teaching, which promotes children's confidence, self-esteem and independence. Most children are confident and establish very effective relationships with their classmates, teacher and other adults. They are polite and respectful and show sensitivity to the

feelings of others as is apparent in whole class sessions and whole school assemblies. Children concentrate well and are eager to explore any new learning. They work well as part of a group, or independently, and are willing to take turns and share fairly. These children are mature for their age. They are beginning to demonstrate independence in dressing and personal hygiene and choose activities with confidence, for example, selecting their own resources to help them practise their letter sounds. They initiate ideas, especially in their imaginative work in art linked to the 'colour magic' computer programs. The vast majority of children of this age have developed a good understanding of what is right and wrong and they treat their school environment with care. The high quality teaching actively encourages independent learning and makes a significant contribution to children's progress. The teacher and classroom assistants relate very well to the children and this has a very positive impact on the quality of learning. Staff know their children well and relationships are very positive and friendly. Even the youngest children understand the routines and rules, for example, when they learn to take turns to use the resources in number exercises, the wheeled toys or to work in the creative areas. When children struggle to decide what to do, all adults are very supportive, gentle and sensitive when guiding the children to be more independent. The teacher sets high expectations for good behaviour. Many opportunities are provided for children to co-operate together, for example in role-play in the 'Post Office' and 'Gardening Centre'. These activities develop the children's self-confidence and sense of community.

### **Communication, Language and Literacy**

68. Children of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in this area of learning, the majority attaining the nationally expected goals by the end of Reception. The quality of teaching is consistently of a good standard. All staff work hard to develop children's communication skills by using incidental and structured opportunities to extend and reinforce speech patterns, vocabulary and awareness, and understanding of the language and literacy skills needed to read and write. Children listen eagerly to nursery rhymes and stories, such as 'Yasmin the Yeti', listen to the views of others in class discussions and their responses to questions are sensible and coherent.
69. When they arrive at school, the Reception children try to copy their own names. Some children recognise and link initial letters and sounds as they draw the shape of the letters in the air. The older children read high frequency words and make good progress when working with teachers in word activities. The majority of older children understand the concept of rhyming words and a few use phonic skills to spell simple words such as cat, mat and hat. They enjoy looking at books or photographs with adult support and are developing good early reading and writing habits. Many children point to the cover and title of a book and understand the work of authors and illustrators. Some children copy their own names legibly and form letters correctly and can write independently. The children enjoy the 'Big Books' and show a growing interest in alliteration, sounds and words. Standards of spoken language increase rapidly because the children are encouraged to talk about themselves and the activities they are involved in: for example, they talk about the different shapes and sizes of the implements that they use in the sand tray.
70. In the attractive Reception class, particularly good use is made of labels and the staff constantly refer to the wall displays to reinforce words recognition skills. The children extend their vocabulary when the teacher explains directional words, such as left, under and through. A group of children work with the teacher sorting words into sets using hoops. The children know that writing in books tells a story and some are secure about

naming full stops and capital letters. In the Reception class, satisfactory use is made of computer programmes to develop children's literacy skills, for example, when they match sounds to pictures. The good quality of teaching ensures that many opportunities are provided to develop spoken language through conversations between children and adults, both one-to-one and in small groups. Classroom assistants give very good support to the teacher in the Reception class to ensure that all children are fully involved and their communication skills are extended. Staff capitalise on the role-play opportunities, which do much to improve children's language skills as well as adding to the quality of relationships, which are already a strong and important feature in the Foundation Stage.

### **Mathematical Development**

71. The good quality of teaching helps to ensure that all children make good progress and securely attain the nationally recommended Early Learning Goals in this area of learning by the time that children start in Year 1. A wide range of activities and opportunities are provided, including counting activities, simple arithmetic, number patterns and shape recognition. In the Reception class the children sing rhymes and use finger play in counting songs. Children count to 10 and much higher and some complete a similar exercise in their workbooks. They learn to form numbers to record their counting activities and recognise numbers 1-10 and beyond when using objects in matching activities. In role-play in the 'Post Office' children learn about the value of money. Children draw, count and match objects. The higher attaining children have a good knowledge of shapes and repeating number patterns and count the faces of a cube and show awareness of measures, symmetry and orientation. Appropriate challenges are provided for these children, such as being asked to extend the numbers to 20 and above when counting forward and backwards following the teacher's guidance.
72. The children make good progress in sorting and ordering and practise counting from the many attractive and informative wall displays and number lines in the classroom. Most children sequence objects in order using ordinal numbers, such as fourth and fifth, and understand patterns with large numbers. They use counting computer programmes and games in a satisfactory manner. In the sand and water play areas they learn to use specific mathematical vocabulary, such as 'more than' and 'smaller than'. The quality of teaching is good, for example, when children were taught to recognise numbers by shape and colour and were asked to apply their knowledge in challenging group activities. Discussion with the older children in Reception shows that they are developing appropriate knowledge and understanding of the properties of numbers, size and shape and use of mathematical language.

### **Knowledge and Understanding of the World**

73. Children of all abilities make good progress in acquiring knowledge and understanding of the world and many achieve above the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning by the end of their time in the Reception class. The quality of teaching is good and sometimes very good. The teacher plans a good variety of experiences that develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world effectively. The children recognise that different situations evoke different feelings and that events such as birth and birthdays are often associated with joy and happiness. Children look closely at similarities, differences, patterns and change, for example, by looking closely at the features linked to their study of the environment. The good teaching ensures children are given good opportunities to find out about living things. They examine the main characteristics of snails brought in from the school grounds and observe and name the

parts of a snail and realise the protective and useful nature of the snail's shell. Many practical experiences are provided which contribute positively to the children's learning about how plants grow, as seen in their study of what happens to the seeds that they have planted in their classroom. These activities are most valuable when actively supported by an adult who is asking relevant questions that help the children to think and to move their learning forwards. Children make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of ideas about their past, their immediate environment and the way plants and animals live and the need for people to keep healthy. The children experiment with materials, such as sand, and understand well that sand passes out of a bottle with a big hole more quickly than one with little holes. They have access to information and communication technology but their computer skills need further development and improvement through direct teaching. The children gain good knowledge from one another in incidental and planned interaction and learn well by doing things, for example, making models, designing paper octopuses, by growing seeds and by using malleable and natural materials. When making models children use an appropriate range of basic tools with safety and confidence under close adult supervision.

