

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **THELWALL COMMUNITY JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Thelwall - Warrington

LEA area: Warrington

Unique reference number: 111000

Headteacher: Mrs C Morgan

Reporting inspector: Mrs J E Platt  
11565

Dates of inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> February 2002

Inspection number: 195670

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Thelwall New Road Thelwall Warrington Cheshire
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr G Weston
Date of previous inspection:	April 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
11565	Mrs J E Platt	Registered inspector	English Music Physical education Special educational needs Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
11457	Mrs J Beattie	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
3191	Mr J Curley	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Geography History Religious education	
2959	Mr B L Leek	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Thelwall Community Junior School is smaller than average having 172 boys and girls on roll between the ages of 7 and 11. Pupils come from a wide range of social backgrounds, but the proportion coming from socially and economically advantaged backgrounds is above average. Three per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals and this is below the national average. Currently, 38 pupils (22 per cent) are identified as having special educational needs which is average. Most of these pupils have specific or moderate learning difficulties. No pupils have a formal statement of need. A very small number of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. No pupils need support in learning English as an additional language. Overall, attainment on entry to the school is average but rising in recent years.

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

The school is effective in providing its pupils with a good education. Good teaching makes a significant contribution to the good progress pupils make. Pupils are eager to play a full part in the rich variety of learning opportunities. Achievement is good in science and mathematics and standards are above average. Overall standards and achievement in English are satisfactory. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and acting deputy headteacher complement each other very well. They work closely with the governing body to provide strong leadership and a clear focus for future improvements. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Standards are good in mathematics and science throughout the school.
- The management of pupils is very effective and pupils are very willing to learn. They work hard and behaviour is good.
- Provides a rich curriculum including very good guidance for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school has a happy atmosphere and pupils are well cared for in a supportive community.
- Parents have a close partnership with the school which greatly benefits pupils.

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

- Standards in writing and information and communication technology.
- Teachers' lesson plans do not always make it clear what is to be learned.
- The match of tasks to the ability of the pupils especially those that are set for more able pupils in writing and science.
- The marking of pupils' work and the attention given to assessing pupils' progress in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

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

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

Improvement since the previous inspection in May 1997 has been good. The key issues have all received attention. The school has strengthened links with the feeder schools and these are now very good. Pupils settle quickly into the school. The staff handbook and more detailed planning guidelines offer effective support for new and temporary teachers. Monitoring of teaching takes place on a regular basis and has led to an improvement in teaching. Staff consistently apply the school's behaviour policy and behaviour throughout the school is good. Moral development is now very good. Shortcomings remain in the clarity of learning outcomes in lessons and in the use of assessment information. Current evidence shows that the high standards in science have been sustained. Results in mathematics dipped after the previous inspection but in response to the on-going effect of the National Numeracy Strategy are now on track to rise again. Standards in writing and information and communication technology remain as aspects still needing attention. Staffing changes have hampered progress in English. Last year the teacher with responsibility for teaching the older pupils took on the acting headship and the pupils were taught by temporary teachers. This disturbed the continuity of their learning.

## 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	C	C	C	E
Mathematics	A	C	C	D
Science	A	A	B	C

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

Results in 2001 were average in English and mathematics and above average in science. The comparison with similar schools does not present a true picture of attainment because the small numbers of pupils doing the tests each year make these comparisons unreliable indicators. An analysis of the information shows the low number of pupils reaching above average levels held down overall standards in English and mathematics. This was not the case in science when 100 per cent achieved the average level and a third reached beyond it. The pattern of improvement since the last inspection has been broadly in line with the national trend. The school predictions for 2002 are high and may be too challenging in English although achievable in mathematics.

Overall standards of the present Year 6 are above average. Current standards in mathematics and science are above average by the end of Year 6. Considering many of these pupils entered school with average levels of attainment this reflects good achievement. Standards in mathematics have improved because of the on-going benefits of the National Numeracy Strategy. Numeracy skills are especially good and pupils are confident solving problems. Overall the standard in English is average and achievement is satisfactory. This reflects the recent test results. The weakest aspect is writing and few pupils have the skills to write a sustained piece of imaginative writing or to draft and edit their work. Higher attaining pupils in English and science do not always do well enough and are underachieving.

Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because staff are sensitive to their needs. This raises their self-esteem and allows them to flourish and become more confident learners.

Standards in information and communication technology are below average because pupils have insufficient opportunities to practise their skills. Standards in art and design, dance, history and geography are good and in all other subjects they are satisfactory.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are keen to take part in everything the school offers. They work hard and have very positive attitudes to their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are polite and behaviour is good throughout the school, in lessons and at other times such as lunchtimes and playtimes.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils respect each other and are especially good at working together on group activities during lessons.
Attendance	Very good; better than in most schools.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of pupils in:</b>	<b>Years 3 – 6</b>
Quality of teaching	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 and learning is good overall. Examples of good teaching were seen in all subjects and classes. The teaching seen in information and communication technology was good but the overall quality of teaching in this subject is unsatisfactory because teachers lack expertise to teach these skills to support pupils' learning in other lessons.

Pupils learn well in mathematics because teaching is consistently good and the challenging tasks are boosting pupils' achievements. Numeracy skills are taught particularly well. Introductions are brisk and teachers follow up responses by getting pupils to explain their calculations. As a result pupils learn from each other and have an extensive knowledge of mental calculations. In English, the teaching is satisfactory but teaching is not showing pupils clearly how to improve their writing and skills are not sufficiently promoted in other lessons.

Teachers and support staff offer effective support to pupils with special educational needs. This is good in Years 5 and 6 where additional support is available to help pupils in literacy and numeracy lessons. However, this help is not available for pupils in Years 3 and 4 and this restricts their learning in lessons. The use of on-going assessment is inconsistent. This leads to the learning needs of the higher attaining pupils not being fully met because teachers do not always expect enough of the pupils.

Teachers' management of pupils is very good and pupils are enthusiastic learners. Teachers have a secure knowledge of most of the subjects they teach so in lessons pupils acquire new knowledge. In the best lessons teachers use a variety of interesting methods and learning is often more rapid. Homework is used effectively to support learning. Shortcomings in teaching are in teachers' planning that lacks a specific focus on what pupils are to learn so pupils do not always understand the focus of their tasks.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. A rich and varied range of experiences is offered to the pupils. The number and variety of out of school activities, visits and visitors is very good and brings enormous benefits in learning and in personal development.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Support for pupils is good and enables these pupils to learn effectively in most lessons. Pupils have targets for improvement but they are not always sufficiently broken down into achievable steps.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Spiritual development is very good and pupils are encouraged to appreciate the world in which they live. Moral and social development is very good because staff promote a climate of justice and fair play. Cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school cares for its pupils to a high level. Staff are sensitive to the needs of the pupils. Systems to assess pupils' academic progress are satisfactory although need further development in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

Parents have very positive views of the school. The school has established very effective links with parents and keeps them well informed about everything that is happening.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher and acting deputy headteacher are a strong team. They give a good lead to the school and focus on maintaining the caring ethos as well as identifying areas for improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are well informed, organised and efficient and fulfil their statutory duties. Their knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses is good.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Information from test results is used effectively and priorities for development are correctly identified.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school gives careful thought to the effect of the reduction in numbers. Spending is closely monitored and special grants are used effectively to the benefit of pupils. When making major purchases the school gives close attention to the principles of best value. Resources are used well except for the computers.

The school is adequately staffed although there is a limited number of additional adult support to help pupils in lessons. Learning resources are satisfactory overall. The accommodation is spacious including the excellent outdoor facilities.

## 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>Teaching is good and their children make good progress.</li> <li>Teachers have high expectations of their children and expect them to work hard.</li> <li>The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>They feel welcome in school and find it easy to ask questions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The amount of teaching that is done by temporary teachers.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agree in large part with the parents. The staffing situation is now more stable and the school is keeping the use of temporary staff to a minimum.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Results in the national tests in 2001 were average in English and mathematics and above average in science. When compared with schools with a similar intake results in English were well below average, below average in mathematics and average in science. This comparison with similar schools does not reflect a true picture of achievement. With small schools it can be unreliable to make statistical comparisons with those achieved in similar schools. In English and mathematics the results were held down by fewer pupils exceeding the level expected for their age. This was not the case in science when every pupil reached the expected level and a third reached beyond it. This was a significant achievement for the school. Results have been higher in English in previous years and a contributory factor to the dip last year was the disturbance in staffing. This especially affected standards in English as the teacher with responsibility for teaching literacy to the older pupils took up the acting headteacher role. As pupils are taught in mixed years the effect of this staffing difficulty is still evident in the current Year 6. However, test results since 1997 show that the overall picture in standards has been broadly in line with the national trend. There is some slight variation in the performance of boys and girls in the National Curriculum tests: generally boys are performing better than girls in mathematics and science. However, these variations are not significant given the small numbers involved and there was no evidence of any inequality of opportunity. Assessment information does not currently identify any gifted or talented pupils. The school has no pupils learning through English as an additional language.

