

INSPECTION REPORT

ST TERESA'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Upholland, Skelmersdale

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119695

Headteacher: Mr P. A. Atherton

Reporting inspector: Mr G. D. Timms
[21038]

Dates of inspection: 22nd – 26th May 2000

Inspection number: 197293

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: College Road
Upholland
Skelmersdale
Lancashire

Postcode: WN8 0PY

Telephone number: 01695 623842

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Canon J. D'Arcy

Date of previous inspection: 16th September 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Geof Timms	Registered inspector	Mathematics History Music Physical Education English as an additional language Provision for children under five	The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Eric Langford	Lay inspector	Equal Opportunities	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mike Duggan	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities?
Christina Morgan	Team inspector	English Art Special educational needs	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development The efficiency of the school

The inspection contractor was:

South West Education Services, 4 Wordsworth Close, Exmouth, Devon EX8 5SQ.

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The Registrar, Inspection Quality Division, The Office for Standards in Education, Alexandra House, 33 Kingsway, London WC2B 6SE.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Teresa's Catholic Primary School serves a wide area of mostly private housing between Wigan and Skelmersdale. The school is smaller than most primary schools and has 179 full time pupils aged from 4 to 11 years old. The 4 to 7 year olds are in single age classes. The reception class contains 27 full time pupils. The 8 to 11 year olds are taught English and mathematics in single age groups but are organised in three mixed age classes for most subjects. Attainment on entry to the school is above that normally expected for four year olds.

A below average number of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. The percentage of pupils speaking English as an additional language is very low. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average. An above average percentage of pupils have statements of special educational need, entitling them to extra support. There is a small percentage of pupils who join or leave the school each year and, as the size of year groups is quite small, this can have an effect on the school's test results. The school's current priorities include the further development of systematic monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning; continue to develop assessment strategies; and individual and group target setting.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Teresa's is a good, effective school that has worked hard recently to raise standards and improve the level of pupils' achievements. It is well led and managed by the headteacher, together with his staff and the governing body. The pupils' attitudes towards work and their behaviour are particular strengths. The provision for pupils' social and moral development is very good. The quality of teaching is good overall, with a high proportion that is very good or excellent. Taking all this into account the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are good.
- The good leadership and management have created a shared commitment to the raising of standards.
- The quality of teaching is good overall, and has a high percentage that is very good and excellent.
- The pupils' attitudes towards their learning are very good. Their behaviour is very good and this has a positive effect on their learning.
- The provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. The relationships in the school are very good and help extend pupils' personal development.
- The parents are very involved in their pupils' learning and there are very good procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare.
- The provision for the under fives, including the teaching, is very good.

What could be improved

- Subject coordinators do not have enough opportunities to monitor the teaching and learning in their subjects.
- Assessment information is not used enough in the planning of work or the setting of individual targets.
- The pupils on the lower stages of the special needs register need more specific learning targets, better matched work and improved resources.
- The provision for pupils' cultural development is unsatisfactory.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in September 1996. Improvement since then has been good overall and the school's capacity for improvement is very good. The provision for information technology has been extended and now meets statutory requirements and standards have improved. Work on mathematics and science has improved the opportunities for pupils to use and apply their skills. A wide variety of subject guidance now exists but the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning by subject coordinators is still not fully effective. The school development plan has improved and is a more practical document and a named safety hazard has been addressed. In addition, standards in mathematics and science have improved; the quality of teaching is now good; the provision for the under fives has improved; parental involvement in their pupils' learning has grown and pupils' welfare is now very good. The provision for special educational needs and cultural development are not as good as they were.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	A	C	A	A
mathematics	C	E	D	D
science	B	D	A	A

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

The above table shows results for pupils who have now left the school. In the 1999 national tests for eleven year olds, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in English and science was close to the national average, while in mathematics it was below average. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels was well above average in English and science, and close to the average in mathematics. When compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, attainment in English and science was broadly average, while in mathematics it was below average. The proportion of pupils who reached the higher levels in English and science was well above average, while in mathematics it was broadly in line with the average. The progress towards meeting the school's targets has been good.

In the 1999 national tests for seven year olds, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in reading was well above the national average. In writing and mathematics the proportion was close to the national average. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels was well above average in reading, below average in writing and well below average in mathematics. The teachers' assessments for science show that attainment was below average overall, with a well below average proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels. When compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, attainment in reading was well above average, in writing and mathematics it was broadly in line with the average, while in science it was below average. When comparing the proportion of pupils who reached the higher levels with similar schools, attainment was well above average in reading but below average in writing and well below average in mathematics and science.

The findings of the inspection show that attainment overall has improved since the last inspection and that early indications from the Year 2000 tests are that, especially in mathematics, standards have improved. Standards in literacy and numeracy are good, and in reading skills they are sometimes very good. Extended writing skills are less well developed across other areas of the curriculum. In mathematics and science, standards are good. In 1999 the level of attainment rose at a much faster rate than that found nationally in all three subjects. The attainment of the small proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is good and they make good progress. The pupils with statements of special educational need are well supported and they make good progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	These are very good. Pupils enjoy school and they try hard in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are very well behaved. They are polite, cooperate with others and respect others' property.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are courteous and very good relationships exist in the school. When they are given responsibility they show initiative and respond well.
Attendance	Good.

Pupils are enthusiastic about school and this enhances their learning. The 'buddy' and prefect system for older pupils, which gives them jobs and the opportunity to look after younger ones, gives the pupils real responsibility which they accept willingly and use in a mature way.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching throughout the school is mostly good and it has improved since the last inspection. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. In the reception class the teaching is never less than good and in over half of the lessons it is very good or excellent. At Key Stage 1, the proportion of satisfactory teaching is 36 per cent while half of the teaching is good and in 14 per cent of lessons it is very good. At Key Stage 2, 60 per cent of the teaching is good or better, 12 per cent is very good and 8 per cent is excellent.

The teaching of English and mathematics is good overall and much of it is very good. The literacy and numeracy strategies have been successfully introduced and have had a positive effect on the teaching methods adopted. The major strengths in the teaching are the good brisk pace found in most lessons, the very good relationships teachers have with their pupils and the effective use of question and answer sessions to assess, consolidate and extend pupils' understanding. Where the teaching has weaknesses, they tend to be based on a lack of challenge for the higher attaining pupils, a lack of correctly matched work for pupils on the lower stages of the special needs register and unsatisfactory marking of pupils' work. These stop the school fully meeting the needs of all its pupils. Pupils' learning is very good in the reception class and good in both key stages. Particular strengths are the pupils' interest and concentration on their work and the effort they put into their schoolwork. The presentation of pupils' work is of good quality and supports their learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	There is a good range of learning opportunities, open to all pupils. The provision for children under five is very good. The provision of extra-curricular activities is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for statemented pupils is satisfactory. For other pupils on the special needs register, provision is unsatisfactory due to a lack of specific enough targets, appropriate resources and correctly focused teaching.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The provision is good and the pupils with English as an additional language make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The provision for social and moral education is very good. Spiritual development is satisfactory. Cultural development is unsatisfactory due to a lack of provision for pupils to learn about the diversity of cultures within the wider community.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The procedures for child protection, monitoring and promoting good behaviour and for eliminating bullying are very good.

The school works very effectively with parents and they are fully involved in their child's education. Good opportunities for extra-curricular activities, especially in sport, exist and the school's teams are very successful. All subjects meet statutory requirements but art and music are not used to develop pupils' cultural awareness fully enough. The teachers do not yet use assessment information in planning pupils' work or setting individual targets.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher provides unobtrusive but effective leadership and is well supported by key staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governors fulfil their statutory duties appropriately but need to be more formally involved in holding the school to account and evaluating spending decisions.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school has become more aware of its weaknesses recently and has worked effectively to improve standards.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The financial planning and control are satisfactory and the use of specific grants has been effective. There is a need to review the use of special needs money to ensure best value.

The good leadership and management by the headteacher have helped create an effective and high quality team of teachers. There is a shared commitment to improve and raise standards. The role of subject coordinators needs to develop further so that the very good practice that exists can be spread around. The weaknesses in the accommodation are the lack of an appropriately sized hard play area and the lack of an outdoor play area for the under fives. Resources are weak for special needs and much improved in mathematics. Staffing is appropriate for the size of the school. Overall the school applies the principles of best practice efficiently, except for the use of special educational needs money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What some parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most parents feel comfortable in the school and are happy to approach staff with problems. • Their children like school. • The school expects the children to work hard. • The school is well led and managed. • Standards are high and their children make good progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They want more information about how their child is getting on. • The amount of homework the child receives. • How the school works with parents. • The extra-curricular activities the school provides.