### **Physical Development**

74. The teaching in this area of learning is good and children of all abilities make good progress in their physical development, moving well in any physical exercise. The majority of children attain the early learning goals by the end of their time in the Foundation Stage. Children show increasing control and co-ordination in their movements, especially when running and jumping. Most are able to hop. They show an increasing awareness of space and use equipment safely and sensibly. The quality of teaching is good. Staff support and challenge children well. They encourage them to think about their movements and how they can improve. Through the use of demonstration and the direct teaching of physical skills, the level of children's performance improves. Staff are keen to use opportunities to enhance children's personal and social development and because of this the children move from the classroom to the hall quickly and quietly and most dress and undress independently. Children show a satisfactory capability to demonstrate a variety of movements and their willingness to talk about their own and others' skills. Children of all abilities handle tools and materials well when engaged in creative activities. They show confidence in handling construction kits and malleable materials like plasticine and clay. The teacher encourages the children to be imaginative in their physical play and activities and to evaluate their own level of performance. The children respond very well to this.

### **Creative Development**

75. Attainment is in line with the Early Learning Goals for most children by the time they start in Year1. The quality of teaching is good and children of all abilities make good progress. The children are given good quality opportunities to explore colour in painting and texture through clay. Children use appropriate styles and colours to produce attractive and interesting painting. The teacher properly emphasises the importance of planning out activities before children start their activities and in evaluating the finished product. There are examples of good teaching in music where the children are encouraged to be imaginative and creative. Good management strategies ensure that all children are involved and all are gaining in confidence because of the praise and encouragement which build up their self-image and esteem effectively. The majority of the older children clap in time and sing well with the piano accompaniment. They know that percussion instruments are hit or shaken and that different instruments make different sounds.

## ENGLISH

76. By the end of Year 2, on the basis of the 2001 National Curriculum tests, attainment in reading is above the national average whilst attainment in writing is below the national average. A similar picture emerges when the school's results are compared to similar schools. By the end of Year 6, on the basis of the 2001 National Curriculum test results, attainment in English is above the national average and above that found in similar schools. Attainment in reading was stronger than in writing. Inspection findings show that by the end of Year 2 attainment is above average in speaking and listening and reading and at an average level in writing. Standards at the end of Year 6 are at an average level overall with standards in writing below average. Any differences between inspection findings and test results and differences in attainment between key stages can be explained by the fluctuating percentage of pupils with special educational needs in the different year groups and the high level of pupil mobility which is a feature in this school and does not indicate a fall in standards between Years 2 and 6. The overall picture is that pupils of all abilities throughout the school, including those with special educational needs, are achieving well and are currently making good progress. The weaker area is in writing. This is because over time the pupils have not directly been taught specific writing skills in a systematic and progressive manner to enable them to become accomplished writers. The school, however, is already addressing the issue with the implementation of a programme of teaching that does precisely this. The recency of the initiative means that it has not yet had sufficient time to have the maximum impact on raising standards. Standards, however, are rising and attainment looks set to improve in subsequent years. The school has made satisfactory improvement in this area of the curriculum since the time of the last inspection.
77. By the end of Year 2 standards in speaking and listening are above average and a strength. Pupils listen carefully to instructions and to text that is being read. They know why it is important for only one person to speak at once, so they listen carefully when teachers read, explain and tell them what to do. They listen well to the contributions of classmates and use a good level of vocabulary to talk about their work and their own experiences. They are confident to engage in conversation with adults. By the end of Year 6, standards in speaking and listening are at an average level. The pupils listen to the views and opinions of others and take these comments on board before making their own responses. The way in which pupils get on well with their work shows that they have listened to the teacher and taken on board what is required of them. The weaker element is that fewer pupils have a good command of an expressive or expansive vocabulary.
78. Reading is another strength by the end of Year 2. Pupils read well aloud and with a good level of expression and understanding. Pupils have a good knowledge of letter sounds and use the good range of reading strategies that they have been taught to help them with unfamiliar words or to gain a deeper understanding of the text. Most pupils know how to use contents and index pages to locate information. By the end of Year 6 standards in reading are at an average level and reflect the ability of the cohort. Pupils read with a secure degree of accuracy and fluency and have a satisfactory knowledge of authors. Many are able to locate information quickly. Teaching ensures that reading skills continue to be taught well and the higher attaining pupils use skimming and scanning techniques to find required information or to get the gist of the text. Few pupils are able to confidently read beyond the literal level and deduce what an author is implying by inference. The area for development in the subject lies mainly in writing. Standards are at an average level by the end of Year 2 and below average by the end of Year 6. At Key Stage 1 pupils are provided with a suitable range of writing tasks that include letter writing, poetry, writing instructions, re-telling stories in their own words as

well as creative and imaginative pieces of writing. Good attention is paid to the development of phonic skills. Pupils use capital letters and full stops appropriately with the higher attaining pupils using speech marks and exclamation marks to help the text come to life. Fewer pupils, however, write extended pieces of work that have a good vocabulary and hook the attention of the reader from start to finish. By the end of Year 6, pupils present their work in a satisfactory manner and use correct grammar appropriately. Spelling standards are usually satisfactory although some pupils make simple mistakes that detract from the overall quality of the work. The weakness is that too few pupils write extended pieces of narrative or creative work that sustains a plot, character, or cohesive argument. Often work starts off well, but fizzles out or lacks the expressive vocabulary that leaves the reader wanting more. The school is well aware of these shortcomings. Strategies have already been put in place to address the issue. Writing lessons are provided where skills such as note taking, setting a scene and sustaining a plot, how to put forward a persuasive argument and how to finish a story with a flourish are taught. Initiatives funded through the EAZ are specifically targeted at developing the writing skills of the higher attaining pupils. The school emphasises the importance of enhancing and extending pupils' writing skills in other subjects of the curriculum. There is an increasing expectation that pupils will write accounts, explanations or factual and creative pieces of work rather than simply filling in a worksheet. All these strategies are proving most effective and are clearly impacting on how well pupils learn. Although the recency of the initiatives have not yet had sufficient time to have the maximum impact on raising standards, inspection evidence clearly indicates that standards are set to rise in subsequent years.

79. All pupils have good attitudes to work and this make an important contribution to the effective learning environment that exists within the school. Pupils enjoy their work and are keen to do well. Pupils of all ages concentrate well in lessons and work at a good pace, particularly when the teachers set time deadlines within lessons. Pupils' behaviour within lessons is good and they show a willingness to listen to and respect the views and opinions of others. The school is increasingly setting individual targets for pupils and when pupils are made aware of these they rise to the challenge. Many pupils take a pride in their work although a small number of pupils do not take enough care in how they present their work. Pupils respond well to constructive comments that are made to help them improve. There are examples of very good marking of pupils' work where what pupils need to do to improve is clearly stated. This very good practice is not consistent across the school. The attitudes of pupils with special educational needs are also good. Their individual education plans contain challenging and achievable targets. Teaching for these pupils is at its best when these targets are taken into account when work and activities are incorporated into the teaching. The pupils take a full and active part in lessons. The school provides good support for pupils with special educational needs whether it is in class or in withdrawal groups. Support staff make a valuable contribution to how well the pupils learn and to the good progress that they make. Occasionally, support staff do not take an active enough role in helping the pupils to answer questions or in modifying what the teacher is explaining so that pupils have a fuller and more secure understanding. This is the exception rather than the norm.
80. The quality of teaching and learning is good across the school. Teaching has improved since the time of the last inspection. The school has introduced the National Literacy Strategy in an effective manner. Where teaching is good there are a number of common features. The introduction to the lesson is lively and text is read with a high degree of enthusiasm that immediately captures the attention of the pupils. This often sets the scene for the rest of the lesson. This was seen when the teacher read 'Little Red Riding Hood' in an expressive way and this was then copied by the pupils when they were taking part in a guided reading activity. Lesson objectives are usually shared