2. Overall, the current standards of work and achievement are above average. In response to consistently good, teaching standards in mathematics are now better than the test results and are above average in Year 6. Achievement is good and the challenging teaching enables the more able pupils to exceed the level expected for their age. Standards in science remain above average although fewer pupils are exceeding the level expected. Considering these pupils entered school with average levels of attainment overall achievement is good. Standards have not shown the same improvement in English and are broadly average. This represents satisfactory achievement for the majority of pupils. However, higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged and are underachieving. The school has set targets for attainment at the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics for 2002. In English they are ambitious, given the standards of the pupils in Year 6 at present. They are also challenging in mathematics but standards are currently at a higher level than in English and the school is on target to achieve these results.

3. The previous inspection judged the progress of pupils with special educational needs to be satisfactory. Effective support is now available, especially in Years 5 and 6, and pupils with special educational needs make good progress. One of the reasons for this improved progress is the relationships between teachers, support staff and the pupils. The pupils know their efforts are valued and consequently their learning is enhanced. It is unfortunate this additional support is not available for pupils in Years 3 and 4 and this restricts their progress.

4. In the work seen in English, standards are above average in speaking and listening and average in reading and writing. Standards are higher in speaking and listening because teachers provide many experiences for discussion in other lessons. As a result, by the time they leave school pupils are articulate, reflect on what they hear and ask considered questions to clarify their understanding. Most pupils are confident readers. Writing was unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection. Although it still remains an aspect requiring further attention standards have improved and are now satisfactory. However, shortcomings remain in handwriting, writing imaginatively and refining and improving work. Literacy skills support learning in other subjects. For example, in religious education pupils write letters

and descriptive writing about the Bible. However, more opportunities are needed to enable pupils to gain experience in writing a sustained piece of work.

5. As at the time of the previous inspection, standards in mathematics are above average. Skills in numeracy are particularly strong and are used well in other subjects. For example, pupils record their data on graphs and in design and technology pupils measure and calculate how much material they need.

6. The school has sustained the high standards in science, which were present at the time of the previous inspection. Standards are above average and pupils have a good knowledge of science and can predict the outcomes of their investigations.

7. The school has not managed to keep up with the pace of change in information and communication technology (ICT) and standards remain below average as they were at the time of the previous inspection. Although pupils show satisfactory skills using computers in the ICT suite they lack confidence applying these in other subjects. This is because teachers do not make best use of the resources in the ICT suite and computers are not available in classrooms.

8. Standards in religious education meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Standards are above average in art and design, geography, history and dance because of the quality of teaching and pupils' interest and enjoyment of these subjects. Standards in all other subjects are wholly satisfactory.

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

9. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. Pupils transfer happily from the infant school and settle well into their studies. They show an enthusiastic interest in their work and in school life, and are eager to take part in the wide range of activities the school provides. The school choir practice, for example, includes members from every year group in school. They participate with enthusiasm, offer suggestions on how to arrange their songs, bring resources from home and even offer to sing solos. They enjoy taking part in concerts, show a delight and joy in singing familiar songs and are keen to extend their repertoire. Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes in class are good, they respond well to the opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning, concentrate well and do not waste time.

10. Behaviour is good overall and often exemplary. Pupils respond very well to the school's procedures to reward good behaviour with a choice of activities in golden time at the end of the week. They take pride in maintaining good conduct throughout the week and during trips out of school. Occasional lapses of behaviour in class or the playground do not interrupt pupils' learning and play. Pupils know that bullying is not tolerated, that any incidents must be reported and they are confident and secure. There have been no exclusions during the past school year. The older pupils help the younger ones and this system of "playground pals" helps to make sure that play is constructive, good natured and that no one is left out.

11. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils' friendships flourish in a community in which every member is respected. Pupils like and trust their class teachers. The teachers can be approached and relied upon to help with any difficulties and have very good relationships with all pupils. In lessons groups and pairs work well together, helping each other, taking turns and sharing resources. In a dance lesson the younger pupils showed a remarkable ability to work collaboratively on an arrangement of movements to perform for the class. They supported and encouraged each other, taking account of different ideas, and together produced a sequence with confidence and a good sense of performance.

12. Pupils' personal development is very good. During personal and social education lessons and Circle Time<sup>1</sup> they think about their own ideas and feelings and the views and needs of others. Every class has monitoring duties and pupils are keen to carry these out and they help in the smooth running of the school. Pupils show a good sense of ownership of the school. The school council members discuss issues with their classmates so that all views can be represented in council discussions. Topics discussed have included improvements to the playground, evaluation of the playground pals scheme and the issue of accessible drinks of water during the day. Residential visits are a highlight of the year for each year group and help pupils to develop confidence in meeting new experiences. The range of sport and extra curricular activities help them to develop a sense of team work, fair play and the ability to mix with others. By the time they reach Year 6 pupils are mature, confident and aware of the part they can play in a community. They are well prepared for their secondary education.

13. Families and school co-operate well to make sure that attendance is very good. Pupils arrive on time, registration is prompt and pupils settle quickly to their lessons.

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

14. Overall the quality of teaching is good and has improved since the previous inspection. Improvements have been brought about by a more stable staffing situation and this has reduced the unsatisfactory teaching seen as well as increasing considerably the amount of good teaching. However, some of the weaknesses identified previously remain. For example, the lack of clarity of learning outcomes and marking of work that does not always tell pupils how to improve. During the inspection, 43 lessons were seen and in 65 per cent of these teaching was good or better. In 10 per cent of lessons seen the teaching was very good. Only in one lesson was teaching less than satisfactory and this was linked to a lack of challenge and knowledge in science. Teaching of ICT is often good in lessons designated to the subject but is unsatisfactory overall because teachers do not use ICT to support learning in other lessons. The teaching of mathematics is consistently good with very lively, challenging lessons that lead to much new learning.

15. Teachers have a sound knowledge of the subjects they teach. Examples of good teaching were seen in most lessons and were especially good in mathematics, art and design, dance, geography and history. Satisfactory teaching was seen in science with some lack of knowledge preventing teachers use of questions to test and extend pupils' understanding. A review of pupils' science books shows overall teaching is good with a wide range of activities planned for the pupils. Only in ICT is there a lack of subject knowledge and the school's future plans for the subject include training for teachers.

16. The teaching of basic numeracy skills is good and has been a major contributory factor to the high standards in the school. Lessons start with a brisk mental activity that is effective in improving pupils' skills of calculation. The teaching of writing is satisfactory but has weaknesses in the lack of attention given to teaching pupils how to plan their work and in promoting literacy skills in other subjects.

17. Teachers' planning is satisfactory. Daily and weekly plans draw effectively on termly plans and so a rich curriculum is provided by the school. The school format for planning is clear for literacy and numeracy but less so for other subjects. This lack of clarity leads to a few teachers recording in too much detail everything that they intend to do in the lesson. Consequently, it is not always clear what is the intended learning outcome. However, in mathematics lessons teachers are much better at identifying and informing pupils what it is they are to learn. In the best lessons teachers return to these outcomes

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<sup>1</sup> During Circle Time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. All pupils agree that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and so pupils feel they can talk with ease free from interruption from other pupils.

and check that pupils fully understand the focus of the lesson. The rate of learning is much better in these lessons.

18. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are generally satisfactory. However, in English and science they are sometimes too low and not appropriate to the pupils' capabilities. This leads to some marking time in lessons and more could be achieved. This is not the case in mathematics and teaching inspires pupils to work hard and particularly to improve their ability to handle number confidently.

19. A key feature of the best teaching is the variety of activities used that capture pupils' interest. In English the use of white boards for jotting down ideas makes sure all pupils take part in the introduction to the literacy hour. A strength in history is the use of artefacts so that pupils can find out facts for themselves and so learn how it feels to be real historians. Group work is a feature in many lessons and makes a significant contribution to the effective learning in dance. Pupils are given the responsibility to plan their own group dance and they rise very well to this challenge.

20. Teachers' management of pupils is very good throughout the school. The weaknesses identified in the previous inspection are no longer present in the school. Pupils co-operate and collaborate well and these strengths are fostered by the teachers. Teachers make very effective use of the school's behaviour policy so pupils have a clear understanding about what is acceptable behaviour in lessons. This has a very significant impact on the good learning seen in many lessons.

21. Time is used well in most lessons. In the best lessons teachers set time limits and this makes pupils work at a faster rate to complete their tasks. Occasionally, in English too much time is spent on the introduction and then insufficient time is available for the completion of the writing task. The use of resources is good. Teachers check resources are ready and try to use imaginative items to capture pupils' interest. This was effective in English in Year 3 when the pupils all had kiwi fruit to examine and this successfully improved the variety of vocabulary used in their descriptive writing. The lack of ICT resources in class restricts the development of ICT skills in lessons. However, during the inspection, there were times when the ICT suite was not used and these resources are under-used to support learning across the curriculum.

22. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. The majority of teaching for these pupils is through providing adapted work in lessons. In Years 5 and 6 teachers make good use of the available adult support and joint planning leads to a clear understanding of the best way to enable these pupils to play a full part in literacy and numeracy lessons. Unfortunately, this support is not available for pupils in Years 3 and 4 and this restricts their learning when the teacher is unable to give them the necessary help. The pupils with individual educational plans receive extra support, in small groups, that focuses on their individual needs. This is effective in increasing their social skills as well as enabling them to make good progress towards their literacy and numeracy targets. A shortcoming is a lack of involvement of all staff in drawing up individual educational plans for pupils and then the identified targets are not used well enough in everyday class lessons.

23. Teachers are not always using the assessment information they have available to tailor their activities to the needs of the pupils. One reason for this is teachers' evaluation of lessons, which often comment on the content of the lesson rather than on the progress made by the pupils. This leads to tasks being set that do not build on prior learning and this slows down the learning of the higher attaining pupils. The school has made a good start in setting group and individual targets for pupils so that they know what they have to do to improve. As yet these are not having any significant effect on standards because teachers are not referring to them regularly and so pupils are forgetting them. Marking is a shortcoming and rarely informs pupils how to improve. In English teachers do not identify the weaknesses in presentation and this especially hinders the progress pupils make in their handwriting.

24. A few parents expressed a concern about the amount of work set for their children to do at home. A review of the amount of work given to pupils shows it is good and especially in Years 5 and 6 prepares pupils well for their move to high school.

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

25. The total teaching time is 25 hours, which is well above that normally found in similar schools. This extra time is used effectively. It allows the school to provide a rich and wide variety of learning opportunities for all its pupils. These include coverage of all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. The school fully meets statutory requirements. It is able to provide a very good personal, health and social education programme, which includes drugs and sex education. Pupils value Circle Time when they can explore relevant issues with their class teacher and golden time when they can, as a reward for good behaviour, choose what to study. Teachers from the local high school teach French and German to pupils in Year 6 for a short period every week. This prepares them well for the new subject that they will meet at the high school and builds up early relationships. There is a shortcoming in the use of time allocated to physical education. Currently, pupils have one lesson a week allocated to the subject and so in the autumn and summer term the lesson is devoted to games and in spring, gymnastics and dance lessons are taught. This means that dance lessons can be overlong and pupils have limited time to experience other activities.

26. A sound literacy strategy and good numeracy strategy are in place. Generally, teaching time is allotted to different subjects and other areas well but the school should ensure that literacy and ICT skills are developed more thoroughly in a range of subjects. Assemblies are enhanced by a number of visitors who also help in large numbers when the whole school moves outside for one day a year to participate in a wide range of projects. All pupils benefit from having at least one residential visit every year. This provides them with a completely different learning situation which teachers build on when pupils return to school.

27. A diverse range of extra-curricular activities enhances and extends the work done in the defined school day. In addition to sports activities, such as cross-country, football, rugby, netball, tennis and judo there is a wealth of other opportunities on offer. These include a choir, maths club, line dancing, keyboard and dance and drama activities. A high proportion of pupils take advantage of these opportunities and benefit greatly.

28. The school is wholeheartedly committed to the principles of inclusion and the curriculum is totally accessible to all pupils. There is no discrimination between boys and girls anywhere in the curriculum and it is difficult to notice pupils with special education needs as they are so well integrated and make similar progress to everyone else. A few parents expressed a concern about the mixed age classes. However, teachers plan carefully to ensure that pupils receive a curriculum that is suitable for their age and check that no topics are repeated or missed.

29. All pupils benefit from the very effective contacts that the school has established with the local community and other educational institutions. Particularly good links exist between the school and the local high school where there is a regular and productive dialogue between teachers. Good liaison with the infant school also helps pupils to settle quickly when they move to the junior school. Some firmer curriculum links, notably in English, would be beneficial to ensure continuity of learning.

30. The school has established very strong links with the local community. Visiting speakers, such as representatives from the police and fire services, make valuable contributions to pupils' learning. The local Rose Queen Festival is an important community event in which the school is heavily involved. Local businesses, such as the newspaper, churches and environmental groups are all linked with the school in a variety of ways. Pupils and the community both benefit from these activities.

31. The curriculum is enriched by very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and this represents a marked improvement since the last inspection.

32. There is very good provision for spiritual development. Pupils take part in a collective act of worship each day and a quiet reflective atmosphere is created through appropriate music and behaviour. Local religious leaders take part on a regular basis and parents are invited each week, which increases the feeling of community. In religious education Bible stories are related to pupils' own experiences. For example, Year 6 pupils read the story of the Good Samaritan and linked this to homeless people who are in need today. World religions are also studied and the pupils are able to compare Christianity with Islam and know about such festivals as Hanukkah and Divali. As a result pupils are aware of the diversity of religions and traditions in our society. At the end of each religious lesson the pupils have a quiet reflection about the topic discussed and say an appropriate prayer. Teachers provide opportunities to pause and reflect about life in many subjects. For example, when the pupils went to the Foxhowl Outdoor Centre they were able to think about the wonder of nature when they were creating natural sculptures using materials gathered from the woods. Spiritual development is also encouraged by the way the teachers value the questions and opinions put forward by the pupils.

33. Provision for moral development is also very good. Staff act as good role models and take every opportunity to emphasise right from wrong. As a result, the pupils have a clear understanding of what behaviour is acceptable in school. In religious education pupils become familiar with moral codes like The Ten Commandments and the Five Pillars of Islam. Pupils recognise the importance of following a moral code and teachers devise classroom rules for the benefit of all the group. They value the rewards for achievement and good behaviour in the school. Every other week there is a Celebration Assembly in which at least two pupils from each class receive certificates for good work. This promotes good behaviour especially because the names of the pupils are then written in the Golden Book. Moral themes are included in assemblies and group discussions about moral issues take place during Circle Time. All these experiences promote pupils' understanding of the impact of their behaviour on other people. The school has an effective policy to combat bullying and discussions with the pupils indicate that this type of behaviour is rare but pupils know what to do if an incident occurs.

34. The provision for social development is very good. Pupils are encouraged to feel concern for those people less fortunate than themselves and willingly support charitable collections like their sponsored aerobics session for handicapped gymnasts. The school provides ample opportunities for the pupils to undertake responsibilities and this raises their self-esteem. Each Friday a small group of pupils with the help of an adult prepare a meal for themselves and selected visitors and this bolsters their confidence and encourages social interaction. Teachers plan many group activities and consequently pupils co-operate together and respect each other's opinions. The curriculum includes opportunities to learn about their role in safeguarding the environment. As a result, pupils know that too many cars and the cutting down of trees have an adverse effect on the environment and compare this with the good effect of conservation.

35. Provision for cultural development is good. Knowledge of their own culture is extended in many lessons. Pupils are introduced to classical music and visiting musicians provide pupils with the exciting experience of hearing live music. On World Book Day a famous author visits school to talk about books and this increases pupils' enthusiasm for reading. In art pupils study the work of well known artists and create pictures in a similar style, for example Renoir, Van Gogh, Lowry and Lubaina Himid. Educational visits extend pupils' knowledge and they have enjoyed the art at the Liverpool Tate and the Walker Art Galleries and the ballet at the theatre. In history the pupils went to the Stockport Air Raid Museum to experience culture in time of war. Provision for pupils to learn about life styles in other countries is satisfactory. A drama group came to school to put on a production about Egypt. In art, pupils investigate Aboriginal Art and look at their techniques. Pupils also learn about the diversity of life in modern Britain. In religious education the pupils study world religions in order to gain an insight in to the way of life of other traditions. For example, pupils have an understanding of the Jewish festival of Hanukkah and the

Hindu Festival of Diwali. However, people from other cultures rarely visit the school to talk to the pupils about their way of life.

36. Overall, the breadth and quality of the learning experiences that the school provides is a very strong feature and plays a significant part in the good standards achieved by the pupils.

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

37. The well being of pupils in school is paramount and pupils thrive in the happy atmosphere the school provides. Very good procedures are taken by all the staff in school to provide personal support and promote good attendance and behaviour. These make a significant contribution to pupils' achievements and personal development. The school monitors pupils' development well. A particularly good feature is the discussions pupils have with the class teacher to identify any needs and these often relate to the pupils' personal development. This is effective in encouraging pupils to accept responsibility for their own personal development. The school's senior management is always ready to attend to pupils' needs and they play an active part in supporting every area of school life, providing a family atmosphere in which pupils feel secure.

38. Procedures for child protection are in place and all staff know what to do if they have any concerns.

39. Staff are aware of any special medical needs and the school works well with outside agencies to provide for any individual needs or areas of concern. Pupils are well supervised at work and play. The midday assistants work very closely with the head teacher to promote constructive activities and good behaviour. Consequently, lunchtime is a happy, social occasion.