The findings of the inspection confirm the parents' positive views. Most of the information for parents is good, but more information about the topics to be covered each term would be helpful. The amount of homework received is broadly appropriate. A high proportion of parents work very effectively with the school, both in school and at home. The school provides good extra-curricular activities for the older pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. In the 1999 national tests for seven year olds, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in reading was well above the national average. In writing and mathematics the proportion was close to the national average. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels was well above average in reading, below average in writing and well below average in mathematics, which indicates that the provision for the higher attainers has not been very effective. These test results are closely matched by the teachers' own assessments. The teachers' assessments for science show that attainment was below average overall, with a well below average proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels.
2. When compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, attainment in reading was well above average, in writing and mathematics it was broadly in line with the average, while in science it was below average. When comparing the proportion of pupils who reached the higher levels with similar schools, attainment was well above average in reading but below average in writing and well below average in mathematics and science.
3. In the 1999 national tests for eleven year olds, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in English and science was close to the national average, while in mathematics it was below average. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels was well above average in English and science, and close to the average in mathematics. These test results are closely matched by the teachers' own assessments.
4. When compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, attainment in English and science was broadly average, while in mathematics it was below average. When comparing the proportion of pupils who reached the higher levels in English and science, attainment was well above average, while in mathematics it was broadly in line with the average.
5. Over the past four years of national testing, the girls have consistently attained higher levels than the boys in all three subjects. However, the inspection did not produce any significant differences in attainment between boys and girls. The attainment of the small proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is good and they make good progress. The pupils with statements of special educational need are well supported and they make good progress. Those also on the register of special needs, but at a lower level of need do not make the progress they are capable of as not enough of the work is targeted at their specific needs.
6. The trends in the school's levels of attainment at Key Stage 1 since 1996, show that reading has remained at a high level, but writing and mathematics have fallen. This is against the trend nationally of continuous improvement. At Key Stage 2, the trends are much more inconsistent with steep annual rises and falls, largely due to the nature of the cohort. In 1999 the level of attainment rose at a much faster rate than that found nationally in all three subjects. The recent improvement work put into mathematics, in particular, has shown the school that it can have much more of an effect on pupils' attainment than it has in the past. The findings of the inspection show that attainment overall has improved since the last inspection and that early indications from the 2000 tests are that, especially in mathematics, standards have improved.
7. The process to set accurate targets for attainment in English and mathematics has been effective and correctly based on the pupils earlier achievements. The focus of much of the recent improvements in the school has been the achieving of these standards and early indications from

this year's test show that they may have been exceeded. The school does not attempt to devise and set any non-academic targets, although this would help in improving provision, especially for the more able pupils.

8. Standards in literacy and numeracy are good, and in reading skills they are sometimes very good. Extended writing skills are less well developed across other areas of the curriculum. In history and geography in particular, pupils are given few opportunities for developing their writing skills through extended pieces of analytical writing and independent research. Also in geography and in science numeracy skills are used effectively to measure, plot and record information in the form of graphs or charts. Opportunities for developing pupils' research skills in other subjects are missed.
9. The attainment of pupils by the age of five is good. Following on from the good attainment on entry, children under five make good progress and the vast majority are on course to achieve better than expected levels for five year olds, especially in literacy and numeracy, but also in all other areas of learning.
10. In English, most children enter the school with above average language and pre-reading skills. The work seen during the inspection indicates that the school builds effectively on these good basic skills and that most pupils continue to make good progress as they move through the school. Most pupils in both key stages have good speaking and listening skills. Even the youngest children are articulate and express their ideas confidently. Nearly all pupils listen carefully, not only to their teachers but also to each other. They quickly learn the conventions of discussion, do not interrupt and respond appropriately to what has been said. Standards of reading are good in both key stages. The most able pupils read fluently and expressively, and demonstrate enjoyment and interest in reading. Less fluent readers have a good basic sight vocabulary and use a range of decoding skills, including context and picture clues and word building. They demonstrate an awareness of punctuation but read more mechanistically with less expression. However, at Key Stage 2, pupils' knowledge of and interest in a wide range of authors and literary genres is comparatively poorly developed.
11. In Key Stage 1, pupils make satisfactory progress in writing overall, but their creative writing does not always reflect their good vocabulary and general knowledge. Standards of presentation are high and in Year 3 pupils can build on this good start to develop a clear and well-formed style of joined handwriting. By Year 2 punctuation and sentence structure are well developed but standards in spelling are more erratic. The school maintains a strong emphasis on providing regular opportunities for pupils to write creatively, in a range of different styles and for a range of different purposes. There is less evidence, however, of the systematic development of spelling skills and the quality and range of vocabulary in pupils' writing in general does not reflect the good language skills evident in class discussions.
12. In mathematics, the evidence of the inspection shows that at Key Stage 1 the present standards are above average and the early indications from this year's tests show that a higher proportion of pupils are attaining the higher levels. Pupils in Year 2 are able to use place value to explain why, for example, 432 is bigger than 423. Higher attaining pupils can round numbers up and down and work on activities with numbers to 1000. Others can correctly find missing numbers on number lines to 1000 and the less able use computer activities to do the same with numbers to 100. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are above average and over three-quarters of the pupils are achieving at the expected level or higher. In mental work, pupils in Year 6 can work out multiplication and division to three decimal places. The higher attainers use approximation as part of rounding up and down activities. Most are beginning to understand the difference between mean and median. They know a variety of types of symmetry and all pupils demonstrate a good understanding of angles. Attainment in Years 3 and 4 is close to that expected for their ages. In Year 5 good attainment is evident. Pupils know terms such as mode, tally and axis. They can

create good bar graphs and extend this into devising a way of putting two lots of information on one graph. Higher attainers are able to enter data quickly onto computers and produce a variety of graphs.

13. In science, attainment at the end of both key stages is above the nationally expected standard, which is an appreciable improvement since the last inspection. At that time, pupils' investigative and experimental skills were considered to be under-developed, a situation which has now been satisfactorily resolved. At Key Stage 1, pupils' development of skills, understanding and knowledge is good, as it is for those with special educational needs. By the end of the key stage they know that light comes from a variety of sources, including the sun. They describe simple electrical circuits, and they know that forces make things speed up, slow down and change direction. They explain clearly the classification of materials. Most pupils in the key stage know that taking exercise and eating the right kind of food help humans to keep healthy. In Key Stage 2, pupils' learning continues to be good, especially in the later years. By the end of the key stage, they have a good knowledge and understanding of a range of scientific facts. They correctly classify creatures as carnivore, herbivore and omnivore while working on life processes and living things. Pupils recognise when a test is fair or unfair and understand why.
14. In information technology, standards of attainment are satisfactory at both key stages, and close to what pupils of seven and eleven are expected to achieve nationally. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were reported as unsatisfactory and is due to improved resources and staff expertise. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils can use a simple word-processor and some higher attainers can save, retrieve and print their work. They also control the mouse well enough to create pictures and patterns. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are using word-processing programs to write stories, labels and in some cases do their homework. Many use database programs to handle information and display it graphically. Standards in the control and modelling aspects of the curriculum, and the use of spreadsheets, are less well developed.
15. In all other subjects most pupils reach the expected levels and they make largely good progress. Standards are good in physical education. However, in music achievement is weaker in composing, listening and appraising. There is some underachievement among the more able pupils and the standards attained by the higher attaining pupils, especially in English, science, design technology and history, do not always reflect their ability.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

16. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are eager and display very good attitudes towards their work. This is an improvement over the findings of the last inspection. The great majority of pupils listen well, demonstrate high levels of commitment to their work and many show themselves to be well-motivated and enthusiastic learners. The great majority of pupils are able to sustain high levels of concentration during their lessons and collaborate well with others in both group and paired activities.
17. The standard of pupil behaviour in and around the school is very good. Pupils display a very good degree of confidence and self-discipline in their work and play which serves to enhance the positive relationships that exist between staff and pupils. The well-structured system of rewards and sanctions are clearly understood by pupils, applied in a fair and consistent manner by staff and proving to be successful in promoting the very good behaviour and discipline observed during the inspection.
18. The school has only excluded one pupil from school over the last five years. There was no evidence of bullying during the inspection, and the school is rightly proud to have no recorded incidents in this area for two years. Parents and pupils agree that the few occasions of

inappropriate behaviour that occur are swiftly and effectively dealt with to the benefit of all involved.

19. A further strength of the school is the very good relationships that exist between pupils, and between pupils and adults. Pupils are friendly and considerate towards each other, to staff and to visitors. They demonstrate by their actions, and through conversations, that they know right from wrong. Many display a natural sensitivity and awareness to the needs of others, and good examples were seen in the school of unsolicited help and support being offered to other pupils, in particular to those pupils with physical and learning difficulties. Of particular note are the very good relationships that exist between pupils and adults in the school with, for example, friendly greetings being regularly exchanged and doors being held open for others to pass through. Pupils happily take turns without question and willingly share with each other. They treat property and learning resources with care. Overall a welcoming and warm family atmosphere of consideration, care and tolerance of others permeates the whole school.
20. The school provides pupils with a very good range of opportunities for their individual development. The children who are under five learn to share, co-operate and work together well. In specific personal and social education lessons, they learn to take turns and respect others' opinions. Pupils willingly accept their assigned responsibilities and take a pride in performing these to the best of their abilities. Year 6 pupils eagerly take up and perform the range of whole school responsibilities offered to them. In particular, their close involvement with the younger pupils, and the guidance and support they provide in the classroom, dining hall and playground, provides benefit to both sets of pupils and enhances their collective learning and social skills development.
21. Pupil attendance is good and has been maintained at this level since the last inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, enjoy coming to school and records show an excellent record of no unauthorised absence over the past five years. Punctuality within the school is very good and lessons start on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

22. The quality of teaching throughout the school is mostly good and it has improved since the last inspection. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. In the reception class the teaching is never less than good and in over half of the lessons it is very good or excellent. At Key Stage 1, the proportion of satisfactory teaching is 36 per cent while half of the teaching is good and in 14 per cent of lessons it is very good. At Key Stage 2, 60 per cent of the teaching is good or better, 12 per cent is very good and 8 per cent is excellent.
23. In the reception class the teaching demonstrates a very good understanding of the needs of young children and of the agreed desirable outcomes for their learning. The teacher works well with the nursery nurse, and all adults have high expectations of the children's work and behaviour. The lesson planning contains clear objectives and lessons are characterised by very good pace. For example, the literacy and numeracy strategies have been effectively adapted for the younger children and activities are kept at an appropriate length, with changes between parts of the lessons brisk and lively.
24. At Key Stages 1 and 2 the introduction of the literacy and numeracy daily lessons has been well managed and this has resulted in effective teaching in both subjects. Teachers have worked hard to implement the new frameworks and to adapt their teaching methods successfully. Subject knowledge in most subjects is at least satisfactory and the teaching of science, in particular, has improved since the last inspection. The best lessons in both key stages are characterised by a brisk pace, well-planned activities and a good match between pupils' abilities and their prior attainment. Expectations of pupils' work and behaviour are often high. The teachers use questioning skills

well to extend and consolidate learning, by targeting specific questions at particular pupils, for whom they are appropriate.

25. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is often good. Those with statements of need are well supported by class teachers and support staff. The teaching of those on lower levels of the register is less successful due to the lack of specific targets and of work at an appropriate level. However, the support they receive helps them to take a full part in the ordinary work of the class. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is good and has resulted in the small number of pupils affected making good progress.
26. Where the good teaching has weaknesses, they are often caused by an unsatisfactory match of work to pupils, especially the higher attainers, or those on the lower stages of the special needs register. This is the result of all the work and activities being pitched at the middle ability pupils and occurs particularly in English and foundation subjects. Teachers do not use the results of assessment effectively enough in planning the work. A scrutiny of the pupils' books shows that, although it does give praise, the marking of pupils' work is not very detailed; it does not give pupils ideas for how they can improve or how well they have achieved the objective of the lesson; little of the work is annotated to illustrate levels of attainment. In history, important historical vocabulary is not corrected when wrongly spelt.
27. Homework is used more effectively than it was at the time of the last inspection. In particular, the homework for mathematics was praised by parents for the way it extended and consolidated the work done in school.

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

28. The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum for the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education, despite increased emphasis on literacy and numeracy. This is an improvement since the last inspection when information technology lacked balance and limited investigative activities in science and mathematics reduced the breadth of the curriculum. Control and modelling in information technology are still limited but the recent purchase of new resources is already beginning to have a positive impact. The planning and staff training for literacy and numeracy have ensured the effective implementation of these strategies. The curriculum for children who are under five is very good and well planned within the areas of learning for children of this age. Personal, social and health education is well promoted throughout the school. Sex education and drugs awareness are dealt with on a regular basis by the school nurse and police respectively, with parental approval. Statutory requirements are met for all subjects.
29. All subjects have satisfactory policies and some are particularly helpful and detailed. The science document is especially useful in outlining the skills to be developed as pupils move through the school. Schemes of work were produced and adapted after the last inspection but have been overtaken by national strategies. The school plans to review the policies and schemes to reflect the new Curriculum 2000 materials, in force from next term. The school uses a range of schemes from commercial to local authority sources, together with ones produced within the school. Most of these offer clear guidance on the development of pupils' knowledge and skills. The school is effective in fostering pupils' intellectual and physical development, preparing them well for secondary education. Very good links have been established with feeder institutions and the local secondary school, which ensure smooth transition between the stages.
30. Strategies to ensure that all pupils have equality of access to the planned curriculum are securely in place. Teachers of mixed age group classes work effectively together to plan similar provision. Provision for pupils with statements of special educational need is good, but support for those on

the lower stages of the register is unsatisfactory. Overall, individual education plans do not contain specifically detailed targets to move pupils' learning on. There is no policy for provision for more able pupils' in place. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are very well supported by the curriculum provided.

31. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities and they enhance pupils' attainment, especially in physical education and music. Sporting activities include netball, football, rugby, rounders and athletics. Pupils play inter-school matches in all these areas. Visiting teachers give lessons on a range of instruments including woodwind and strings. The school makes effective use of educational visits and visitors to school. Educational trips have included visits to Jodrell Bank, Formby and an agricultural college. An annual Year 6 residential trip to a Shropshire adventure park promotes pupils' social development.
32. The school promotes a caring and positive learning environment within which staff provide equality of opportunity to all pupils, irrespective of gender, ability, ethnicity and social background. Staff are alert to the differing needs and capabilities of the pupils and teachers plan and deliver a standard of education that fully embraces the equality of opportunity to all. Effective systems are in place to monitor and review the practice of equality of opportunity in the school and to ensure that the full range of learning opportunities are made available.
33. The school's promotion of pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory but pupils have limited opportunities either in assemblies or lessons to reflect on issues of major importance or to develop a sense of awe and wonder. In the reception class, opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own feelings are effectively built into the curriculum, but this was not a strong feature in the rest of the school where an atmosphere of purposeful enthusiasm and application prevailed over a more contemplative and reflective way of working.
34. The school makes a very positive contribution to its pupils' social and moral development. Pupils work in a caring and supportive atmosphere, which encourages good relationships and raises self-esteem. The school is very good at promoting principles that distinguish right from wrong, and high expectations of behaviour and consideration for others are constantly reinforced by calm and consistent class routines. Expectations of good behaviour are so intrinsic to the life of the school that teachers rarely have to remind pupils of their need to behave appropriately. The promotion of values such as caring for others form an integral part of the life of the school and pupils work together co-operatively and play amicably in the playground almost without exception. The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities, particularly in sport, which greatly enhance pupils' social development. The involvement of pupils in the life of the school has been increased by the development of a 'buddy' system whereby older pupils take on additional responsibilities for younger children outside at lunch times, playtimes and in classrooms during wet lunchtimes. This effectively increases their sense of social responsibility and they carry out their role with confidence and self-assurance.
35. The quality of provision for pupils' cultural development is unsatisfactory which is a less positive picture than that found at the previous inspection. Most pupils share a common cultural background but are given few opportunities to appreciate their local heritage either in geography or history. There is little evidence that pupils are aware of the diversity of cultures within the wider community. The school's recent lack of focus on creative subjects, such as art and music, has further limited opportunities for exploring a wide range of cultures. Insufficient use is made of the major local art galleries within easy travelling distance of the school. Little evidence of musical appreciation, even through listening to music at the beginning or end of assembly, was seen during the inspection. Opportunities for a profound exploration of a wide range of literature are not effectively built into the English curriculum.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. The school provides a very good standard of care and welfare for pupils and this is a more positive finding than at the last inspection. The manner in which the school has developed procedures for child protection, the promotion of good behaviour and the health and safety of the pupils is very good and is one of the school's major strengths.
37. Teachers and support staff know their pupils well. All staff display a high level of care and concern for the pupils and there is evidence of the very good rapport and respect that exists between pupils and staff. Pupils feel safe and happy and have the confidence and independence to raise any queries and concerns they may have with staff. Very effective pupil registration systems are in place that fully comply with statutory requirements and incorporate very good whole school recording and monitoring procedures, to report on and manage all incidents of pupil absence from school.
38. The very good and well-established behaviour management routines help to enhance and promote the self-image of pupils and contribute greatly to their very good attitudes to learning. Great emphasis is placed on promoting good behaviour and the school has effective systems in place to encourage and reward pupils' good work and behaviour. The comprehensive whole school behaviour policy is discussed and personalised within each classroom to provide each pupil with a meaningful focus of the school's expectations and rewards for good behaviour and effort. The clear, simple and well-displayed code of conduct is understood by pupils, applied in a fair and consistent manner by staff and successfully used to promote the very good behaviour to be seen in and around the school. During the inspection there was no evidence of any bullying or harassment of pupils. Pupils are aware of the need to inform staff of any inappropriate behaviour of others and past incidents are judged by parents and pupils to have been swiftly and effectively dealt with by staff.
39. Very good child protection procedures are in place, which are understood and acted upon by staff in the best interests of the pupils. Staff are aware of, and regularly monitor, the well being and welfare of the pupils in their care and respond in a discreet and sensitive manner to any personal queries raised with them. Very good arrangements are in place for the correct management and notification of pupil injuries and accidents that occur in school.
40. Good and effective strategies have been established to support pupils who have special educational needs, and especially those with statements of special need. The ongoing review of their targets and progress in consultation with their parents is effective. The school complies with the code of practice and liaises well with external agencies. Individual education plans are completed in line with requirements and are easily accessible for reference and use in the classroom. However, the targets set for some pupils at stage 1, 2 and 3 are insufficiently detailed and have a greater stress on the integration of the pupil into the classroom rather than addressing the pupil's specific individual need.
41. The school has established very good health and safety procedures that embrace the whole spectrum of the pupils' time in the school. During the time of the inspection staff and pupils demonstrated very good health and safety awareness. Fire evacuation drills are undertaken each term and regular health and safety inspections are carried out with all report recommendations being considered by governors and acted upon. The school premises are maintained to a satisfactory level of cleanliness and the whole school site provides a very safe and secure environment for both pupils and staff alike.
42. The procedures for the assessment and monitoring of academic performance in the core subjects of mathematics and science are good, and judged to be broadly satisfactory in English and the

foundation subjects. Teachers know their pupils well although there is no systematic whole school approach to utilising these procedures to aid teachers' planning and the recording of pupils' achievements. Class records are used effectively as part of the planning cycle to record curriculum coverage and experience gained. The use of this information to support and guide curricular planning and the effective tracking of pupils' academic progress through the school is limited, thus making it difficult for teachers to provide work which is correctly meeting the needs of all pupils.