with the class and this makes pupils fully aware of what they are to learn in the lesson. Teaching is at its best when these objectives are re-assessed at the end of the lesson and evaluated to see how successfully they have or have not been met. Teaching is also effective when teachers set time deadlines within lessons as this helps the lesson to zip along at a good pace and leaves the pupils in no doubt as to what is expected of them in terms of work rate.

81. A strength of teaching in literacy is that pupils are being directly taught reading skills in a progressive and rigorous manner. Teaching pays good attention to phonic awareness and skills and pupils are expected to put their knowledge to the test in both reading and writing activities. The pupils at Key Stage 1 are taught a range of strategies to help them tackle unfamiliar words and phrases, taught the importance of expressive reading and taught how to locate information quickly and accurately. The skills continue to be taught well at Key Stage 2 with specific teaching of higher order reading skills such as skimming and scanning and an increasing awareness of the need to teach the higher attaining pupils how to read beyond the literal level or to look at how the author may be inferring something without actually stating it in print. The school is currently teaching writing skills in a more effective manner than has been the case over time. Pupils are now being provided with specific guidance on how to write for specific purposes such as newspaper reports, how to take notes, extended pieces of work, persuasive arguments and a synopsis of a book. A particularly effective lesson was seen for the higher attaining pupils, taught by a teacher funded through the EAZ, where the pupils were putting together a multi-media presentation about the impact of bullying. The pupils were directly taught the importance of expressive and evocative language to put across a viewpoint to strengthen their case. The finished piece of work was of a good standard. Some good examples were observed of pupils' writing skills being enhanced in other areas of the curriculum, such as history and geography, and of computers being used to extend pupils' writing. There is, however, a lack of consistency of this good practice across the school.
82. The subject is led and managed in an effective manner. The co-ordinator and the headteacher have formally monitored lessons and provided teachers with feedback. This process has taken on more rigour during the last year and is proving successful in helping to improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school. The co-ordinator is keen to extend this process through the more regular and rigorous scrutiny of pupils' work. Good procedures are in place for assessing pupils' attainment. The school has started to analyse the results of test and assessment data to look for strengths and to also identify areas for improvement. The co-ordinator rightly recognises that this process can be refined further by a more careful analysis of attainment by gender, individual pupils and year groups and in assessing how pupil mobility can impact on standards. Resources for the subject are satisfactory.

## **MATHEMATICS**

83. By the end of Year 2, on the basis of the 2001 end of Key Stage 1 National Curriculum test results, pupils' attainment in mathematics is at an average level when compared to all schools nationally and below average when compared to similar schools. Inspection findings show that standards currently being attained in Year 2 are above average. The difference between inspection findings and test results can be explained by the fact that the 2001 cohort of pupils had a higher percentage of pupils with special educational needs, many of whom had not spent their full educational lives at the school. By the end of Year 6, on the basis of the 2001 National Curriculum test results, pupils' attainment in mathematics is well above average when compared to all schools

nationally. When compared to similar schools attainment was above average. The inspection findings show that the present Year 6 standards are at an average level. The difference in attainment levels between inspection findings and test results and between key stages does not indicate a fall in standards but reflects the fact that the present cohort of pupils has a higher percentage of pupils with special educational needs and approximately 25% of the year group have not spent all their educational lives at the school. Pupils of all abilities are currently making good progress overall and are achieving well in terms of their ability. A minority of pupils at the end of Year 6 and more at the end of Year 2 are on track to exceed the nationally expected level. There is no significant variation in the progress of different groups or between boys and girls. The trend of attainment over time since the last inspection has been above expectations at the end of both key stages and improvement since the time of the last inspection has been good.

84. The school has introduced the National Numeracy Strategy in an effective manner and this is having an increasingly effective impact on standards and how well pupils achieve. There is a successful emphasis on number and algebra throughout the school, which results in above average achievement by the majority of pupils at the end of both key stages in this area of the curriculum. Pupils have a very sound grasp of number and are developing flexibility and resourcefulness in applying their knowledge to new problems. They have quick and accurate recall of multiplication tables and of number facts. Year 2 pupils have a good grasp of place value. They confidently order two digit numbers up to 100 and know a three digit number contains hundreds, tens and units. Because of the level of challenge posed by teachers, pupils look beyond the obvious. Both Year 1 and Year 2 pupils think about the numbers they cannot see when estimating the length of the gaps along a number line. Teachers successfully instil an interest in the methodology in the pupils. Pupils from all age groups are keen to discuss and compare different methods of calculation. Year 6 pupils offered three different methods of solving halving and doubling problems but some are less secure in applying their methods in different contexts. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 evaluate strategies for addition and division knowledgeably and explain their solutions confidently. Because teachers provide both regular practice of basic facts and encourage discussion of strategies, these pupils acquire a good level of knowledge and understanding which they apply to a range of problems. Although they are presented with regular problem-solving activities, pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 have had more limited opportunities to carry out independent investigations in mathematics and this prevents learning in this area of mathematics from being stronger.
85. Attainment in the targets relating to shape and space and to data handling is at least in line with expectations and above average in some aspects by the end of Year 2. Pupils accurately identify two- and three-dimensional shapes in different contexts. They have practical experience of measuring in metres and centimetres, for example, when measuring the playground with a trundle wheel and recording the results in an effective manner on a ground plan. They collect data, such as birth months and family pets, and record data well on bar charts and are also used to comparing results and posing questions. Attainment in these aspects of the subject by the end of Year 6 are in line with expectations. Pupils demonstrate appropriate understanding but lack some of the higher order skills. Older pupils identify the properties of complex two- and three-dimensional shapes and calculate area of regular shapes. They find position using two figure co-ordinates in quadrants and demonstrate translation of shapes. They are familiar with the use of bar charts but are not yet skilled in the creation of line graphs. Pupils calculate using fractions but are less secure in using percentages and ratios. The majority of pupils know and understand the principles of probability and use an appropriate mathematical vocabulary to talk about and explain their work.

86. Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to the subject. Pupils enjoy getting involved in their work and respond well to the quick fire question and answer sessions that are a feature of many lessons. Here, the pupils become particularly well motivated and, when the tasks are challenging and demanding, this level of motivation is set for the rest of the lesson. Pupils are keen to do well and respond positively to verbal or written pointers for improvement. Although there are some good examples of the marking of pupils' work being used to set targets for improvement, this good practice is not as consistent across the school as it could be.
87. The quality of teaching throughout the school is good and on occasion very good. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. Teachers have appropriate expectations, monitor progress regularly and teach basic skills well. They encourage discussion and foster positive attitudes towards the subject. Presentation methods are clearly taught. Teaching of identified groups, such as those with special educational needs, is good. The school makes good use of the National Numeracy Strategy 'Springboard' programme and has recently introduced for all Key Stage 2 numeracy lessons classroom assistants, who have a positive impact on how well pupils learn. The Education Action Zone initiative has provided extra personnel and resources and has had a positive impact on attainment, for instance, among the higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 2. Lessons are usually well planned with tasks that are set matching the needs of the pupils. Pupils are well motivated when the teaching provides them with opportunities to put their number knowledge and skills to the test in open-ended investigative and problem solving activities. Good teaching is characterised by the sharing of what is to be learned with the pupils and the revisiting of these objectives at the end of the lesson to judge how effective the teaching and learning have been. The good practice of enhancing pupils' numeracy skills in other subjects of the curriculum, such as science and geography, needs to be disseminated across the school. The overall good quality of teaching and the positive attitudes of the pupils contribute much to how well pupils learn and to the good progress that pupils make.
88. The curriculum provision is now secure. This represents an improvement since the last inspection and there has been regular in-service training. The supporting commercial scheme has recently been adopted in full and is having a positive impact, although it has not yet been worked through completely. Pupils in older age groups have not experienced the scheme in its entirety. Information and communication technology is used regularly to support mathematics in Key Stage 1 but less consistently in Key Stage 2. Teachers make good use of information and communication technology to produce their planning guidelines.
89. The subject is well led and managed. The practice of monitoring teaching and learning is well established in mathematics and has made a significant contribution to improving the quality of teaching across the school. Assessment procedures are of a good standard and the information gained from test and assessment procedures has been increasingly used to set targets for improvement and to identify any areas for improvement. The school has rightly identified the need to continue to refine these procedures still further by paying more attention to factors such as gender and pupil mobility, so that the whole process can be used to its maximum potential to have the biggest impact on helping to raise standards even further. The school fully recognises the need to challenge the highest attaining pupils and there are well-considered plans for the implementation of a wider strategy to meet the needs of these pupils in a consistent and challenging manner.

## SCIENCE

90. The results of the teachers' assessments in 2001 show that by the age of seven, pupils' attainment in science is below the national average and above the average found in similar schools. At the age of 11, National Curriculum test results in 2001 show that pupils' attainment is above the national average and above the average found in similar schools. Inspection findings show that pupils' attainment is above the national average by the age of seven and in line with the national average by the age of 11. The fluctuating numbers of pupils with special educational needs and the level of pupil mobility that is a feature of this school can explain the different attainment levels between year groups and from year to year. Pupils are currently achieving well and making good progress by the age of seven and satisfactory progress with some good features of achievement by the age of 11. Pupils with special educational needs are making progress at a similar rate to their classmates.
91. Teachers provide satisfactory and sometimes good opportunities for pupils to investigate ideas and to communicate and record observations. By the age of seven, pupils' skills in carrying out investigations are good. They use basic equipment carefully, demonstrate a keen interest in their work and use their senses to observe changes well. They talk about their measurements and observations with increasingly precise language and record them using simple sentences and sometimes using information and communication technology to create simple bar charts. The lowest attaining pupils are encouraged to record their observations by drawing pictures and writing simple phrases, supported by key vocabulary from the teacher. Occasionally, the teacher scribes their findings for them, so that their observations can be recorded accurately. The highest attaining pupils begin to make general statements and pose further questions based on their findings. Recent training has been effective in that teachers demonstrate secure knowledge and understanding of the subject overall. Pupils develop a growing knowledge and understanding of all aspects of science. The younger pupils are all familiar with the changes that will occur in their teeth if they drink liquids with added sugar or colouring, and how to take care of their teeth to keep them clean and healthy. Additional workshops funded through Education Action Zone monies have helped to support learning, about physical processes, for example. Pupils talk about how they have constructed circuits to make a light bulb work, incorporating a simple switch they have made. They show a good understanding that electricity flows around the circuit and that electrical devices will not work with a circuit break. They know living things and materials can be grouped according to their similarities and differences.
92. By the age of 11, pupils recognise in a satisfactory way the need for a fair test and how to vary one factor when designing an experiment to see which conditions make water evaporate the fastest, for example. They have a secure understanding of the differences between solids, liquids and gases and higher attaining pupils use scientific words, such as 'evaporation' and 'condensation', when talking about changes in water. Teachers help pupils, through discussion, to make good links in lessons between knowledge gained in other subjects and scientific principles. Higher attaining pupils make good links between their geographical knowledge of water cycles when talking about their experiments with evaporation. In music lessons, pupils use their scientific knowledge well to make generalisations about the pitch of sounds in relation to the size of instruments. Pupils show a satisfactory and growing ability to take control of their own work. Good expositions and questioning and appropriate homework tasks help pupils to steadily gain knowledge about healthy eating and the way the body moves and works. In Year 3, pupils name the main parts of the human skeleton to an expected level and learn that it protects and supports the main internal organs. Pupils in Year 4

and 5 show a good level of understanding of the need to eat healthily by planning a healthy meal and undertaking independent research on the main food groups. Pupils in Year 6 have a secure grasp of the main functions of the heart and how it circulates oxygen around the body. They investigate changes in heart and pulse rates before and after exercise, and record their results carefully in tables, drawing well-reasoned conclusions about who are the fittest people.