40. The school has recently commissioned an audit of the whole premises to identify areas of risk and are acting on the recommendations. Any school or playground accidents and incidents are recorded and parents informed when necessary. The school has made risk assessments of curriculum areas and has plans to up-date and extend risk assessments of all areas of school activity

41. The school has recently re-considered the policy to promote good behaviour and has introduced very good procedures, which encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own behaviour, both collectively and individually. Pupils know that they must choose, by the way they behave, to earn the privilege of golden time at the end of the week. They discuss classroom and playground rules and procedures, talk about issues of behaviour in their personal, social and health education lessons and can raise any concerns with their teachers and discuss procedures with the school council. The policy to identify and eliminate any form of bullying and oppressive behaviour is effective and pupils say that they know how to respond to any such incidents.

42. Attendance records are monitored regularly and the school works closely with the educational welfare service to identify individual concerns. Class teachers record and develop a personal profile of each pupil in their assessment files regularly, so that pupils' progress and any areas of concern can be identified and discussed together with parents, if necessary.

43. Procedures for assessing pupils' academic attainment and progress are satisfactory. The school has made some progress in tackling the weaknesses previously identified but there are still areas that need further attention. Improvements are more evident in English, mathematics and science. Regular and accurate assessments take place which allow the school to check pupils' progress, to broadly identify strengths and weaknesses in their work and set targets. There still needs to be further improvements in these subjects if pupils are to gain maximum benefit. For example, the group targets are on display in classrooms but these are not always sufficiently broken down into small achievable steps. Consequently, pupils are unsure of what their targets are and what they have to do in detail to improve their work. The school has reading diaries that go home to parents. These identify the books which pupils have read but

lack sufficient detail to enable teachers to check closely on the progress that pupils are making in reading. Assessment in the other subjects of the curriculum is a weakness because it is not regular or detailed enough to be able to accurately chart pupils' progress.

44. The assessment of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Pupils with individual education plans have their targets reviewed by the special needs co-ordinator and the support assistant. However, these reviews are not recorded and class teachers are not involved in the process. Consequently, there is some lack of clarity among staff about the overall progress these pupils are making.

45. The school makes satisfactory use of assessment information to adjust the curriculum when a potential weakness is identified. This has been more effective in mathematics than in English and science. In English, the areas for development have been identified but as yet action to improve writing has yielded limited improvement.

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

46. Partnership with parents continues to be a great strength of the school. The school works very closely with parents. Weekly information about the school activities keeps parents fully informed about what is happening in school. An 'open door' policy welcomes parents who feel confident discussing concerns with the school. Parents, in their turn, show strong support for the school and are very pleased with the quality of education provided. They are very pleased with the management, the quality of teaching and their children's progress in response to the school's high expectations. They say that their children are happy, behave well, work hard to achieve their best and develop mature and responsible attitudes. They find the school staff very approachable. The large majority feel that they are well informed about how their child is getting on.

47. A few parents are not happy about the amount of homework given but inspectors found that the school has a good homework policy which is applied consistently and that homework makes a good contribution to pupils' progress. A very few parents are concerned that some pupils could work at a higher level. Inspectors agree that some of the higher attaining pupils are underachieving in English and science. A few parents considered that the school has relied too much on temporary teachers. Following the recent appointment of the head teacher the staffing situation is more stable.

48. The school has very good procedures to inform parents about the work of the school when their children transfer from the infant school. Parents also receive helpful information about their children's individual progress. Each term they are told which topics their children are studying and have very good opportunities to discuss their children's progress at parents' evening in the autumn and spring terms and after the summer report. The end of year report has a good evaluation of pupils' attainment and progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and of their attitudes and personal development. The reports do not give enough information about what they have been studying in other subjects. Staff provided a very good opportunity for parents to attend a workshop evening to learn about the teaching of literacy in Years 3 and 4. This will be followed up with a similar meeting for parents of older pupils where, in addition, they will be able to discuss the preparation for national assessment tests. Parents whose children have special needs are informed of their children's individual education plans and measures to provide them with the support they need.

49. Parents contribute well to the work of the school and to their children's work at home. The school has a very active parent and teacher association which actively promotes successful social and fundraising events which enhance the provision in school and the pupils' social development. They have provided the school with a 'smart board' which effectively enhances ICT resources. Parents help with extra-curricular activities and with the care of pupils on residential trips. A parent governor organises and supervises a weekly lunch party cooked and presented by a small group of pupils to be enjoyed

together with their parents or grandparents. Parents help with reading and in class and attend celebration assemblies. At home, families sometimes help their children research topics and provide artefacts, for example a Second World War gas mask, to illustrate studies in school. Overall the school and parents work very well together sharing aspirations and a strong commitment to the pupils' education.

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

50. The overall quality of leadership and management by the governors, headteacher and key staff is good. Since the last inspection a new headteacher has been appointed and had been in post for a matter of weeks at the time of the inspection. However, during her time as acting headteacher the school ran smoothly although it was difficult to make any significant changes. Since her appointment, and with the valuable support of the acting deputy headteacher, the school is beginning to move forward again. The school now has a more focused vision for school improvements. Parents are virtually unanimous in their belief that the school is well led and managed.

51. The staffing disturbances slowed down the school's response to the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection. However, all have received attention and the only remaining shortcomings are identified as priorities for improvement in the school's development plan. This is a well-written document that includes evaluation of previous priorities and a review of all subjects. Priorities are appropriate to the school's needs. The plan includes detailed strategies to achieve them and identifies success criteria and any cost implications. Staff training is linked to identified need. The school has successfully implemented performance management and this is enabling staff to further extend their skills and so improve pupils' achievements.

52. The acting deputy headteacher has played a major role in improving the use of assessment to set targets for the school and in drawing up a detailed action plan for ICT. The management of English, mathematics and science is good because subject leaders have had time to observe lessons and so have a more informed view of standards in their subjects. Other subject leaders have not had the opportunity to check on lessons and so the reviews of subjects do not give sufficient attention to standards being achieved. The management of special educational needs is satisfactory. A good start has been made to adjust procedures in line with the new Code of Practice<sup>2</sup>. Individual education plans are drawn up but currently are not always broken down into small achievable steps. The school has purchased new resources to tackle this weakness. A strength in the management of the needs of these pupils is the focus on including them in lessons. The joint planning between teachers and support staff helps to give these pupils full access to the curriculum.

53. The contribution of the governing body to the work of the school is good. As at the time of the previous inspection all statutory requirements are met. The business of the governing body is carried out systematically through a committee structure. Close links have been established with the subject leaders for literacy, numeracy and special educational needs so the governors are very aware of developments in these subjects. This information is shared with the full governing body and as a result all have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. The governors offer much practical support to the school. A few regularly help in lessons and the chair of governors and other governors accompany the pupils on their residential visits. There is a good working relationship with the headteacher and as a result the governors have successfully developed a vision for the way forward for the school.

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<sup>2</sup> Code of Practice – this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development.

54. At the time of the previous inspection, the monitoring of teaching had diminished because of staffing issues facing the school. This has now been restored and the headteacher, key staff and local authority advisers have all played a part in monitoring and providing advice. When a weakness is identified, action is taken to resolve it and, consequently, teaching has improved. The school gives good attention to monitoring its overall effectiveness by analysing the results of national tests. Governors also meet with the infant school to discuss standards as pupils start in the school. This enables governors to have an overall picture of progress throughout the school. This information is also being used effectively to predict future standards and this is a good step forward to further raise standards.

55. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have clarified the school's financial management systems. This has yielded rewards with clear procedures now in place. Careful records are maintained of income and expenditure and the recommendations of the latest auditor's report have been acted upon. Day-to-day administration is good and much of the work is carried out using ICT. The school faces the challenge of managing a reduction in pupil numbers. Plans are in place to maintain the current staffing ratio for as long as possible. Money is spent prudently and additional grants are spent correctly. The school successfully applies the principles of best value by comparing performance with similar schools and setting challenging targets. Parents are consulted over major changes. Governors and staff check closely that the purchasing of resources and services used by the school are economic and effective.

56. Learning resources are generally satisfactory. There are not enough computers in classrooms and those in the ICT suite are under-used. The school has an adequate number of teachers who are all qualified and experienced in teaching this age range. The school has insufficient support staff and this means that pupils in Years 3 and 4 do not always receive support in lessons. The accommodation is very good. The school benefits from a large hall, an ICT suite and excellent outdoor facilities.

57. The overall strength of the leadership and management of the school means that it is effective in fulfilling most of its mission statement. This includes the promoting of a happy and secure atmosphere where effective teaching will enable children to become independent. The aim to enable pupils to achieve their full potential is reflected in the good progress most pupils make although the higher attaining pupils are not always doing as well as they might in English and science.

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

58. In order to continue the improvements and to raise further standards the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) Raise standards in writing by:
  - placing more emphasis on planning and revising work;
  - consistently implementing the school's handwriting policy;
  - providing more opportunities for extended writing in lessons;Included in the school's development plan.  
Discussed in paragraphs 1, 2, 4, 16, 18, 21, 23, 26, 29, 45, 60, 61, 64, 65.
- (2) Raise standards in information and communication technology by providing more opportunities for pupils to use their skills in a wide range of contexts.  
Included in school's development plan.  
Discussed in paragraphs 7, 14, 15, 21, 26, 56, 64, 69, 71, 75, 81, 92, 93, 97, 99, 101, 102, 117.
- (3) Further improve teaching by:
  - making it clear what pupils are to learn in lessons;
  - checking that all tasks are sufficiently challenging;

- improving the marking of pupils' work so that pupils have a clearer understanding of how to improve.