43. The mix of formal and informal systems for monitoring and supporting the academic and personal development of pupils is satisfactory. Teachers and subject co-ordinators work well together on an informal basis to support and monitor pupils' academic and personal development in the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44. Very good partnership links are in place and they provide for the full involvement of parents in all aspects of their children's education and personal development. This represents an improvement in the effectiveness of the partnership than that found at the last report. Parents are very supportive of the school, hold the staff in high regard and believe their children receive a very high standard of care and education. The school welcomes and actively encourages all parents to become fully involved in their children's learning. The teachers greatly appreciate the voluntary contribution of the high proportion of regular parent helpers who provide a valuable and well-planned input to the classroom activities and learning of the pupils. The school also benefits from the many parents and friends of the school who voluntarily support the school on a more casual and ad-hoc basis
45. The close working liaison that exists between teachers and many of the parents has a significant impact on the continuity and quality of pupils' learning and the good progress they are achieving. In particular, the school works hard to ensure the full involvement of parents in the development and review of those children who have been identified with having special educational needs.
46. Overall the quality of information provided to parents is very good, although parents would like a return to an earlier system that gave them information about the pupils' upcoming work during the next term. There are weekly newsletters, organised meetings and workshops designed to raise parental awareness to curriculum matters.
47. Parents have a high regard for the very good induction programmes the school organises for the quick and smooth introduction of new parents and pupils into the daily routines of life in the school. Of equal note are the very good transition arrangements for Year 6 pupils moving up to secondary education and the positive manner in which parents are kept fully involved.
48. The termly parent and teacher consultation meetings are highly valued by parents and provide very good opportunities for parents to discuss and review their child's progress and achievements. Of note is the willingness of teachers to listen to, and make time for, any parents who have concerns and queries about their child's education and development. Many parents praised the positive response they received from teachers and the help they were given on various aspects of their children's learning, both in the home and in school.
49. An effective home-school agreement system is in place and provides for the regular and quality exchange of information between teachers and parents via the medium of the pupil's home reading books and assigned homework. End of year reports are well written and informative. However, they do not always show clear learning targets for the future.
50. The ongoing development of the school's partnership arrangements with parents has helped to promote the good name of the school, raise a positive awareness amongst parents to the successes being achieved in pupil development and provides significant benefits and enrichment to the pupils' learning environment and individual development opportunities.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. There is good, unobtrusive leadership and management shown by the headteacher and senior staff and this has resulted in good improvement to the work of the school since the last inspection. A good, strong team of teachers has been built with strengths throughout the school, including for the under fives. There is a clear educational direction to the work of the school and a shared focus on improving standards. This is well illustrated by the amount of work recently and successfully put into improving standards in mathematics. The mission statement and aims for the school's work are based on its Catholic ethos and are largely met.

52. The school development plan has improved since the last inspection when it was criticised for containing too many initiatives. There is now a good balance of new plans and the consolidation of other aspects of the school's work. The link to the school's budget is not always specific and detailed enough but the plan provides the school with a sound document that summarises the next twelve months' improvements in enough detail. A version of appraisal is in place and linked to teacher development needs. Effective induction procedures have been established for new staff and good systems are in place to support the teachers in training at the school.
53. The role of subject coordinators has been developed since the last inspection, but more formal monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are now needed, especially in English and foundation subjects. This would enable the spread of good practice and help raise coordinators awareness of weaknesses in their subject. The coordinators for literacy and numeracy have successfully overseen the introduction of the recent national strategies, and this work has resulted in improvements to the standards pupils have achieved. In addition the literacy work in the school has been managed to ensure that time is still available for creative and extended writing. In mathematics, more monitoring has taken place, involving the headteacher, coordinator, numeracy governor and local authority adviser. This good practice needs to spread to all subjects when time and finances allow. Some confusion still exists between the role of the assessment co-ordinator and that of subject co-ordinators in the core subjects who do not undertake detailed analysis of the results of standardised tests in their own subject areas. This prevents them from developing a clear analysis of areas for development and priorities for spending.
54. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities effectively and all statutory requirements are met. Although recently a lot of new governors have been recruited the systems are in place to ensure that its work is efficient, organised and for the benefit of the school. In particular, the work of the premises committee has been very effective in overseeing the improvements to the buildings. However, there is a need to review the ways the governors judge the effectiveness of their decisions and how successful initiatives have proved in practice. The governors with specific links to areas of the school's work, such as numeracy, literacy and special needs, are knowledgeable and able to effectively hold the results the school achieves to account. Most governors visit the school regularly, but there is a need to create more formal opportunities during the day to see the school in action and to become more involved in the school development planning process.
55. The special educational needs coordinator has received insufficient training in the role and although she has regular advice from outside agencies, does not have the expertise to support colleagues effectively or provide in-school training for classroom assistants. Pupils with statements of special educational need are well supported by classroom assistants but pupils on Levels 1 to 3 of the register are not having their specific learning difficulties adequately addressed at present, as they are receiving no additional support. Existing resources are unsatisfactory and essentially limited to additional reading schemes.
56. The management of pupils with English as an additional language has been a recent development at the school. This has been effectively managed with the result that the pupils and families affected are very happy with the support that has been offered, and with the progress made.
57. Staffing costs and expenditure per pupil are higher than average. Staff are generally well deployed, although the coordinator for special needs has a full time classroom teaching commitment and is unable as a consequence to fulfil her role adequately. Support staff are not always used effectively in lessons. At present, an additional lunchtime supervisor has been funded from the special needs budget and the impact of this spending has not been sufficiently evaluated in terms of educational outcomes.

58. Educational priorities are supported by sound financial planning. For instance, there has been additional investment in resources for mathematics in the light of the school's relatively poor results at Key Stage 2 in 1999. Major spending is linked closely to the priorities in the school development plan. However, not all spending decisions are evaluated in terms of their impact on learning. For example, the school has continued to spend large sums on consumable phonic workbooks without considering their effectiveness with pupils who enter the school with above average phonic awareness. At the same time, the school needs more sets of group readers for use in the literacy hour. Overall, the school does apply the principles of best value satisfactorily.
59. Specific additional grants are used appropriately for their designated purpose. A recent grant has enabled the school to buy in bursarial help in order to monitor the spending of specific grants and to release the head teacher for a more extended monitoring of teaching role. Sums raised by the parent-teacher organisation, make a substantial contribution to the budget.
60. The school is largely well resourced although there are weaknesses resources for special educational needs, and a need to build up resources in history. The staffing of the school is appropriate and generally efficiently deployed. There are times when the support staff are not fully or effectively utilised during whole class teaching. The accommodation has a balance of strengths and weaknesses. The new extensions have clearly improved the teaching areas, and the grounds are very good. However, there are no quiet areas on the playground and the extensions have reduced the hard play area available for break-times and sports. This needs urgently addressing. In addition, the multi-purpose hall is too small for the large classes of older pupils physical education lessons and there is no outdoor hard play area appropriate for the reception class.
61. The internal decoration of the school is aesthetically pleasing and very good use has been made of bright colours in most of the teaching areas to give a warm and welcoming feel to the school. Walls and flat surfaces around the school are well decorated with examples of pupils' work, photographs of their achievements and a mixture of colourful educational materials, all of which provide for attractive and informative displays in support of pupils' learning. There is no evidence of vandalism, litter or graffiti and the school accommodation is judged to provide a good and safe environment for pupils and staff alike.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. To continue the good improvement made since the last inspection, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

Develop the role of subject coordinators further, through increased monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, in order to recognise and spread the good practice that exists.

(Paragraphs 53, 83, 92, 99, 116, 127, 132)

Improve the use of assessment information by:

- improving the marking of pupils' work;
- introducing an evaluative reading record;
- ensuring the identification of assessment opportunities in teachers' lesson planning;
- ensuring the identification and provision of challenging enough work for the higher attaining pupils.

(Paragraphs 14, 26, 30, 42, 76, 81, 82, 91, 98, 107, 110, 115, 117, 119, 127, 133)

The above issues have been recognised by the school and form part of the school development plan.

Improve the provision for pupils with special educational needs by:

- providing training to improve staff expertise;
 - evaluating the present use of money for special educational needs and improving resources;
 - writing more specific short term targets in individual education plans;
 - providing work better matched to the needs of pupils on the special educational needs register.
- (Paragraphs 25, 30, 40, 55, 57, 60, 73, 74, 81, 86, 91)

Improve the provision for pupils' cultural development, especially through art and music.
(Paragraphs 35, 101, 129, 132)

In addition, the governing body should consider including the following, less important issues in their action plan:

Improving the systems for judging the success of spending; (Paragraphs 54, 58, 59)

Continue the planned work on extending the playground and providing an outdoor area for the children under five; (Paragraphs 60, 64, 70)

Explore ways of using pupils' basic numeracy and literacy skills in the foundation subjects more effectively. (Paragraphs 7, 79, 115, 117)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	45
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
7	18	42	33	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/a	179
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/a	6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/a	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/a	24

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	5.8
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		1999	14	10

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	13	13
	Girls	9	8	9
	Total	23	21	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96	88	92
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	12
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	22	22	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92	92	88
	National	82	86	87

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		1999	10	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	6	9
	Girls	12	11	13
	Total	20	17	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77	65	85
	National	70	69	78

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	6	9
	Girls	12	11	13
	Total	18	17	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	69	65	85
	National	68	69	75

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	179
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.2
Average class size	29.8

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	72

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.