93. Pupils' learning in science is generally good. The Key Stage 1 pupils are keen and inquisitive and are eager to find things out for themselves and talk enthusiastically about the work that they have covered. Pupils at Key Stage 2 show a similar level of interest and motivation but the learning environment is not always ideal because of the size and design of the classrooms, which sometimes makes practical and investigative work more problematic. Behaviour in lessons is usually good although there are a small number of older boys that shout out rather than following the accepted conventions of question and answer sessions. This sometimes spoils the flow of the lesson. Overall, however, the attitudes and behaviour of pupils impact positively on the progress that pupils make.
94. The quality of teaching in science is good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory with good features at Key Stage 2. Questioning within lessons is often good across the school and is at its best when pupils are asked to re-cap on previous learning. Throughout the school, teachers often share with pupils what they are to learn and this emphasises the part that pupils have to play in their own learning. Support staff often make a valuable and valued contribution to the quality of pupils' learning but there are occasions when they could be used more effectively during whole class teaching, either to record what pupils say and know, or to support those with less confidence to answer questions. Teachers have high expectations that pupils will think for themselves and encourage pupils to behave with consideration for the needs of others. There are sometimes weaknesses in the amount of detail expected in the older pupils' scientific reports, which restricts their ability to use the work as an effective source of reference for revision. Numeracy skills are taught well in the subject and there were many examples of scientific work supporting the learning of measurement skills. There are very good examples of the marking of pupils' work but there are some examples where marking does not use sufficient constructive criticism to confirm what pupils have learned or ask pertinent questions to move pupils on in their scientific thinking.
95. The planning and organisation of the subject is based on national guidance. Additional workshops broaden and enliven the provision. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory overall. The co-ordinator has been actively involved in monitoring teaching and learning and has identified the need to ensure that there are more regular scrutinies of pupils' work to further help identify areas of weakness and to disseminate the good practice that clearly exists. The school has increasingly been analysing test and assessment data to look for areas of strength and to also pinpoint areas for improvement and to establish sharper target setting for individuals, groups of pupils and for different year groups. This is an appropriate area for further development if data analysis is to have its biggest possible impact on helping to raise standards. Resources are satisfactory overall.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

96. Standards in art and design are in line with national expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6. The never less than satisfactory and, at times, good teaching, pupils' positive attitudes and good quality of behaviour mean that pupils of all abilities make satisfactory

progress as they move through the school. Standards and provision have been maintained since the time of the last inspection.

97. By the end of Year 2 pupils show a satisfactory ability to draw for different purposes and recognise that by mixing paints or by using pencils of different thickness they can produce different effects. Pupils produce work that is sometimes of a good standard in the style of painters, such as Picasso. The teaching also uses the opportunity to increase pupils' knowledge with pupils knowing that Picasso went to art school in Barcelona and that he had an aversion for war that inspired his work on the 'Dove of Peace'. Pupils carry out observational drawings and paintings of flowers and other examples of still life. The finished products are of a satisfactory standard with the higher attainers achieving well. Pupils are adept at mixing colours and have used different colours of ink to make creative designs and portraits that are never less than a satisfactory standard. Pupils carry out simple weaving techniques appropriately. The weaker element is the range of opportunities that are provided for pupils to carry out extensive three-dimensional work.
98. Pupils continue to make steady progress at Key Stage 2 and by the time that they leave school they have acquired a satisfactory range and level of artistic skills and knowledge. Pupils explore ideas and work with a range of different materials. Pupils have developed a satisfactory knowledge of the work of famous artists, such as Monet, Van Gogh, and Picasso. They produce work in the style of Lazzarini and of Guiseppe Arcimboldo, without simply copying the original piece. The work is of a satisfactory standard overall with the higher attainers producing work of a good standard. Observational drawings are of a satisfactory standard. Pupils develop differing artistic techniques at an appropriate rate and have recently started using sketchbooks to try out these techniques before committing them to paper. Pupils recognise that people can have different responses to different pieces of art and to different artists and that art is used in the same way as music or literature to convey different feelings and emotions. The area for development is for pupils to be provided with more opportunities to complete work in three-dimensional formats using different materials and techniques.
99. Pupils have good attitudes to the subject, behave well in lessons and put a good deal of effort into their work. Pupils are always ready to share resources and to help one another. Pupils show a readiness to listen to and take on board constructive criticisms to help improve their work. The pupils take a pride in their work and are keen to discuss the processes and techniques that they used. These positive attitudes and the quality of behaviour all help to create an effective learning environment that impacts positively on the progress that pupils make.
100. The standard of teaching is satisfactory with some good features. The school has increasingly placed an emphasis upon teaching knowledge, specific skills and understanding rather than just using art as an activity related to other subjects. This approach is proving successful. The curriculum is well planned with most elements of the subject being taught in sufficient depth. The co-ordinator has clearly identified the need for more opportunities for pupils to complete three-dimensional work. Teachers are enthusiastic about teaching the subject and use the subject effectively for promoting pupils' cultural development. Teachers are increasingly asking pupils to evaluate their work and look at ways in which it can be improved. As this becomes an expectation, pupils are responding in a more confident manner. Much importance is attached to celebrating pupils' achievements by displaying their efforts sensitively and creatively. Examples of good quality work are well annotated.

101. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Documentation to support teaching and learning in the subject has been modified and now takes account of both national and LEA guidance. This is appropriate. The co-ordinator has not had the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning across the school but plans are in hand for this to happen when the subject is a priority on the School Development Plan. The co-ordinator, however, has a clear idea for areas for development within the subject that include further three-dimensional work, the development of procedures to assess and track pupils' progress as they move through the school and developing pupils' awareness of art from non-European cultures. The school runs an after school art club and this, together with plans that are in hand for a professional artist to work in school, adds to the quality of pupils' artistic experiences and enhances their personal and cultural development. Resources are at a satisfactory level but the design of some of the classrooms makes practical work more problematic on some occasions, particularly for the older pupils.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

102. Standards at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with those expected for pupils of this age nationally. The never less than satisfactory teaching, together with the good attitudes and behaviour of pupils, ensures that pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. Standards and provision have been maintained since the time of the last inspection.
103. By the end of Year 2, pupils have been provided with a satisfactory range of opportunities to design, make and evaluate a broad variety of products. Pupils design, make and evaluate puppets and the finished products are of a satisfactory standard, with an appropriate level of originality and creativity, rather than all finished products being the same. Pupils show an appropriate awareness of the suitability of different materials for the purpose and pupils join the materials effectively using different methods. Pupils handle a range of tools in a safe, sensible and mature manner. The satisfactory teaching ensures that pupils have developed a secure awareness of the balance between the designing, making and evaluating processes and, although the pupils clearly enjoy the making element, they are becoming increasingly aware of the need to evaluate whether the finished products looked the way that they wanted them to and to think about how they could be improved.
104. In Key Stage 2, pupils continue to make satisfactory progress. Pupils are provided with opportunities to design and make hats for a specific purpose. The finished hats are never less than of a satisfactory standard with the higher attainers producing work of a good standard. They have to design and make buggies that cover a certain distance and travel at speed powered by balloons. Pupils make good designs for the buggies and show a good level of understanding of the design brief. This was a particularly good example of pupils having to use their scientific and mathematical knowledge to complete the task successfully. Younger pupils design and make free standing animal models using pipe cleaners, whilst the oldest pupils take part in food technology activities which involve examining the texture, aroma, and taste of different types of bread from around the world. Through the food technology activities, pupils gain a secure understanding of the different ingredients that are used to make bread or a sandwich and how these ingredients impact on the taste and texture and how they, for example, help bread to rise or to have a different colour. Pupils' learning is further advanced through a visit to a local bakery where they see first hand how bread is made. With the help of representatives from local industry the pupils make working

models of fairground rides. The fairground rides are of a good standard with a good level of originality. Pupils work with a range of materials and are secure in their knowledge that different types of joints or fixings are needed for different tasks. Although pupils are always ready to talk about their work, they do not have a particularly well developed technical vocabulary.