Discussed in paragraphs 2, 14, 17, 18, 23, 43, 65, 74, 77, 78, 86, 87.

- (4) Extend assessment procedures to all subjects to enable teachers to check more closely on pupils' progress.

Discussed in paragraphs 43, 84, 93, 98, 102, 108, 118.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	30
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	43

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	4	24	14	1	0	0
Percentage	0%	9%	56%	33%	2%	0%	0%

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	172
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	5
<b>Special educational needs</b>	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	38
<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	3.0
National comparative data	5.6

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.3
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 2 (Year 6)***

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	18	22	40

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	15	18
	Girls	19	18	22
	Total	31	33	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (79)	83 (73)	100 (96)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	13	15
	Girls	19	19	21
	Total	30	32	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (79)	80 (75)	90 (92)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	168
Any other minority ethnic group	2

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

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

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

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.5
Average class size	28.6

#### **Education support staff: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	37

*FTE means full-time equivalent*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	336008
Total expenditure	344906
Expenditure per pupil	2054
Balance brought forward from previous year	20090
Balance carried forward to next year	11192

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	172
Number of questionnaires returned	50

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	52	40	8	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	49	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	40	52	6	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	60	14	0	0
The teaching is good.	58	42	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	48	6	0	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	42	0	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	44	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	34	54	8	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	52	46	2	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	52	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	47	41	8	2	2

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

### **ENGLISH**

59. Standards of the present Year 6 are average. Considering that the majority of these pupils entered the school with average results in the national tests as they left the infant school the current standards reflect satisfactory achievement. Standards in speaking and listening are good because pupils have ample opportunities to extend these skills in other subjects. Many pupils make good progress in this area of the subject.

60. In the 2001 national tests at the end of Year 6, the results were average when compared to all schools but well below the average for similar schools. The comparison with similar schools is not a reliable indicator of performance because of the small numbers of pupils doing the tests each year. Most pupils reach the level expected for their age but few do better and this is keeping the school's results down. Results have fluctuated over recent years and have been adversely affected by the staffing difficulties in the school. Last year the Year 6 pupils had their continuity of learning disturbed because of staffing changes in the school. This is a contributory factor to the dip in test results. Standards are similar to those identified in the previous inspection. Although the overall standards in writing have improved and are now satisfactory they are the weakest aspect of the subject and the more able pupils are underachieving. The 2002 target set by the school is very challenging and taking on board the current standards in writing may prove to be unrealistic for the school.

61. Pupils with special educational needs receive additional support in lessons in Years 5 and 6. This enables these pupils to play a full part in lessons because the classroom assistant is fully involved in planning and so has a clear understanding of her role in the lesson. This support is not available for pupils in Years 3 and 4 and often this leads to some pupils struggling to complete their work. Pupils with individual education plans benefit from additional literacy sessions and overall progress is satisfactory.

62. The school puts great emphasis on discussion and collaboration and consequently good progress is made in speaking and listening. Pupils throughout the school converse sensibly with their friends on social occasions and when working. In Year 6 pupils are confident asking questions. They listen attentively and respect the opinions of other pupils. Most are articulate and use well-expressed lively language. They enjoy suggesting a wide range of words when writing class poetry. In other lessons their vocabulary is enlivened by technical terms and pupils are confident when explaining what they are doing. No examples of formal debate were seen but in the school council pupils in Year 6 were very confident putting forward their requests. The class representatives were very articulate feeding back what had been said at the school council meeting. Teachers successfully promote discussion in other subjects. For example, in dance good examples of collaboration were seen. Pupils shared their ideas and were very willing to listen to other pupils' ideas.

63. Standards in reading are satisfactory. Most have attained the level expected and many read well for their age. Pupils use these skills to support learning in other lessons and are confident using non-fiction books to locate information. They have experienced a wide range of texts in lessons and discussions with pupils show they have a number of favourite authors. Most talk easily about the styles of different authors and recognise that J K Rowling's strengths are in the magic and adventure created in her stories. Higher attaining pupils can read between the lines and recognise how the author creates suspense. However, the great majority of pupils have not yet reached this level. This reflects a weakness in the teaching. In all year groups, the teachers keep a diary which records the books pupils have read and allows parents to comment on the reading done at home. However, too little detail is recorded to indicate where pupils are having difficulties or what they need to do to improve.

64. The previous inspection judged writing to be unsatisfactory. Although standards have improved a few of the weaknesses remain. Pupils are still not transferring the skills they learn in lessons to their independent writing. This is very apparent in handwriting. In lessons devoted to teaching this skill pupils have a neat joined-up script but they do not always write neatly in their other work.. By the end of Year 6, many pupils are not confidently joining-up their handwriting. One reason for this is teachers do not always demand that pupils do this and the marking of their work fails to identify this weakness. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their spelling and most conscientiously learn the words set for homework. Basic punctuation is generally correct and higher attaining pupils are using paragraphs correctly to organise their writing. Although pupils are taught to plan their writing the skills of drafting are not taught thoroughly and so many pupils find it difficult to organise, sustain and refine their ideas. ICT is under-used to develop these skills. Pupils' writing lacks imaginative vocabulary. In the lessons seen many recognised different patterns and rhyme in poetry but the language used was not very adventurous. A review of pupils' work showed the more able pupils had produced better work in their character descriptions. Words such as 'spine-chilling,' 'demented' and 'inferior' were used to create a vivid image of Macbeth. Pupils have a sound understanding about writing in a style that matches its purpose. Persuasive writing expresses pupils' ideas and often includes a summary. The focus on the effects of the misuse of alcohol promote pupils' moral development and they successfully list the harmful effects of alcohol on the body. Literacy skills are used in science and factual writing is well presented with pupils using diagrams and lists of results accurately.

65. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the lessons seen teaching was good in a half and satisfactory in the rest. A key feature in all lessons is the good management skills that enable pupils to learn in an orderly atmosphere. The weak management skills reported in the previous inspection report are no longer evident in the school. Teachers engage the pupils' interest with a range of activities that keep them involved and interested in the new learning. The use of white boards for pupils to jot down their ideas is effective in keeping all pupils active as well as improving their writing skills. The teaching of literacy is satisfactory. Teachers plan to the National Literacy Strategy and this provides a clear framework for lessons. The introductions to lessons are often good with effective questioning, use of role-play and collaborative writing activities. For example, in Year 6 pupils enjoyed sharing their ideas to write different types of poetry. Teachers do not always promote writing in other subjects and this restricts the development of confidence to write an extended piece of work. Teachers often tell pupils clearly what is to be covered in the lesson so that pupils know the structure of the lesson and understand what is expected of them. However, lesson plans do not always make clear what the pupils are to learn in lessons and this was a weakness in the last inspection. This weakness also affects the conclusion of the lessons. For example, teachers use the time to celebrate achievement with pupils reading out their work but fail to return to the learning focus of the lesson. Consequently, pupils are not always clear about what they have learnt. Teachers conscientiously evaluate lessons and this identifies aspects of the lesson that went well and those that need further attention. However, the on-going progress of pupils is not always recorded and this leads to tasks being set that do not always match pupils' ability. This is more of a problem for the higher attaining pupils who are underachieving because they are not being fully challenged in lessons.

66. Management of the subject is good. The school has identified the weakness in writing and has sought advice and drawn up an action plan to tackle the difficulties. Monitoring of lessons has been effective in providing support although areas, such as the non-implementation of the school's hand writing policy, need more rigorous attention. The school makes good use of assessment information from end of year tests to identify pupils needing extra help. Additional booster classes are being effective in raising standards. Since the last inspection the curriculum has improved and pupils now experience a wide range of texts and activities.

## **MATHEMATICS**

67. The standard of Year 6 pupils' work is above average. This is similar to that reported at the last inspection and the school has sustained many of the strengths identified at that time. Considering that these pupils started school with average levels of attainment these standards reflect good achievement.

68. The results in the 2001 national tests for Year 6 were average when compared to all schools but below average when compared to schools with a similar background. However, the comparison with similar schools does not present reliable information because of the low number of pupils involved. The number of pupils reaching the higher level 5 was average when compared to all schools but well below average compared to schools with a similar intake. These results showed a decline in the years 1999 and 2000 but improved by 10 per cent in the year 2001 and were broadly in line with the national trend. The targets set by the school with the advice of the local education authority were comfortably reached in the tests. Targets for the current year are challenging and show the school's determination to further raise standards. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.