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	293 656
Total expenditure	294 798
Expenditure per pupil	1 656
Balance brought forward from previous year	18 756
Balance carried forward to next year	17 614

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	179
Number of questionnaires returned	106

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	25	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	58	37	4	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	52	42	2	2	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	38	16	1	2
The teaching is good.	58	37	3	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	54	34	8	4	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	74	24	1	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	32	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	51	38	9	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	60	38	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	41	3	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	42	43	9	2	4

Other issues raised by parents

Parents are concerned about the reduced size of the playground now that the building has been extended. The inspection team share this concern.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

63. The provision for the children who are under five has improved since the last inspection and is now very good. The quality of the teaching has improved and resources and accommodation have been developed. The children's attainment when they enter the school, as shown by the baseline assessments, is higher than average. The very good teaching and support provided enable them to make good progress during the reception year. The planning is based on the nationally agreed desirable learning outcomes. When they reach the age of five, the transfer to work within Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum is seamlessly achieved.
64. The quality of teaching for the under fives is very good. The teaching and non-teaching staff work well together as a team and have a good knowledge and understanding of the needs of younger pupils. Good routines are established at the start and end of the day, and children take responsibility for clearing away after activities. The resources are good and all lessons are very well planned and prepared to enable effective learning to take place. The school is aware of the need to improve the outdoor play provision for the under fives as this is unsatisfactory at present.

Personal and social development

65. The children make good progress and they are on course to exceed expected levels by the time they are five. They learn to share, co-operate and work together well. In specific personal and social education lessons, children learn to take turns and respect others' opinions. The teacher has a range of good strategies for developing this, including the use of puppets to encourage appropriate behaviour. The children learn to express themselves clearly and they are very keen and confident when exploring new learning.

Language and literacy

66. The baseline assessment shows that the present reception year entered the school with above average skills in reading and very good phonic skills for their ages. The very good teaching builds on this sound foundation and the majority of the children are on line to exceed the expected level by the time they are five. Good progress in reading and writing skills has been made. Speaking and listening skills are a focus for much of the work and children often express themselves clearly and in complete sentences. When reading, the average and above average children show a good grasp of the basic skills. Their records show that a great deal of reading has taken place and that parents offer very good support by hearing children read at home. The use of an appropriate text in the daily literacy lesson has created good listening skills and good word recognition skills. The higher attainers can sort three-letter words into families while the middle attaining pupils can link initial letters and vowel/consonant blends to create three-letter words. The less able pupils are learning to write by copying adults writing.

Mathematics

67. On entry to the school children's attainment in mathematics is good. Good progress is made and children will achieve the expected level by the time they are five. The teacher's planning is based on the National Numeracy Strategy and creates a good environment for challenging and extending children's learning. Over three-quarters of the pupils are able to count to 50 in ones and fives, with the teacher leading, and to count to and from 100 in tens and fives. They know the properties of a square and rectangle. The use of number rhymes and songs is beginning to develop into

recognisable calculations such as $3-1=2$. Good use of mathematical language enables the children to extend their understanding of concepts such as taller, shorter, largest and smallest.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

68. Most children are achieving a good level in their knowledge and understanding of the world and will exceed the expected level by the time they are five. They make good progress. In science, they know the difference between light and dark, bright and dark colours. Through good teacher demonstration they learn that red and yellow cellophane can create orange. The interactive displays give children the opportunity to handle and experiment with torches and different materials. Children learn about different celebrations such as birthdays and Christmas, as well as specific aspects of the Catholic faith. Good opportunities to use construction apparatus to design and create a variety of models are provided, and children approach this work with confidence and interest. Evidence of a range of work using the computer is rare, but children do use tapes and headphones with confidence.

Creative development

69. By the age of five, most children will exceed the expected level of attainment, and they are making good progress. They have many opportunities to explore a variety of materials when making collages and paintings. They print using a variety of materials and experiment with the effects produced. Imaginative play is evident in many activities, including the use of soft dough and sand. The class has café and office areas set up for imaginative play which children take part in with interest and enjoyment. Music is used daily as children sing a lot of rhymes and number songs. In addition, in music lessons they can clap and recognise beats and rhythms representing names, and they can control their voices effectively to sing softly or squeakily.

Physical development

70. By the age of five, children will match or exceed the expected level. They make good progress. No physical education lessons were observed but a lot of opportunities for handling tools and a variety of soft or hard materials are provided. The planning shows that children have the opportunity to use gymnastic and games apparatus appropriately. The reception class does not have an appropriate hard outdoor play area and this hinders their physical development.

ENGLISH

71. The Key Stage 1 test results in 1999 show the numbers of pupils reaching the required standards in reading as well above the national average, with nearly half of the pupils reaching a higher level. However, the performance of pupils in writing was less good, with the numbers reaching the required standard, close to the national average. No pupils reached the higher level in writing. There was no significant difference in the performance of girls and boys. In reading, pupils' performance is well above that of schools with a similar intake, but in writing pupils' performance is broadly in line with the results achieved in similar schools.

72. The Key Stage 2 test results in 1999 show the numbers of pupils reaching the required national standards in English as close to the national average although nearly half the pupils reached the higher level. The performance of girls was significantly better than that of the boys, although no differences were identified during the inspection. Pupils' results were well above average in comparison with those in schools with similar pupils.

73. This indicates that the above average attainment, noted in the last inspection report, is being maintained. Pupils with special educational needs, who do not have a statement, now receive less support than at the time of the last inspection and make only satisfactory progress. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress.
74. Most children enter the school with above average language and pre-reading skills. The work seen during the inspection indicates that the school builds effectively on these good basic skills and that most pupils continue to make good progress as they move through the school. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress when given additional adult support and satisfactory progress at other times. Teachers work hard to integrate pupils with special educational needs into all activities, but without additional adult support in classrooms, they are not able to address the specific learning difficulties of individual pupils. Individual learning programmes are largely very general and often do not include measurable short-term targets, specific to the needs of individual pupils.
75. Most pupils in both key stages have good speaking and listening skills. Even the youngest children are articulate and express their ideas confidently. Nearly all pupils listen carefully, not only to their teachers but also to each other. They quickly learn the conventions of discussion, do not interrupt and respond appropriately to what has been said. In Year 5, pupils demonstrate an understanding of the concept of a counter argument, can articulate both sides of an issue and incorporate this into their writing.
76. Evidence gathered during the inspection confirms that standards of reading are good in both key stages. The most able pupils read fluently and expressively, and demonstrate enjoyment and interest in reading. They can discuss the plot and characters and predict events using evidence from the text to justify their viewpoint. Less fluent readers have a good basic sight vocabulary and use a range of decoding skills, including context and picture clues and word building. They demonstrate an awareness of punctuation but read more mechanistically with less expression. In Key Stage 1, pupils' reading skills are developed by a very structured progress through the stages of a published reading scheme. Pupils' interest and enthusiasm for reading would be better developed by the inclusion of a wider range of interesting group readers as the focus for guided reading sessions. In Key Stage 2, pupils are introduced to a range of interesting authors such as Laurie Lee and Penelope Lively through a published scheme of selected extracts. However these are not effectively built on and pupils' knowledge of and interest in a wide range of authors and literary genres are comparatively poorly developed. Pupils' effective mastery of the necessary skills warrants a more ambitious approach to the development of pupils' critical appreciation of a wide range of literature.
77. In Key Stage 1, pupils make satisfactory progress in writing overall, but their creative writing does not always reflect their good vocabulary and general knowledge. Standards of presentation are high and in Year 3 pupils can build on this good start to develop a clear and well-formed style of joined handwriting. By Year 2 punctuation and sentence structure are well developed but standards in spelling are more erratic. Many pupils rely on the class teacher for help with spellings. They are not encouraged to apply the word building skills developed in their reading to their creative writing and they do not use dictionaries and a thesaurus regularly or systematically. There is an unfocused and blanket use of phonic workbooks that does little to develop pupils' spelling skills. More effective assessment of pupils' individual knowledge and understanding of spelling conventions and rules would result in more careful and effective targeting of resources on those pupils who have specific difficulties.
78. The school maintains a strong emphasis on providing regular opportunities for pupils to write creatively, in a range of different styles and for a range of different purposes. In Year 3, for example, pupils use a traditional fairy tale as a stimulus for writing their own sad or happy endings.

In Year 4 pupils begin to investigate the style and vocabulary of persuasive writing and by Year 5 pupils are writing persuasively to their head teacher in the hope of getting him to set up a school tuck shop! In Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress in their writing; presentation, punctuation and sentence structure are good. There is less evidence, however, of the systematic development of spelling skills and the quality and range of vocabulary in pupils' writing in general do not reflect the good language skills evident in class discussions.