105. Pupils behave well in lessons, despite the fact that the size and design of some classrooms makes practical tasks more problematic. Pupils enjoy taking part in practical activities and use tools with a good degree of maturity and with a good view to health and safety. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and work together well in small groups. They persevere well when events or finished products do not always turn out as well as intended. All these factors contribute much to the quality of pupils' learning.
106. Teaching during the week of inspection was of a good standard but evidence indicates that over time the quality of teaching has been at a satisfactory level, with some gaps in pupils' skills and knowledge that are currently being addressed by the better quality of teaching. Teachers often show a good level of enthusiasm in their teaching and this helps to fire up the pupils, who in turn are eager to learn and listen attentively. Teachers often use pupils' prior learning to help them make informed choices in new products that they are making. This was particularly well illustrated in a Year 3 lesson when pupils were urged to look carefully at previously completed sketches to check for accuracy, perspective and plausibility. The pupils did this, modified their designs and then produced stand-alone models that were of a better and more realistic standard than their initial designs would have produced. The wide and varied breads that were used in a food technology lesson not only reinforced the teaching point about how breads may differ in texture, aroma and taste but the sheer variety produced much discussion and debate that did much to enhance pupils' literacy skills. Teaching is often well organised and pupils are managed well. Although there are some good examples of the subject being used to develop pupils' writing skills, there are occasions when opportunities are not capitalised on and worksheets are used as a method of recording rather than an extended piece of writing. Opportunities are also missed for computers to be used to support and enhance pupils' learning in this area of the curriculum.
107. The co-ordinator has only recently taken responsibility for the subject and has had little opportunity to evaluate the quality of teaching or learning across the school, which makes it difficult for the co-ordinator to have a secure grasp of the standards that are being achieved. This is to be addressed when the subject is a priority area for development on the School Development Plan. The co-ordinator is starting to put together a portfolio of examples of pupils' work and recognises the need to put in place procedures to assess and track pupils' progress as they move through the school. Documentation to support teaching and learning in the subjects follows national guidance and is appropriate. Resources for the subject are satisfactory but the design of some classrooms makes practical activities more problematic.

## GEOGRAPHY

108. By the end of Years 2 and 6 pupils' attainment in geography is above national expectations and standards have been maintained at this level since the last inspection. Pupils of all ages show a good knowledge and understanding of environmental geography. All pupils achieve well. Work set at different levels and additional support ensure that pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all aspects of the subject and make good progress in line with the rest of the class.
109. By the end of Year 2, pupils have developed a good understanding of places in the world in their study of post cards and photographs brought into school, linked to family holidays in places such as Spain, The Philippines and Wales. In addition, pupils learn from the journeys of 'Barnaby Bear' around the world. Many pupils identify England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland on a large map of Great Britain with ease. On a map of the local area they identify St Mary's Church, shops, library and railway station and plot their route from home to school in a successful and effective manner. By the age of seven, pupils identify clearly what are the attractive and unattractive features of different localities and understand that different forms of transport are needed for different terrain. Teachers make good use of trips into the locality to develop pupils' environmental geography skills. Most pupils name and use the points of the compass well and give accurate directions. Year 2 pupils have made a plan of their local area using aerial photographs and are confident in their identification of the location of their home addresses, petrol station, school, playing fields and main roads. They understand map symbols and are competent in using different keys.
110. By the end of Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of life in other countries because of their study of mountain ranges all over the world, such as the Atlas Mountains, The Himalayas, The Andes and the Rocky Mountains. In this study they compare and contrast many aspects including location, people, tourism and animals. They use the Internet and the school library in their research. Pupils confidently locate countries and major cities throughout the world. The pupils use geographical language well in their written work on India when they locate the countries and seas that border India and also when studying climate and communication in that country. Pupils understand map symbols well and are competent in using different keys, as seen in their work linked to the transport survey carried out close to the school.
111. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall in both key stages. Pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and are keen to develop a wider knowledge and understanding of the world in which they live. Pupils behave well in lessons and show good levels of concentration. Although most pupils take a pride in their work, there are a small number that do not. Many pupils are ready to take on board constructive comments to help them improve. There are some good examples of the marking of pupils' work but there are occasions when teachers do not provide enough guidance to pupils as to what they need to do to improve. Evidence gained from examining the pupils' books and the teachers' planning, and from talking to the pupils and teachers, indicates that there are good features in the teaching that contribute to the overall good progress of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. The quality of the teachers' planning is good as it builds systematically and effectively on pupils' previous learning. The teaching places a good emphasis on the development of geographical skills alongside geographical knowledge. The best teaching capitalises on the opportunities to develop pupils' literacy and computer skills through the subject. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this effectively to motivate and enthuse the pupils, with younger pupils showing a genuine and sincere level of amazement or surprise at what their teachers know.

112. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. There have been some opportunities provided for standards of teaching and learning to be monitored across the school and the information collated from these activities has been used effectively to improve the quality of teaching and to impact positively on the standards that are attained and how well pupils achieve. Areas for development that have been accurately identified are to carry out more regular scrutinies of pupils' work and to establish and implement effective procedures to assess and track pupils' progress as they move through the school.

## **HISTORY**

113. Standards of attainment in history are in line with national expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6. The school has maintained the standards identified during the previous inspection. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of the past, and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in the subject.
114. By the age of seven, pupils have developed a secure understanding of events in the past, show an appropriate awareness of how things have changed over the years and a secure sense of chronology. Pupils talk enthusiastically about famous people they know from the past, such as Louis Braille, Mother Teresa, Van Gogh and Walt Disney. They know Florence Nightingale improved conditions in hospitals, and that it was unusual for women to nurse patients at that time in war conditions. They compare conditions in hospitals in the past to those of the present day and have a satisfactory understanding of why living conditions in general are better than they were in the past and some basic reasons that account for this. Pupils are not always as confident in recognising the differences between historical fact and opinion or in recognising the different sources of evidence that could tell us about life in the past.
115. By the age of 11, pupils have increased their knowledge of history and have a satisfactory level of knowledge and understanding about the periods of time they have studied, such as the Greeks, Tudors, Victorians and World War 2. They understand and make use of dates and chronological conventions, such as AD and BC. They talk knowledgeably about the reasons why Henry VIII had so many wives, and how and why he changed church laws. They know that German and British historians view the Second World War differently, and understand they can find about history from a range of sources, such as photographs, the Internet and people, as well as from books. There was limited evidence of extended writing in the subject that would deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding of the past as well as enhancing their literacy skills.
116. Teaching over time has been satisfactory in the subject, with examples of good teaching observed during the inspection. Planning has improved over time and now ensures that all elements of the subject are taught in sufficient depth with appropriate references made to pupils' prior learning. In a good lesson on life in England in the 1960s, good use was made of John Lennon's family photographs, obtained from the Internet, to exemplify differences in fashion during his lifetime, and to help pupils raise questions about the 1950s and 60s that they might want to research. Opportunities to develop and enhance pupils' numeracy skills are often capitalised on with pupils being encouraged to work out differences between dates and asked to use their knowledge of positive and negative numbers, when discussing time before and after the birth of Christ. Homework is often set and pupils are asked to carry out research tasks or interviews. Support staff could be used more effectively during whole class teaching, to make notes on what pupils know and understand, for example. Pupils show a positive attitude to learning about the past and are keen to deepen their historical knowledge.