69. Through detailed analysis of test results, the school found that numeracy was a weakness and consequently altered the planning in mathematics to give numeracy more focus. This has been successful and now pupils' numeracy skills are good. The numeracy hour has been instrumental in this because it is effectively organised. As a result, the pupils have been taught to manipulate numbers in their heads. Standards of the present Year 6 show pupils work out squares and square roots of numbers in their heads. Pupils are also taught effective methods to operate numbers when working in their books. Year 6 pupils solve problems by multiplication using brackets. They are confident working with large numbers like 1,097,407. The mathematics curriculum covers a wide range of topics linked to the National Curriculum. In Year 6, pupils use protractors to measure angles. They measure accurately acute, obtuse and reflex angles and know that the total of the angles of a triangle is always 180 degrees. They use this knowledge to calculate unknown angles. When discussing mathematics with Year 6 pupils they talked about probability and were quickly able to explain the likely number of time a dice would fall on a six when thrown a certain number of times. Year 6 pupils construct shapes in all four quadrants using co-ordinates. They use line graphs and bar graphs and can interpret pie charts. Pupils use the correct mathematical vocabulary and fluently use words like "inverse operation" "heptagon" and "equivalent fraction". However, the pupils do not use ICT to support and consolidate their knowledge frequently enough.

70. Teachers check that all pupils are taught every aspect of the curriculum. Work is thoughtfully planned to cater for the varying abilities in the class and also to take account of individual programmes for pupils with special educational needs. In the daily mental mathematics session less difficult questions are directed to the lower ability pupils so that they are fully involved in the lesson. For example, in a Year 6 class, the higher attaining pupils were asked the square root of 81 whereas the lower ability pupils were asked to square 4. This builds up pupils' self-esteem and also enables them to learn from their classmates.

71. The quality of teaching is consistently good and this is an improvement since the last inspection. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection and in all lessons seen the teaching was good. Teachers' knowledge of mathematics is good and as a result learning is good. In particular the teaching of mental mathematics is very effective. Numeracy skills are taught effectively. The pupils enjoy manipulating numbers in their heads and are enthusiastic about strategies that make calculations easier. The school discovered that numeracy was a weakness through reviewing pupils' work and the teachers have concentrated on this aspect of mathematics. They have been successful in their aim and the pupils have learnt effective methods for manipulating numbers accurately. Another strength of teaching is the planning of work that meets the needs of the various ability groups. This has an important influence on learning. The teachers use assessment effectively to guide planning and also to track pupils' progress. Overall the quality of marking is satisfactory and in one lesson, for example, the teacher revised part of the previous day's work because a common difficulty was identified when marking the work. The teachers have a warm relationship with their pupils and as a result their confidence is bolstered so that

they tackle problems that they initially thought were difficult. Often the teachers create a working atmosphere in the classroom where pupils concentrate, co-operate and behave well. This makes an important contribution to the good and improving standards. Teachers' expectations are realistic and they set work to challenge the various groups in the class and thus stimulate learning. On the occasions when there is an additional adult in the classroom, the teachers use this support effectively for the lower attaining pupils so that they make better progress. A regular homework programme makes an important contribution to the improving standards. The mathematics club is held twice a week after school and is well attended by Year 6 pupils and helps to boost standards especially those of the higher attaining pupils. Other subjects are supported by pupils' good numeracy skills. This helps to consolidate learning and makes it more relevant. For example, in science the pupils use negative numbers when dealing with thermometers. In history and geography, they devise time lines, use co-ordinates and present information on graphs. In art, they use three-dimensional shapes and in design and technology they use accurate measurements. However, not enough use is made of ICT to support learning in the subject.

72. Management of the subject is good. A particular strength is the effective assessment system that enables teachers to track pupils' progress. The analysis of tests enables the teachers to see where difficulties lie and future plans are adjusted to tackle these weaknesses. This has been most effective in raising standards in numeracy. The results of all the assessment are also used to track pupils' progress and identify those needing extra help. Assessment information is also used to set group targets but these are not referred to with sufficient rigour to have a significant impact on standards. Planning is regularly monitored, teaching is observed and advice provided where necessary and this has a positive effect on learning. Mathematics makes a valuable contribution to the pupils' social development as pupils learn to work in groups and realise that challenging mathematics can be interesting and enjoyable.

## **SCIENCE**

73. The 2001 results of national tests were above the national average but they were average when compared to similar schools. Over the last five years results have been consistently well above average apart from last year when they fell slightly. This variation is not uncommon in relatively small schools when performance of one or two pupils has a significant effect on overall results. The trend in results has improved with the national trend which is a good achievement considering that the results overall have been well above average. The results are generally better than in other subjects. All pupils reached the national target level which is a particularly good achievement although only an average proportion reached the higher level. These test results show that pupils with special educational needs are fully included in lessons and through effective support reach the level expected for their age. This represents a significant achievement for these pupils. Over the last five years there has been no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.

74. Overall standards of work seen in lessons and pupils' books are above average and match closely the test results. A small proportion of higher attaining pupils do not achieve their full potential but almost all pupils are on target to achieve the national target. The work on the knowledge and understanding of science is of a slightly higher quality than their investigative work. Nevertheless, pupils develop the necessary separate skills of investigation well. In Years 3 and 4 they are familiar with fair testing. In Years 5 and 6 they can conduct an investigation in which the outcomes are predictable but they are not as confident when the investigation is more open-ended, when there is a choice of variables and hypotheses have to be changed in the light of new evidence. Taking into account pupils' attainment on entry to the school pupils' achievement is good.

75. Science makes a good contribution to pupils' literacy and numeracy. Pupils write for different purposes and gain a good understanding of scientific words. They learn to measure accurately and they can present their experimental results in various appropriate graphical forms. Science does not make sufficient use of ICT. Some good work was seen on the water cycle where pupils used the Internet to

research information and imported text and graphics into a word document. However, pupils were given little opportunity to use the skills they developed in discrete ICT lessons in their science work.

76. Pupils have very good attitudes to science. They become excited when given the chance to participate in experiments. They listened attentively and were keen to respond to the teachers questions and, on occasions and when appropriate, to the inspectors. They were anxious to please and many pupils took much care in presenting their work. These attitudes plus a rich and varied set of learning opportunities provided by the teachers have a significant and positive effect on pupils' learning. This is also helped by good parental support with work set to be done at home.

77. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching seen in lessons during the inspection period was satisfactory but the scrutiny of pupils' books showed that teaching over a longer period of time was consistently good. A good example of this is an extended topic on health education. Pupils are given a lot of scope for individual work, and have conducted some very good research on drug abuse and their report writing is accurate, informative and well presented. Most teachers have a secure scientific knowledge which leads to pupils gaining new knowledge and understanding. In many lessons, what the pupils are expected to learn in that lesson is not made clear to them and hence it is difficult to check what has been learnt. In addition, some lessons are too tightly prescribed by the teacher and more able pupils are not sufficiently well catered for so that they did not make as much progress as they could have done.

78. Science is managed satisfactorily and there have been some good improvements since the previous inspection. Class control is now very good. A good assessment system is in place, which allows teachers to set targets, although the day-to day marking could show more clearly how pupils could improve. High standards have been maintained. However, the quality of teaching can be improved still further, as indicated earlier, and by a better monitoring and support system for those teachers who have limited science expertise and lack a little confidence.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

79. The attainment of Year 6 pupils is above average and is similar to that reported at the last inspection. It is clear after observing the fine pieces of art and displays in the school that the achievement of all pupils is good.

80. There are several reasons for these high standards. The pupils experience a wide range of worthwhile art activities and are introduced to a variety of materials. Teachers give due attention to the teaching of skills and pupils are encouraged to collaborate in creating large-scale pictures. Both in the classrooms and around the school there are beautiful displays of pupils' art, which contributes to an atmosphere that encourages creative talents.

81. Year 6 pupils are confident artists. They understand how to create movement in their pictures and this can be clearly seen in a striking display of metallic life size figures portraying different actions. Sketchbooks are used effectively in school for practising skills and when sketching out doors. These have a positive effect on standards. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, the pupils made working sketches outside school and from these the pupils collaborated in small groups to make large landscapes using poster paint. In a Year 5 class, pupils were being taught several techniques to improve their skills. They made printing blocks and used poster paint, other pupils were effectively using matchsticks to produce dot designs similar to those create by Aborigines. The pupils are taught about famous artists and Year 6 pupils produced some fine pictures based on their work and styles. For example, the pupils drew weary figures walking along the road by using soft pencils to produce merging tones in the style of Van Gogh. To widen their experience pupils are involved in three-dimensional art. In Years 5 and 6 the pupils made large masks painted in striking colours with curled tissue for beards and hair. Teachers' planning shows the use of clay is included in a future topic. Little use is made of ICT art programs to extend their skills.

Art skills are used to support other subjects. For example, there is a sombre display of drawings in charcoal and soft pencil of the crucifixion in religious education. Sculptures of famous people made by the pupils and exhibited in the Millenium Dome.

82. Teachers check to see that all pupils play a full part in art lessons. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers encourage groups of pupils to create large pictures together and the pupils with lower ability enjoy working with their peers to produce beautiful pieces of art and this raises their self- esteem. For example, in one Year 3 and 4 class, pupils made printing blocks. All of the pupils mastered the technique required and all contributed to the final piece of work which was an attractive design of brightly coloured prints on a background of pale blue cloth. The achievement of pupils of all abilities is good.