79. Extended writing skills are however less well developed across other areas of the curriculum. In history and geography in particular, pupils are given few opportunities for developing their writing skills through extended pieces of analytical writing and independent research. Pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour, combined with their mastery of the essential writing skills, would again warrant a more ambitious approach to fostering independent study skills. Equally opportunities within the literacy hour for developing pupils' exploration of aspects of the history and geography curriculum are missed.
80. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work and concentrate for extended periods of time even when not directly supervised. Relationships with teachers and between pupils are very good and a harmonious and purposeful working atmosphere is a characteristic of all classrooms.
81. The quality of teaching in English in both key stages is good overall and there is no unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers have high expectations of the quality and quantity of work to be achieved and there is a largely unspoken understanding in all lessons that pupils will behave appropriately. On a few occasions pupils were expected to sit too long on the carpet during introductory text work and this resulted in a loss of pupil attention and concentration. Teachers plan their lessons carefully, although the learning objectives are frequently couched in terms of the activities to be covered. As a result pupils are fully aware of what they are supposed to be doing but not necessarily why. The texts used in the literacy hour are generally used well as a context for the grammar and writing tasks and most lessons have a coherent and logical structure. In the best lessons, teachers provide a range of tasks, appropriately matched to pupils' abilities. Occasionally the tasks provide limited opportunities for the more able pupils to extend and develop their ideas creatively and imaginatively. Equally the specific learning difficulties of pupils with special educational needs are not always sufficiently addressed.
82. The quality of ongoing assessment is variable and inconsistent. Reading records for instance contain accurate information on books read and remarks from teachers and parents but rarely record diagnostic comments on the quality of individual pupils' reading or suggestions on how difficulties can be tackled. Equally the marking of pupils' written work is largely confined to ticks and congratulatory comments. Pupils are not provided with the necessary information on what they have done well and what areas they still need to improve. In particular, spelling is rarely a focus of teachers' marking. In addition, the lack of precise learning objectives to meet the needs of all pupils affects progress. In particular, higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged and the less able pupils are frequently covering the same work as the rest of the class but in less quantity.
83. The subject is led by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator, who sets a good example by the quality of her own teaching. She has a good understanding of the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy and provides appropriate advice and support for colleagues. Her monitoring of the quality of English teaching in the school has been limited and she has only a general overview of what standards are achieved and what teaching strategies are used in Key Stage 1. This limits the extent to which she can develop and refine the quality of provision across the school. Equally it limits her capacity for evaluating the effectiveness of spending decisions, despite the fact that she has undertaken an audit of resources. Feedback from observations is informal and not based on precise success criteria. She is not involved in the analysis of standardised test results in Key

Stage 1. As a result success criteria for English in the school development plan are not expressed in terms of learning outcomes but focus more on the need for resources.

MATHEMATICS

84. Standards in mathematics are good. Pupils' attainment at the end of the reception year is above average. They make good progress as they move through the school. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has had a very positive effect on the teaching and learning. Resources have been improved and the strong focus the school has maintained on the subject recently has clearly been effective. The early indications are that the test results for this year should show a good improvement at both key stages.
85. In 1999, the National Curriculum tests show that standards fell from their previous above average level at Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2, although still below average, they improved from the previous year's low level. The inconsistent results achieved in the past were a result of the lack of a focus on improvement in mathematics, the slavish following of a commercial scheme and less concentration on mental skills. In addition resources needed to be improved. The trends in results over time point to falling standards at Key Stage 1 and widely varying standards by the end of Key Stage 2. The small number of pupils in each cohort also has an effect on the consistency of results as one or two pupils have up to ten per cent influence on the results. The training received with the numeracy strategy has improved teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject and this is reflected in the improved teaching now evident.
86. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress and they are well supported by teachers and support staff. The pupils with special educational needs are less well provided for. Those with statements are provided with appropriate work but others on the register of special needs, although they are often well supported in attempting the same work as the rest of the class, are not provided with enough work targeted at providing for their specific needs. Taking the results on average over the past four years, girls have consistently outperformed boys.
87. When compared with pupils in similar schools, the test results for 1999 showed that attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was below average. This was also the case in the 1999 Key Stage 2 results. The evidence of the inspection shows that at Key Stage 1 the present standards are above average and the early indications from this year's tests show that a higher proportion of pupils are attaining the higher levels. Pupils in Year 2 are able to use place value to explain why, for example, 432 is bigger than 423. Higher attaining pupils can round numbers up and down and work on activities with numbers to 1000. Others can correctly find missing numbers on number lines to 1000 and the less able use computer activities to do the same with numbers to 100. In Year 1, children can count in ten's to 100 and back and most can work out ten more or ten less of a given number accurately. They can measure length and height using cubes as units.
88. By the end of Key Stage 2 standards are above average and over three-quarters of the pupils are achieving at the expected level or higher. In mental work pupils in Year 6 can work out multiplication and division to three decimal places. The higher attainers use approximation as part of rounding up and down activities. Most are beginning to understand the difference between mean and median. They know a variety of types of symmetry and all pupils demonstrate a good understanding of angles. Attainment in Years 3 and 4 is close to that expected for their ages. Year 3 pupils can read simple graphs that they have produced for homework. They can also round numbers up and down using money. In Year 4 pupils can double large numbers mentally and they know that a quarter turn is equal to 90 degrees. They know the difference between different types of triangles. In Year 5 good attainment is evident. Pupils know terms such as mode, tally and axis. They can create good bar graphs and extend this into devising a way of

putting two lots of information on one graph. Higher attainers are able to enter data quickly onto computers and produce a variety of graphs.

89. The standards throughout the school have improved since the last inspection. Throughout the school pupils' skills in numeracy are being well used in other subjects. For example, in geography, data is collected and put onto graphs. In science, pupils measure and compare, for example, the opacity of materials for light shades. They record their findings using graphs, and they use numeracy skills effectively in recording and interpreting findings.
90. The pupils' attitudes to the subject are good, with some very good. They are enthusiastic about numeracy lessons and clearly enjoy the pace and challenge of the mental work. Pupils behave well and respond positively to their teachers. When engaged on group tasks they concentrate well and where expected collaborate with others. Their work is very well presented, neat and carefully completed.
91. The teaching of mathematics is mostly good with none that is unsatisfactory. At Key Stage 1 it is good or very good, while at Key Stage 2 40 per cent is very good or excellent. The teachers have worked very hard to successfully introduce the National Numeracy Strategy and this has improved their overall subject knowledge and understanding. Planning is good and in the best lessons the objectives are clear and shared with the pupils so that they know what learning is expected of them. A good emphasis is placed on mental strategies and lessons are mostly well paced, challenging and enjoyed by pupils. Teachers' skilled question and answer techniques also ensure good consolidation of new learning is made. Resources are well used and appropriate for the tasks. Most lessons contain work that is pitched at pupils' abilities appropriately. However, the support offered to pupils with special educational needs is not always focused on their specific needs although it enables them to take a full part in the lesson. The marking of pupils' work is unsatisfactory with little evidence of feedback that tells pupils what they need to do to improve or clearly explains what they have achieved. The provision of homework has improved since the last inspection, and this is recognised by parents.
92. The subject fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The coordinator has provided useful guidance and support for colleagues and has monitored a number of lessons, as has the headteacher, numeracy adviser and numeracy governor. This has been done on a largely informal basis and the school recognises the need to create a system that will provide teachers with more effective feedback and help spread around the very good practice that exists.

SCIENCE

93. Attainment in science at the end of Key Stage 1 in the 1999 teacher assessment was slightly below the national average for pupils achieving the expected level or better. The percentage reaching a higher level was well below average and, in comparison to similar schools, it was also well below average. At Key Stage 2 the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level was close to the national average. Of these, 42 per cent gained a higher level, which is well above the national average, and the results from similar schools. Overall this was a significant improvement on the previous year when standards were below average and reflects the school's successful efforts to improve. This is very encouraging. Taking the results on average over the past four years, girls have consistently outperformed boys but no gender differences were evident during the inspection. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress.
94. Classroom observation, discussion with pupils and an analysis of their current and past work indicates that attainment is above the national average. Judgements confirm that by the end of both key stages attainment is above the nationally expected standard, which is an appreciable

improvement since the last inspection. In that report, pupils' investigative and experimental skills were considered to be under-developed, a situation which has now been satisfactorily resolved. A more systematic approach to this aspect of science and the understanding and use of technical terms has had a positive impact on all aspects of the subject.

95. At Key Stage 1, pupils' development of skills, understanding and knowledge is good. By the end of the key stage they know that light comes from a variety of sources, including the sun. They describe simple electrical circuits, and they know that forces make things speed up, slow down and change direction. They explain clearly the classification of materials. In a Year 1 class they demonstrated this by using their sense of touch to identify materials in a 'feely box'. Pupils carry out investigations to a simple format, test and record their findings, thereby applying and reinforcing their literacy and numeracy skills. For example, pupils in the same year group, while studying forces and motion, could predict and give reasons why toy cars travelled different distances on a variety of gradients given similar starting conditions. Pupils in Year 2 understand the necessity of light and water in order to grow plants successfully, and explain how vibrations occur. In the reception class, the older pupils observe and describe living things, and have begun to notice and talk about seasonal changes. Most pupils in the key stage know that taking exercise and eating the right kind of food help humans to keep healthy.
96. In Key Stage 2, pupils' learning continues to be good, especially in the later years. By the end of the key stage, they have a good knowledge and understanding of a range of scientific facts, including the representation of series circuits in drawings and diagrams, and balanced and unbalanced forces. They use precise scientific names for the skeleton, major body organs and the function of the solar system. In the study of materials and their properties, pupils identify the changes which take place when materials are heated or cooled, and suggest ways in which liquids and solids might be separated. They correctly classify creatures as carnivore, herbivore and omnivore while working on life processes and living things. Pupils recognise when a test is fair or unfair and understand why. For example, in a Year 3 lesson, while designing an effective light shade, pupils realised the necessity of testing the opacity of a variety of materials under similar conditions. The writing up of their experiments is good and contributes to the development of their literacy skills. They record their work in a variety of ways including graphs to represent their findings. In such investigations, pupils understand the need for accurate measuring and they use their numeracy skills well in their calculations and interpretations of results.
97. Pupils' attitudes to science are good, especially when they are motivated and stimulated. This was particularly noticeable in a Year 2 class, engaged in planning an experiment to predict and investigate the changes which occur when a variety of materials are heated and cooled. They listen well to the teacher and each other, and work purposefully throughout the session. They show respect for their peers and adults. Only on the odd occasions when they are unclear about what they have to do or when allocated too much time on task, are some pupils restless and inattentive.
98. Teaching and learning is never less than satisfactory and is mostly good. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. In most lessons teachers have high expectations, display good scientific knowledge and plan well, with a good balance between written and practical work. Teaching is not always as good in investigative work, which, although paying good attention to fair testing and prediction, is sometimes too prescriptive, leaving pupils less challenge to exercise initiative. Where teaching is best, explanations and introductions to tasks are clear and a good range of resources is used well. A prime example was observed in a Year 5 lesson where pupils learned about the basic working system of internal organs by placing organ cut out models correctly in the full outline of a human body model. In nearly all lessons good use is made of recapitulation to establish previous learning, to highlight discoveries and reinforce teaching points. This was well illustrated in the reception class where pupils were fascinated by paint colour mixing