Behaviour in lessons is more often than not of a good standard. When marking is of a good standard, pupils take on board the constructive comments that are made and this leads to improvements in their work. This good practice of good quality marking needs to be disseminated across the school. Overall, the increasingly good quality of teaching and the positive attitudes of the pupils are starting to have an even greater impact on the progress that pupils of all abilities make.

117. The school has adopted national guidance to support teaching and learning in the subject and teachers are using it effectively to plan units of work. This has improved the balance and breadth of provision. The school has identified the need for a more cohesive and effective whole school approach to assessment in the subject in order to more accurately assess and track the progress that pupils make as they move through the school. The co-ordinator has recently undertaken further training and has accurately identified the need to further monitor the teaching and learning across the school through the detailed and regular scrutiny of pupils' work. Teachers use good quality loan services of historical artefacts to supplement the more limited resources that are available in the school. Occasionally, visits are used as a starting point for learning, such as a visit to the toy museum.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

118. Standards of attainment at ages seven and 11 are in line with national expectations. The standard of attainment observed at the time of the last inspection has not been sustained consistently. There was some decline in the quality of provision for information and communication technology during the last two years but an improvement in the quality of resources, the use of specialist teaching, and the impact of initiatives funded through the EAZ are having an increasingly positive impact and have led to the recent decline in standards being arrested. The good quality of teaching now evident in the school means that pupils of all abilities are currently making good progress, although over time the rate of progress has been at best satisfactory and at times clearly unsatisfactory. The majority of pupils demonstrate confidence and familiarity in using information and communication technology and have a range of satisfactory skills. This enables pupils to manage new types of programs competently. They show interest in the subject, work purposefully, show positive attitudes, behave well and show good levels of perseverance when things do not work out as intended. Pupils are only too ready to help a classmate. These factors, together with the improving quality of teaching, are impacting positively on standards and how well pupils achieve.
119. Pupils at the end of Year 2 use information and communication technology to convey ideas through text and graphics in a satisfactory manner. They are familiar with selecting font style, colour, and size and incorporate clipart and borders. They produce title plates and mini-profiles of themselves. By the end of Year 6 pupils have a satisfactory level of knowledge and understanding of multi-media production and know how text, sound and photographs can be combined, for example, in a presentation of their limericks. Although pupils have the basic skills for text entry and editing, they have little experience of word processing at length.
120. Year 2 pupils program basic commands for a floor robot and Year 6 pupils plan a sequence of commands for both floor robots and screen turtles. Younger pupils are familiar with the creation of bar charts to convey information, such as favourite pets and fruits, whilst the oldest pupils develop graphs further to convey more complex information, such as pulse rates. Older pupils research information from the Internet

and encyclopaedia CD-ROMs in an appropriate manner and know how to narrow down a line of enquiry, for example. They have experience of databases and spreadsheets in science but are not yet using them independently.

121. Pupils of all ages are familiar with the Internet. Each pupil has an email address and the school is developing a website. Younger pupils in Key Stage 2 have a secure understanding of the requirements of email correspondence and successfully send and retrieve messages. The school is establishing email links with a school in China through the help of a parent.
122. The curriculum for information and communication technology is now secure. A scheme of work ensures that the requirements of the National Curriculum are met but older pupils have not benefited from the full programme yet. Consequently, there are occasional gaps in their experience but these are being rectified as they arise. The procedures for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning have yet to be implemented. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and is keen and enthusiastic but opportunities to support and evaluate teaching and learning have been limited. The co-ordinator provides a great deal of informal support and guidance and opportunities are to be provided in the near future for the co-ordinator to play a more pro-active and formal role in helping to continue the upward trend of attainment. The practice of collecting examples of pupils' work has begun and the development of an annotated portfolio is underway. In addition, the school is examining the most effective ways of assessing and tracking pupils' progress as they move through the school.
123. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was good overall. There is significant specialist teaching that is ensuring the development of appropriate skills. The direct teaching of specific skills and the provision of time for pupils to practise and refine these skills are having a very positive impact on how well pupils learn. The good subject knowledge of specialist teachers means that tasks that are set are often challenging and demanding with any technical problems being dealt with quickly without spoiling the flow of the lesson. The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum lacks consistency, being more frequent in Key Stage 1 than Key Stage 2. Teachers encourage the use of programs to produce graphs in science and geography and there is some use of programs to consolidate and extend pupils' numeracy skills. Although writing is one of the school's current priorities for development, there is less evidence of sustained writing using information and communication technology. A very good example, however, was observed of computers being used to present multi-media presentation about bullying. This was very well taught, teachers had high expectations and really pushed on pupils' literacy skills as well as their computer skills.
124. The ratio of pupils to computers now matches the national average and will shortly be better than the average. Although there are a number of recently purchased machines, some machines are of an older generation and are becoming unreliable. The school has the benefit of a computer suite, which provides an area for small class teaching. The accommodation, however, is essentially a corridor and there is little natural light which occasionally has an adverse impact on how well pupils learn. The provision for information and communication technology is in the process of development and the school is pursuing a detailed plan. Further improvements are in hand for both technical provision and learning opportunities. For example, a Family Learning class for parents and children is about to begin as an after-school course. National initiatives, including the National Grid for Learning and the New Opportunities Funded information and communication technology training for teachers and the Local Education Action Zone,

have had a positive impact on teaching and learning in information and communication technology.