83. Teaching is good throughout the school and this is an improvement since the last inspection where it stated that it was satisfactory and sometimes good. Teachers have an enthusiastic knowledge of art and teach skills directly which has a beneficial effect on the good learning in the subject. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and as a result they respond well and behaviour is good. These practical lessons are well organised so pupils work hard as well as enjoying their work. All these aspects contribute to the high standards in the subject. Teachers have high expectations and in most lessons they evaluate the work produced along with the pupils. This evaluation increases the speed of learning as it raises self-esteem, improves techniques and enhances speaking and listening skills by enabling the pupils to express themselves clearly to a group of peers.

84. The management of the subject is satisfactory. There is a comprehensive scheme of work which has improved the continuity of learning. Good quality resources are used effectively and contribute to the stimulating curriculum. Although useful evaluation of work takes place in the classroom there are no assessment procedures to enable progress to be regularly gauged and attainments cannot be judged against expected standards. Good use is made of visits to extend the formal curriculum. Pupils visited Bolton museum to see the unique work of Lubaina Himid and have been to the Tate Gallery in Liverpool.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

85. Standards of work are average throughout the school and all pupils, including those with special needs, achieve satisfactorily. Pupils' work shows some good design features. They evaluate their work as it progresses and make changes to improve their design but their work is limited by the absence of a good design brief. Generally, they do not identify who will use their products, what they will be used for and what they want their design to achieve. Throughout the school there are examples of satisfactory and occasionally good work. In Years 3 and 4 pupils design and make photograph frames to a satisfactory standard and in Years 5 and 6 they make a wide a wide variety of toys with moving parts, some to a good standard. Pupils only use a limited range of materials and there is a heavy emphasis on paper based materials. Wood, plastics, metal, food and textiles were only used occasionally and pupils had little opportunity to develop the techniques, skills, processes and knowledge to work with these materials.

86. Only two lessons were observed but the evidence from these and the examination of pupils' work indicates that teaching and learning are satisfactory. In one good lesson with a Year 3 and 4 class the teacher captured the pupils' interest with the choice of topic 'make a monster that moves'. Pupils became very enthusiastic and had many creative ideas. They set their ideas down on paper and although, in many cases, their ideas were too far advanced for their making skills they quickly learnt what worked and what did not and adjusted their design accordingly. Other evidence indicates that pupils are not always clear what they have to do. The set tasks are not specific enough and have no clear parameter.

87. Pupils show much interest in the subject and are particularly keen to be involved in the practical work. Not all teachers make full use of these positive attitudes and some tasks set lack challenge. They

need to make more use of knowledge and skills that pupils have already gained in other subjects such as using a computer to aid design.

88. Management of the subject is satisfactory. New guidelines have been introduced to provide more continuity of learning as pupils move from class to class. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory but there is much potential for raising standards. Resources need strengthening and some teachers need more training and support in this area.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

89. Only two lessons were seen and so judgements are also based on the scrutiny of pupils' work, interesting displays around the school and discussions with teachers and pupils.

90. Standards of work in Year 6 are above average and the high standards identified in the previous inspection have been sustained. These standards represent good achievement. The curriculum enables pupils to learn about countries and place and also acquire correct geographical skills, such as making and understanding maps.

91. Year 6 pupils have a good knowledge of the local area. They understand how geography inevitably links with historical events and that this influences the development of the area. After identifying the development of the village from the year 900 to the present day, pupils recorded the major geographical changes. For example, the expansion of buildings, such as the All Saints Church and the opening of the National School in 1880. Their work reveals an appreciation of the importance of communication and the growth in economy and population caused by the building of the Bridgewater Canal and the Manchester Ship Canal in 1900. Pupils confidently use maps and compared a map dated 1876 with a present day map. They noted that the village had grown much bigger during this time and that some features had been added and others had disappeared. For example, they noted that the railway no longer runs through the village but the Ship Canal is clearly marked. Pupils understand the building of the locks enabled the ships to climb up hill. Pupils also compare life in Pakistan with that in Great Britain. In order to investigate climate they compared maps of both countries and illustrated differences in rainfall diagrammatically with a coloured key. On another set of maps they coloured in land usage and came to the conclusion that Pakistan has more of an agricultural economy than United Kingdom. Pupils use data accurately because teachers give due attention to these skills and so pupils were able to draw a graph showing the populations of the countries. The younger pupils in Years 3 and 4 also follow a worthwhile curriculum and compare Llandudno with Thelwall. They intend to visit Llandudno shortly to carry out fieldwork and have already started their preparation by using maps and statistical information to check on the features to look for during their visit.

92. Overall teaching is good and this is an improvement since the last inspection when it was only satisfactory. Learning is also good because teachers have a good knowledge of geography and their own interest motivates the pupils. As a result pupils find the subject stimulating, concentrate well and behaviour is good. Their attitude makes an important contribution to the high standards in the subject. As well as giving the pupils a wide knowledge of geography the teachers also concentrate on making sure the pupils acquire geographical skills. When collecting information they know how to use the correct questions to obtain the relevant information. For example " Why is this settlement built here?" "Why is irrigation vitally important in one country and not in another?" Consequently they ensure that the pupils are confident reading maps and are aware of the symbols and keys that are necessary for reading them. They show the pupils how to present information they collect in a clear way by using graphs, charts and writing. They encourage the pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills by using co-ordinates, interpreting scale and writing observations. Although the pupils have started using the computers to collect information little use is made of other aspects of ICT such as word processing and data handling.

93. The management of the subject is satisfactory. A comprehensive scheme of work has been introduced and there is an overall plan so that the teachers know what to teach and when. However, assessment and recording of pupils' learning at the end of each topic is at an early stage of development and this was a shortcoming reported at the last inspection. There is a good range of maps in school but more suitable software is required so that ICT can add more support to the subject. Geography makes a worthwhile contribution to the spiritual, social and cultural development of the pupils through the study of countries and places at home and abroad.

## **HISTORY**

94. Due to the arrangement of the timetable only two lessons were observed and therefore judgements are also based on the examination of pupils work and discussions with teachers and pupils.

95. The standards in Year 6 are above average. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were average and has been brought about by better teaching and new planning guidelines. Achievement for pupils of all abilities is good. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the practical approach to history and the effective use of artefacts.

96. In Year 6, pupils study Great Britain since 1930 and have a good understanding of how people's lives changed during the Second World War. They appreciate the difficulties war created for everybody and recognise the need for food rationing and looked at the actual small amounts of food that were allocated to each person weekly. The teachers provide experiences of "living history". For example, the pupils visited the Air Raid Shelter Museum in Stockport to see at first hand what conditions were like when families had to sleep in the damp, dimly lit tunnels during the nights when their homes were being bombed by the Luftwaffe. To make the occasion even more realistic the pupils and staff dressed up in the drab clothes worn at the time and carried a small cardboard gas mask case round their necks. In talking to the pupils it was clear that they had a real feeling of sorrow for the plight of the people during the war and this contributed to the pupils' spiritual development. Pupils used their history skills to find out at first hand evidence about conditions during the war by devising question sheets to send to grandmothers and other people who were alive at that time. Year 6 pupils also study the local history of Thelwall. They recognise the changes in the village and the importance of places they have visited, such as the local church and the original Victorian school which is now being renovated as a family home. History makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development as they learn about how changes have affected their own lives. An item of interest that captured the pupils' interest was the mortuary built mainly to accommodate the bodies of the Irish labourers killed whilst building the Ship Canal. Using their history skills, the pupils were able to create a timeline to pinpoint the dates when significant events took place. Throughout the school, important historical topics are thoroughly taught. Younger pupils study the Tudors and Year 6 pupils recall this work and explain how Henry V111 had problems with the Pope because he wanted to divorce his wife and that this led to the establishment of the Church of England. The pupils were also keen to talk about the sterling voyages of Francis Drake.

97. The quality of teaching and learning are good and this is an improvement since the last inspection when it was satisfactory. A key feature of the teaching is the range of activities planned that makes learning very exciting for pupils. Teachers have good subject knowledge and so much new learning takes place in lessons. Teachers focus very much on teaching historical skills and by providing original resources, pupils acquire the essential skills of enquiry and investigation. For example, pupils investigate history by making surveys, looking at artefacts and studying old documents and newspapers. The teachers also use history lessons to consolidate the skills they have learnt in literacy and numeracy. The teachers have a caring relationship with their pupils and provide interesting topics to study. As a result the pupils co-operate, enjoy their work and behaviour is good. This makes a valuable contribution to the high standards in the subject by creating a learning atmosphere in the classroom. However, ICT is not used enough to support the subject.