techniques while exploring light and colour. In a good Year 6 lesson on dissolving, the teacher provided a set of challenging tasks to perform in order to hypothesise and choose different solids for the solutions. Such teaching enhances the development of pupils' investigative skills. The presentation of pupils' work is of a high standard although the marking throughout both key stages consists mostly of praise, omitting evaluation and specific target setting to move pupils' learning forward.

99. The coordinator gives strong and effective leadership in promoting the subject throughout the school. She ensures that the budget allocation is used effectively, and regularly monitors teachers' planning. The curriculum is enriched by visits to off-site venues such as Jodrell Bank and Formby. Monitoring of teaching and learning is still under-developed. The medium and short term planning, which is specifically linked to the national planning document, is detailed. It contains precise learning objectives and an effective assessment and recording system. A portfolio of pupils' levelled work is an added advantage. Resources are sound, easily accessible and well used.

ART

100. Pupils' achievements in art at the end of both key stages reach the level expected and this has been maintained since the previous inspection, although attainment varies somewhat according to the interest and expertise of individual teachers. High standards of display help create a stimulating and attractive learning environment, but art has insufficient status as a subject in its own right. The subject shares curriculum time with design and technology, and in some lessons there is insufficient distinction made between the different skills needed for each subject.
101. Although an appropriate emphasis is placed on the development of basic skills across both key stages, art is most frequently used to illustrate topic work in other curriculum areas. Pupils have only limited opportunities to work imaginatively or to explore a wide range of media. They generally lack a specialist art vocabulary and knowledge of a wide range of artists from a variety of cultures. Pupils do not, for instance visit the large number of good art galleries within easy travelling of the school.
102. Pupils are generally enthusiastic about art. They concentrate and persevere for appropriate periods of time and use tools and materials sensibly.
103. The teaching and learning in the lessons seen during the inspection were good overall. In a Year 1 lesson pupils were making faces on a wood or paper base using a variety of materials and relating this effectively to a science topic on the same subject. In Year 6, pupils are embarking on a cross-phase pottery project as part of their preparation for transfer to secondary school. They are looking at the work of a well-known potter who bases her work on natural forms particularly fruit as a stimulus. The pupils draw on previous knowledge of line, texture and shape to make good observational drawings of fruit and then design their own containers. They will then translate their ideas into clay when they visit their new school. The lesson seen was well prepared and the teacher provided good advice and support for pupils.
104. The subject is co-ordinated by an enthusiastic co-ordinator, who has positive ideas of how to raise the profile of the subject in the school. She is aware of how art needs to develop and has the experience and good subject knowledge necessary to support colleagues.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

105. Only a limited number of lessons were observed during the inspection, all of which were confined to Key Stage 1. However, discussions with teachers and pupils, and evidence from planning and

displays, indicate that pupils' skills in designing and making develop steadily as they move through the school. Overall, pupils' progress, including those with special educational needs, is sound, and standards have been maintained from the time of the last inspection.

106. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are aware of the link between the designing and making elements of technology. Reception and Year 1 pupils display appropriate levels of manipulative skills while designing and making shadow puppets and robots from a varied selection of materials. Acquiring these skills and thought processes often involves applying mathematical and literacy knowledge. They also use large construction materials well when building houses and castles. In Year 2, pupils successfully select relevant materials and tools to design and make winding mechanisms for model wells. They were also able to evaluate their work and make suggestions for improvement.
107. In Key Stage 2, pupils use evaluation sheets to record their design, to state materials needed, to mention changes that were made and then to evaluate their final design. By Year 5 pupils have sufficiently well-developed skills to design mobiles, mechanisms and pneumatics using card, timber, cotton reels, motors and syringes. Pupils in Year 3 have designed and made photograph frames using materials such as shells, tinsel and wood, while pupils in Year 4 designed and made models of their favourite rooms and their contents. Pupils are beginning to use technical language correctly and are aware of safety. Work is precise and most pupils take care to finish the item well. However, some tasks are still insufficiently demanding for the more talented pupils to reach their full potential.
108. Attitudes are good and pupils work sensibly together. They are interested in their work, show sustained concentration and the majority endeavour to improve their performance. They make sensible decisions about the types of materials and tools needed. In some instances they share equipment, consult with each other and make critical judgements about their own and others' work. Pupils are very well behaved as was noted in a good food technology lesson that was led by parent volunteers.
109. In the lessons observed, teaching was always good and sometimes very good. Effective interventions and questioning help pupils to develop skills and understanding in the making process. Good subject knowledge, use of technical vocabulary and the direct teaching of skills ensure that older pupils' learning is at least satisfactory. However, pupils are also encouraged to show initiative, as for example in a Year 2 class engaged in making spouts and spiders incorporating winding mechanisms. An example of pupils being set appropriate challenges was observed in a Year 1 lesson on construction using various sized plastic blocks.
110. The co-ordinator ensures that an adequate range and quality of resources are maintained. Planning is sound and linked to the National Curriculum programmes of study and local educational authority guidelines. Although work is informally assessed at the end of units, the assessment system requires further development. Tools and materials are well stored and readily accessible.

GEOGRAPHY

111. It was only possible to observe a small number of lessons in Years 3 and 5 during the inspection. Other evidence includes an analysis of pupils' work, discussion with pupils and teachers and the subject co-ordinator. Photographs showing previous work were also made available. From this it is clear that pupils' learning, including those with special educational needs, is sound as they develop their geographical skills, knowledge and understanding. This has been maintained since the previous inspection.

112. At Key Stage 1, pupils have satisfactory recall of subject knowledge and the skills involved. Year 1 and older reception pupils know how to carry out simple mapping and can describe their route to and from school. They know the effects that weather and temperature variations have on the types of clothes which people wear. Pupils in Year 1 in their study of the locality create a good large, three-dimensional map depicting routes, and different types of houses and street furniture. In Year 2 pupils understand the difference between human and physical features such as shops, houses, rivers and hills. They are able to sketch a map of the surrounding grounds and recognise the location of the school from aerial photographs. Higher attaining pupils use stories well, such as 'Granny Morag's Island', to strengthen their understanding of how coastal and inland communities evolve. They discuss both attractive and unattractive features in their own neighbourhood, and give reasons for their opinions. By the end of the key stage, pupils can read basic symbols accurately, to identify features and use simple co-ordinates to establish locations on imaginary maps.
113. At Key Stage 2, pupils continue to develop their mapping skills and, by Year 6, are able to use co-ordinates with some higher attainers using four and six grid references. In Year 3, pupils successfully link their work to history. A good example was the examination of aerial photographs in their study of Upholland. In their project on landscapes they accurately distinguish between highlands and lowlands on a physical map. Pupils in Year 4 have a good understanding of other places in the United Kingdom that contrast with their local area. They identify the major cities such as Birmingham, Glasgow and Manchester on a map of the British Isles. On a world map they can locate the major seas and continents, and they use anemometers and rain gauges to measure wind speed and rainfall respectively. In Years 5 and 6, pupils' knowledge of other parts of the world is soundly developed, for example the different countries and their main physical and industrial features. Comparing villages in St Lucia with their own area further develops their understanding of how climatic conditions influence ways of life. Many pupils accurately identify on physical maps features such as river sources, tributaries and estuaries, and higher attainers knowledgeably explain the link between contour lines and varying heights.
114. Pupils have a positive attitude to their work. They listen carefully and respond well to questions. Once on task they work well, either independently, in pairs or groups. This was evident in a Year 3 lesson where pupils compared and interpreted the results of frequency analysis charts while carrying out a traffic survey. Such exercises support the development of mathematical skills. They take good care in presenting their work, show interest and are enthusiastic.
115. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Effective pace was maintained through a range of activities, for example in a Year 5 lesson where pupils demonstrated their knowledge of rivers and their courses by marking them on a large map of the United Kingdom. Homework, such as drawing maps of routes to school, is used well to reinforce learning. Teachers use questioning well to develop ideas and extend further pupils' answers. Plenary sessions are always beneficial and consolidate key learning points, as was the case in a Year 6 lesson on the source and course of the River Severn. Although teachers are increasing the opportunities for pupils to undertake research exercises, the scope for free writing is not always sufficiently developed and as a result higher attaining pupils are not consistently challenged.
116. The co-ordinator, who has recently been appointed to the post, works hard to promote the subject. She has attended relevant in-service courses in relation to Curriculum 2000. Planning, which is on a two year rolling programme basis, is satisfactory, covering all National Curriculum programmes of study. She monitors teachers' plans but to date no formal assessment of monitoring of teaching or learning has taken place. Organised field trips to Jodrell Bank, a beach, the Lake District and the Martin Mere Wildlife Centre further enhance pupils' learning.