## MUSIC

125. Overall, standards are at an expected level at the end of Years 2 and 6. Standards of singing are above those expected for pupils in Years 2 and 6 and those for composition and communicating musical ideas are at a satisfactory level and there is scope for improvement in these areas of the curriculum. Standards are similar to those found at the last inspection. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, have made satisfactory progress over time in the subject.
126. Pupils are making satisfactory progress in the subject over time and very good progress in lessons taken by the music specialist. By Year 3, pupils know there are different groups of instruments in the European orchestra. They observe and talk about the differences and similarities between instruments from the same family. They describe sounds as, 'high' and 'low', and 'loud' and 'soft'. Pupils in Year 2 talk enthusiastically about how well they play the recorder and know a good range of songs and hymns for their age. They sing in assembly with great enthusiasm and a good awareness of melody. Younger pupils have opportunities to explore the sounds of musical instruments and compose simple mood pieces, but pupils have less awareness of what a 'composer' is.
127. The music specialist teaches and models singing very well and has high expectations. As a result, by Year 6 pupils sing well. Two-part singing is very well executed and secure. Pupils show a good awareness of the quality of phrasing in their singing, and try hard to breathe correctly to reach and sustain notes. Good attention is paid to ensuring pupils talk about the sounds they hear. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of the elements of music, although they do not always use the correct musical vocabulary, such as 'pitch' and 'dynamics', to describe the elements. Good opportunities are given to listen to music from different times and cultures in lessons and during workshops taken by musicians from the community. Pupils listen to music and have a satisfactory awareness of some composers' names from the past, such as Beethoven and Mozart. Pupils talk excitedly about their own modern pop culture and are keen to research the work of John Lennon in history lessons. During samba workshops they learn to play musical instruments from different cultures, such as the marimba, dhundhun and djembai. They write reports about their experiences and show a sensitive and astute awareness of the different moods that these instruments portray. Notational skills are developed appropriately through guitar and recorder lessons, which are well attended at lunch times and after school. However, these skills are not always built on in lessons. Pupils do have opportunities to compose simple pieces using percussion instruments, but rarely record their work either symbolically or by using information and communication technology. This limits pupils' ability to communicate their musical ideas.
128. The teaching observed during the inspection by the enthusiastic and skilled music specialist was very good. Both lessons had singing as the main focus, although the elements and appreciation of music were taught very well through the wide and exciting range of activities provided. Added interest was provided by the brass instruments that pupils took turns to explore and listen to. Teaching on inspection took place in the classroom, although this is not always the case. On this occasion, it limited the teachers' ability to provide practical compositional experiences, because of the large number of pupils in the group. The large groups were managed well. Evidence

indicates that teaching over time, when not provided by a specialist, is at a satisfactory level. There is little doubt, however, that pupils have excellent attitudes to music and behave in an exemplary manner during lessons. Pupils are keen and eager learners and are obviously highly motivated and keen to sing as a result of the infectious enthusiasm and sense of occasion that the teacher brings to every lesson. This is a marked improvement since the last inspection when attitudes were satisfactory overall.

129. The co-ordinator for music is new, has musical expertise, but limited experience of leading a subject. Much of the teaching of music is reliant on the skills and knowledge of non-specialists and, because of this, the school has bought in time from a music specialist. This has specifically raised standards in singing. The headteacher and music specialist have a good overview of how the subject is progressing, but as yet the teaching and learning in the subject have not been monitored and evaluated by the co-ordinator, with the co-ordinator accurately identifying the need to ensure that all aspects of the curriculum are taught in sufficient depth by class teachers as well as building on the very good experiences that are provided by the specialist teaching in music. The co-ordinator has also accurately identified the need to ensure that procedures are put in place to assess pupils' level of performance in all aspects of the curriculum and to more accurately track the progress that pupils make as they move through the school. New Opportunities Funding has been used wisely to support extra-curricular music and this is helping to raise standards in performance, and provides additional breadth to the opportunities seen at the last inspection. The school has further identified the need to ensure that teachers attend good quality in-service training to improve their confidence and expertise in the teaching of music and in doing so add to the quality of the musical experiences provided by the specialist teaching, rather than relying too heavily on this specialist teaching.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

130. Pupils' attainment in physical education is in line with national expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6. Standards are similar to those reported in the last inspection report. During the course of the year, pupils take part in a wide range of activities, including swimming, gymnastics, games and athletics, which successfully promote their physical development. Most pupils, including those with special education needs are making at least satisfactory and, within individual lessons, good progress. The large majority of pupils achieve the required standard in swimming before they leave the school and many pupils swim well beyond this distance. The increasingly good quality of teaching is having a positive impact on pupils' attainment and learning and contributes significantly to the positive and enthusiastic attitudes of the pupils.
131. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils have reached an average standard in gymnastics and games, as the result of effective teaching. Pupils are given clear instructions about what is expected of them, and are guided carefully in the learning of new skills. Pupils exhibit satisfactory body control and balance when using the apparatus, and perform well-planned sequences of linked and fluid movements. In a lesson seen during the inspection, pupils gained in confidence in their throwing, catching and kicking of balls and they are developing a range and consistency of skills involving balance, quick turns and hopping. The pupils have developed satisfactory skills in throwing, catching and striking a ball and have a good understanding of the basic rules of basketball, which they are keen and willing to obey.
132. As they move through Key Stage 2, pupils are currently making good progress, and continue to work hard to perfect their movements in gymnastics and dance. Most pupils

have satisfactory skills of balance, and many are well co-ordinated. They make appropriate use of space, and vary the direction, speed and level of their movements to create variety and interest. In dance, pupils effectively express the mood of the music, and show a good sense of rhythm as they interpret different and contrasting sections of the music. Pupils enjoy performing their work and watching that of others. Pupils have satisfactory game skills and are energetic. They show a good appreciation of the need for basic rules, and most demonstrate a sense of sportsmanship. Swimming lessons are available for the older pupils, who are developing their swimming skills well and making good progress.

133. The quality of teaching and learning observed during the inspection was good overall. Pupils are keen and eager to develop their physical skills. They listen carefully to instructions and recognise the impact that physical activity has on their bodies. They put a lot of physical effort into the activities in which they take part. Pupils work together well in group activities and show a good appreciation of the need to obey the rules in team games. Behaviour in lessons is often of a good standard. The pupils achieve especially well in those classes where they are systematically taught the necessary skills, and are given time to practise, demonstrate and evaluate their work. In these lessons, the pupils are highly motivated and their behaviour is good which aids learning. All teachers place a high priority on safety, when organising the setting out and putting away of apparatus, and by incorporating warming up and cooling down periods into the lesson. Most of the lessons observed had appropriate pace and all activities were well structured. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and this enables them to present activities in a confident manner, and to help pupils to improve their work further. In most lessons, pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, are appropriately challenged. In the vast majority of lessons the pace is lively and brisk and all pupils are eager and enthusiastic to perform competently.
134. The school runs a wide range of extra-curricular activities, which are well attended and appreciated by the pupils. The school also takes part in inter-school competitions and achieves well. These opportunities add much to pupils' personal and social development as well as improving their physical skills. The co-ordinator has had limited opportunities to monitor teaching and learning across the school but has an appropriate awareness of the strengths in the teaching and the areas for further development, which include the development and implementation of procedures to assess and track pupils' attainment and progress as they move through the school.