98. The management of the subject is satisfactory. A comprehensive scheme of work has been introduced and there is a clear framework to guide teachers' planning. The subject manager checks the half term planning, examines the pupils' books each half term but does not have the opportunity to check on standards in lessons. Assessment and recording procedures are not yet developed enough to guide planning in the subject.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

99. Pupils are taught the basic skills of ICT in the ICT suite for one hour per week. They start at a low base and most achieve satisfactorily although by the time they reach Year 6 their standards are still below average. In these discrete skills lessons pupils in Year 3 and 4 program an electronic vehicle to travel a prescribed path. They can change the font and size and use colour to enhance their work when writing and printing text. However, their work is below average and only covers a very limited range. They have difficulty, for example, in using ICT to explore what happens in real and imaginary situations. In Years 5 and 6 standards of work are higher but still do not reach the standard to be expected from pupils of a similar age. Pupils use the Internet to research information, they have a satisfactory understanding of how to use a spreadsheet to make simple calculations and they store and retrieve information and present it in different forms. However, they are not able to perform a number of tasks that is expected from pupils of this age. For example, they do not use ICT to explore patterns and make predictions about the consequences of their decisions.

100. Pupils' attitudes are good and they are keen to work on computers. They show much interest and are well behaved. Many have computers at home and they say they use the Internet regularly to browse the web, research information and send e-mails.

101. The quality of teaching and learning overall is unsatisfactory mainly because many staff lack the expertise and confidence in teaching ICT. Teachers do not make good use of the ICT resources. This hampers learning because pupils have insufficient opportunities to practise and enhance their ICT skills in a range of different contexts. Some limited use was observed in science, geography and mathematics but there was no evidence of pupils using their word processing skills to draft and re-draft work in English, using graphics in art, or using computers in their literacy and numeracy lessons, for example. However, in a few lessons in the ICT suite the teaching was good. In these lessons good subject knowledge was shared with pupils and they gained new skills and the rate of learning was good.

102. There has been little progress since the last inspection when many of the above mentioned deficiencies were present. Overall, management of the subject is satisfactory because the school is well aware of the situation and has identified it as an urgent priority. New modern computers are on order and staff training will commence immediately after that. Assessment procedures need to be strengthened by building on what is currently in place and opportunities for using ICT in a range of contexts need to be identified and built into planning guidelines.

## **MUSIC**

103. Standards in music are average. This reflects satisfactory achievement for pupils of all abilities. The many positive features identified in the previous inspection are still evident in the school.

104. Singing in assemblies continues to be enthusiastic and pupils obviously enjoy these sessions. Occasionally, pupils sing too loudly and the quality of singing deteriorates. However, this improves in hymn practice because the teacher reminds the pupils of the need to sing tunefully. Consequently,

'Hosanna' was sung joyfully and in comparison 'Peace I give to you' was sung sensitively and a spiritual atmosphere was created.

105. Year 6 pupils are confident when they sing in lessons. They listen carefully to music and pick out and repeat the beat. In the lessons seen for pupils in Years 5 and 6, a key feature was the pupils' willingness to practise and improve. This culminated in a whole class piece of music, which included different and repeating parts. Only when the task led to integrating two different songs did pupils have difficulty in keeping up with the music. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own performance and suggest how they can improve. Listening skills are developed effectively in Years 3 and 4 and the pupils' response to 'Morning' by Grieg showed a vivid sense of imagination. One pupil said, 'I am in green fields, under a tree reading a book' and another could visualise swans swimming. During the inspection there was little evidence of pupils composing their own pieces of music.

106. In the lessons seen, teaching and learning were good. In response to the teachers' enthusiastic approaches lessons are great fun and much new learning takes place. Teachers prepare well and use musical terminology correctly. As a result pupils use 'tempo' and 'pitch' correctly and are beginning to understand that by singing in different groups they are improving the texture of the music. The pace of lessons is often brisk and teachers challenge pupils to include harder tasks and levels of concentration are high. Teachers do not always make it clear how pupils could improve the quality of their singing. This leads to a lack of understanding about the importance of posture and breathing to improve their singing.

107. Many pupils benefit from additional instrumental teaching. These skills are practised in lessons when pupils play their keyboards to accompany the class singing. The school choir is very popular and singing is very good. This extends pupils' social and cultural development. For example, they experienced singing with a mass choir of seven thousand in a recording for the 'Songs of Praise' television programme.

108. Sound management has led to the introduction of new planning guidelines that are providing useful advice for non-specialist teachers. Currently, no monitoring of standards has taken place and there are no systems to assess pupils' progress. This makes it difficult for the subject leader to have a clear understanding of areas that need further attention.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

109. It was only possible to see dance lessons during the inspection. Standards and achievement are good and the standards identified in the previous inspection have been sustained.

110. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have a good understanding about the effects of exercise on their bodies because teachers remind them of this in the warm ups that start all lessons. They control and co-ordinate their movements well. They understand that movement can interpret feelings and moods. However, in the lesson seen a few became too involved in the drama and actions were more like mime than dance. Teachers encourage pupils to plan what they are going to do, to practise what they are to perform and then evaluate and adjust their ideas. As a result, pupils collaborate and enjoy adapting their movements to those of others. In the lessons seen, group activities were a key feature that led to good learning. Some pupils raised questions and took the lead role while others followed and then shared their ideas to improve. These occasions make a positive contribution to the good speaking and listening skills evident in the school.

111. Pupils go swimming in Year 4 and the majority are confident swimmers. Although it was not possible to see any games lessons being taught the school has numerous trophies and photographs to show the school's success in team games.

112. Teaching and learning are good. A positive feature in the lessons seen was the teachers' enthusiasm as they joined in with demonstrations and ample encouragement. Demonstrations are used effectively to foster good effort and performance. A weakness is an over direction of movement and choreography that limits the pupils' creativity. In the best lesson seen this was not the case and the teacher asked the pupils to 'show me an explosion' and the results were varied and imaginative. The weakness in management identified in the previous inspection has been resolved and discipline is now good.

113. A wide range of activities including netball, football, rugby and line dancing extends the formal curriculum. Pupils also experience a range of challenging outdoor activities because every year group goes on an annual residential visit that includes a wide range of interesting activities. Management of the subject is satisfactory. New planning guidelines are in place but the lack of time means these cannot always be followed in sufficient depth. For example, pupils only have dance and gymnastics for one half term a year and so the many strengths identified during the inspection cannot be fully developed.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

114. The standard of work of Year 6 pupils meets the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. The standards identified in the previous inspection have been maintained. The achievement of pupils of all ability is satisfactory. There is a collective act of worship each day that meets requirements and broadens the pupils' spiritual experience and gives them time to think about moral issues and the world around them.

115. Pupils in Year 6 know about important people connected with religion; they investigate world religions and have a satisfactory understanding of religious and moral issues. For example, in one lesson the pupils were discussing rules in society and made up ten rules for the smooth running of their class. They looked at the Ten Commandments in the Bible and compared them with the rules that they had devised. This led into an interesting discussion about rules for the common good. At the end of the lesson the pupils spent some time quietly reflecting on what they had learnt and the session ended suitably with a short prayer. Year 6 pupils recognise that stories in the Bible often carry messages and relate the story of the Good Samaritan to what it would be like to be homeless and in need of help. In Years 3 and 4 the pupils study world religions like Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Pupils compare Christianity with Islam recognising the similarities. Year 6 pupils visited the local church to see artefacts associated with religion at first hand. They know the names and purposes of the baptismal font and the eagle lectern. Year 6 pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of religion. They are familiar with the creation as explained in the Bible and compare this with the 'big bang' theory. The subject contributes to pupils' cultural development as they learn about other world faiths. They understand about the Jewish Passover and the symbolic use of the Seder Plate. They know that the Dredle Candle is used during Hanukkah and about the Hindu festival of Diwali.

116. The school advocates inclusive education both in policy and practice. In religious education lessons, pupils sit in mixed ability groups, all pupils are encouraged to take part in the discussions and pupils of all abilities give their views. For example, in a Year 5 class when talking about the Ten Commandments, two pupils with special educational needs made it clear that they thought school rules were for the benefit of everyone in the school. The progress of pupils with special educational need is satisfactory.

117. The quality teaching is satisfactory and pupils' learning reflects this. This is similar to that reported at the previous inspection. Teachers have a satisfactory knowledge of the subject and provide interesting lessons for the pupils and this enhances their learning. They not only teach knowledge about religion but also try to get the pupils to respond to this knowledge by discussion. This extends learning about how religion can affect the way you live. To reinforce their teaching teachers include a short

reflection at the end of each lesson followed by a short prayer. This aspect of lessons contributes greatly to pupils' spiritual development. Teachers ask effective questions so that the pupils listen carefully and enjoy joining in the discussions. There are good relationships between teachers and pupils and this gives pupils confidence to state their views. This relationship also produces good behaviour and this improves learning. Teachers consolidate literacy skills in lessons because the pupils usually write about the topic under discussion. Teachers have an interesting supply of artefacts especially for world religions in order to make the topic more realistic. Little use is made of ICT to enhance learning in the subject.

118. Management of the subject is satisfactory. A comprehensive scheme of work is used with an overall plan so that teachers know when to teach each topic. There are no procedures for assessing and recording the work covered in order to gauge pupils' progress. Pupils' books are examined at the end of each term to find out the quality of work being produced.