HISTORY

117. Attainment by the age of eleven is in line with that expected nationally and most pupils make satisfactory progress. This is broadly in line with the standards found during the last inspection. However, not enough use of pupils' literacy, research and computer skills is made and too much of the work provided is not matched closely enough to their abilities. The result of this is that higher attaining pupils are not achieving the standards of which they are capable. Pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs make sound progress.
118. The curriculum is planned on a topic basis, on a four year rolling programme, largely due to the mixed age classes. Although this ensures that pupils do not repeat work unnecessarily, there is not enough progression between the work in Year 3 and that in Year 6. In the scrutiny of pupils' work, too much of the writing is copied from books, worksheets or the board. In Year 2, pupils learn about seaside holidays in the past and compare them with their own experiences. Illustrations are well used to stimulate discussion about holidays in the last century. Older pupils know about some of the Egyptian beliefs about life after death, and the preparation of bodies for the afterlife.
119. A small amount of teaching was observed during the inspection, all of which was satisfactory, as was the pupils' learning. Pupils' attitudes are good and they take a full part in their lessons. The presentation of pupils' work is good. Resources are well used and opportunities for good discussion between pupils are regularly found. However, the marking of pupils' work does not evaluate their achievement or suggest ways they can improve. In addition, the incorrect spelling of important historical vocabulary is too often left uncorrected.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

120. During the inspection no lessons were observed at Key Stage 1 and only a limited number in Key Stage 2. Judgements are therefore also based on discussions with pupils and teachers, scrutiny of the school documentation and pupils' past and present work.
121. Standards of attainment are satisfactory at both key stages, and close to what pupils of seven and eleven are expected to achieve nationally. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were reported as unsatisfactory. Pupils begin using a computer as soon as they start school. In the reception class and Year 1 they learn to control the mouse and to recognise letters on the keyboard. Many know how to use the space bar and delete keys, and some use arrow keys effectively. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils can use a simple word-processor and some higher attainers can save, retrieve and print their work. They also control the mouse well enough to create pictures and patterns.
122. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are using word-processing programs to write stories, labels and in some cases do their homework. Many use database programs to handle information and display it graphically. They use CD-ROMs to research topics and select and print appropriate extracts from texts. A good example was noted in a Year 4 class studying the ancient Egyptians, on the importance of secondary source material. Examination of previous work indicates that pupils in upper Key Stage 2 combine drawing and writing, using different fonts and colours, as well as emphasising the layout of text. Control and modelling and the use of spreadsheets are less well developed. All programs of study are attempted and pupils' progress, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory.
123. The recent installation of six new personal computers in the upper Key Stage 2 area has benefited the whole school. This increases the availability of computers for use during other lessons. The

facility, together with specific information technology timetabled skills lessons, is beginning to have a positive impact, especially at Key Stage 2.

124. Where computers are used to support the teaching and learning across the curriculum the level of competence required is sound. For example, in a Year 3 literacy lesson pupils used a phonic program effectively to spell and understand new words. Similarly in a Year 5 numeracy lesson pupils generated a block graph using a data-handling program. A further instance was noted in a Year 4 science lesson where pupils successfully accessed information from a CD-ROM to support their findings on growth and change. Pupils at both key stages are on course to attain the necessary skills, understanding and knowledge across all aspects of the programmes of study.
125. Pupils are generally enthusiastic about their information technology work. They can explain procedures and some of the more experienced are able and eager to help others. This was particularly noticeable with a group of Year 4 pupils engaged in constructing databases. These computer-based activities offer pupils good opportunities to work with minimal supervision, using initiative and often responsibility for their own learning. Many pupils have access to computers at home and in Years 5 and 6 can discuss the benefit of the Internet. Equipment is treated well and the routines of saving work and recording the sessions' achievements are carried out smoothly and efficiently.
126. The teaching was never less than sound, and often good. Pupils' learning is also good. In the best lessons, the teacher shows good subject knowledge and presents information clearly and at the appropriate level. Such lessons have a clear focus on a specific skill to be taught and often have close links with other subjects. For example, some pupils in a Year 6 class combined graphic and word-processing programs to design and comment on a school uniform. The same pupils successfully loaded and used a digital camera and then printed the resulting pictures. Where teaching is less effective, pace is slow, with occasional over-direction by the teacher, thus limiting the opportunity for pupils to do sustained practical work, especially during short sessions. Teachers are gaining in confidence and expertise, and are becoming more secure in the use of the new equipment. Classes are managed effectively despite some cramped and busy conditions. All pupils have the opportunity to handle and communicate information over a range of topics each term, at appropriate levels and to a lesser degree controlling and modelling.
127. The co-ordinator is an enthusiastic advocate of the subject. She provides effective support for colleagues and helps to raise standards through in-service training and helpful documents. Assessment procedures are in place but practice is inconsistent. The school is aware of this and plans to introduce a more formalised system. Additional specific skills lessons are also planned for inclusion in Key Stage 1. The school development plan identifies a detailed focus on improving information and communication technology as the next major priority. The policy document and scheme of work provide a sound basis for the development of the subject but the implementation is not consistently rigorous. Monitoring of teaching and learning requires further structuring.

MUSIC

128. Pupils make satisfactory progress and their achievements are in line with the satisfactory standards found at the time of the last inspection. There are no significant differences between pupils of different gender or background. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.
129. Music does not have a high enough profile in the life of the school. Opportunities to introduce pupils to a variety of styles and types of music are not evident. For example, no music is played during assemblies except to accompany the hymn. In the lesson observations the youngest pupils showed a good sense of rhythm and a keenness to join in songs and rhymes. Others use

commercial tapes to sing songs telling the story of Pinocchio. These are performed to a satisfactory level. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils can keep a steady beat with untuned percussion instruments, although they are not familiar with the names of many of the instruments. They devise ways of recording simple compositions and have made effective musical instruments in science and technology lessons.

130. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 also sing along to commercial tapes, learning some African songs. These are well used as a resource by the teacher. An opportunity to use an older child to play and talk about the flute effectively extended pupils' understanding of one of the instruments being played.
131. Pupils' attitudes are positive. In lessons they join in well, and in assembly they sing tunefully, although without great enthusiasm. They enjoy using percussion instruments in lessons, and a good number take up the opportunity to learn instruments from visiting teachers of woodwind, guitar and keyboards, or joining the recorder club.
132. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and sometimes good where the teachers' personal expertise is greater. Although there is an over reliance on taped resources the staff have undergone training in their use from a BBC education officer. However, not enough opportunities are provided for composing, listening and appraising. There is no monitoring or evaluation of teaching and learning in this subject, and non-specialist teachers are in need of more support.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

133. During the inspection lessons in gymnastics, games, dance and swimming were observed. It is clear from these observations that the subject has a high profile in the school, and standards have maintained the good levels found during the previous inspection. However, a lack of subject expertise results in some underachievement by the more talented pupils at Key Stage 1. Pupils with special educational needs often make good progress, especially when there is specific provision for them, such as the use of appropriate apparatus like balls that have bells inside.
134. At Key Stage 1, pupils know the need to warm up but there is not enough discussion about the effects of exercise on their bodies. The majority can throw and catch beanbags accurately. By the end of the key stage, pupils can jump and land safely on one or two feet. Very good use of one child's expertise gained at a gymnastic club enabled pupils to observe a high level of skill, but opportunities to evaluate and comment on their own and others' work are not regularly created.
135. At Key Stage 2, Year 3 and 4 pupils create and perform good quality sequences of balances, rolls and stretches. They are beginning to develop good starting and finishing positions. In a Year 4 and 5 dance lesson a very good warm up was well used to prepare for work about puppets. Pupils worked very effectively in pairs to create a sequence of movements based on string puppets, which they improved and developed under the teacher's guidance. Year 6 pupils' attainment in a swimming lesson was very good with many of them achieving well above the level expected. The less able also demonstrated excellent learning as they were encouraged and coached to achieve a higher level built on their previous performance.
136. The attitudes of pupils are at least good throughout the school and often very good at Key Stage 2. Their behaviour as, for example, when swimming, is very good. They are keen to join in with activities and demonstrate genuine enthusiasm for sports and games.
137. The quality of teaching and learning is at least satisfactory and, especially at Key Stage 2, it is very good. The swimming teaching observed was excellent. Teachers' subject expertise is good and their enthusiasm is transferred to the pupils. A very good range of extra curricular activities is

provided for older pupils. These often lead to teams which perform at a high level locally in a variety of sports, and which extend and develop the skills of the more talented pupils. Good use is made of parents and other outside expertise to provide additional coaching in netball, cricket and rugby league. The oldest pupils also take part in an outdoor adventure weekend that provides an opportunity to experience activities such as canoeing, archery and abseiling.