

INSPECTION REPORT

PEBBLE BROOK COUNTY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Crewe, Cheshire

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111219

Acting Headteacher: Andrew Warren

Reporting inspector: Bogusia Matusiak-Varley
19938

Dates of inspection: 2nd – 5th July 2001

Inspection number: 198339

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

© Crown copyright 2001

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Balmoral Avenue Crewe Cheshire
Postcode:	CW2 6PL
Telephone number:	(01270) 568956
Fax number:	(01270) 666028
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev Bill Baker
Date of previous inspection:	15 th June 1999

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
19938	B Matusiak-Varley	Registered inspector	Under fives English Religious education	How high are standards? How well are pupils and students taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9769	Margaret Morrissey	Lay inspector		Attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils and students? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23721	Howard Gibson	Team inspector	Science Information communication technology Music Physical education	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
20270	June Tracey	Team inspector	Mathematics History Geography Design and technology	
23574	Lona Thomas	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Special educational needs Art and design	

The inspection contractor was:

PPI Group Limited
7 Hill Street
Bristol
BS1 5RW

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London

WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4 - 8
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	9 - 13
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13 - 15
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	15 - 17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	18 - 19
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	19 - 20
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	20 - 21
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	22
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	23 - 26
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	27 - 42

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Pebble Brook is a small primary school, situated on the western outskirts of Crewe, with 183 pupils on roll, 100 boys and 83 girls. It has recently opened a 26 full time equivalent place nursery. The area served by the school is socially and economically disadvantaged. There are high levels of unemployment, housing is mostly local authority owned. 35 per cent of pupils are on the special educational needs register, high for a school of this size. 34 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is above average. Almost all pupils are of white United Kingdom heritage. Attainment on entry to the reception class is well below that expected of children of this age and attainment on entry to Key Stage 1 is below the national average. Pupil mobility is high; out of the present Year 6, 38 per cent of pupils did not start their education at the school. The school is involved in a local initiative to develop parents' skills in literacy. The school came out of special measures following an inspection by HMI in 1999. Prior to this inspection, the headteacher left and the school is now managed by an acting headteacher until the end of term. The school has undergone many challenges in the previous year, 17 supply teachers have been employed as it has encountered difficulty in retaining permanent staff. At present the school has a full complement of permanent staff and partnership with the local education authority is very good.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

In spite of the many setbacks the school faced previously, the local education authority adviser, together with the chair of governors and the acting headteacher, has been instrumental in moving the school forward. As a result, it is now well placed to do so. The quality of teaching is good and all staff are very hard working and conscientious. At present, standards are better at the end of Key Stage 1 than Key Stage 2, because recruitment of teachers has been more stable in the lower key stage. Standards in Key Stage 1 in English, mathematics and science are in line with the national average and pupils' achievements are good. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards in English and science are below the national average and standards in mathematics are well below. Pupils' achievements in English and science are satisfactory, overall, but are unsatisfactory in mathematics. Standards are rising in Key Stage 2, but, as yet, this is not fully reflected in national test results. The school is fully inclusive in all of its practices and meets the needs of pupils well. The leadership and management are good and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching is good and teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well.
- Standards in art are above average at the end of both key stages.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, resulting in their making good gains in learning.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and relationships throughout the school are very good.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, overall.
- Present partnership with parents is good.
- The school is well led and managed by the acting headteacher.
- Governors support the school well. The chair of governors, with the help of the local education authority adviser, has been instrumental in establishing a purposeful and caring learning environment.

What could be improved

- Standards in writing, experimental and investigative science and information and communication technology at the end of both key stages.
- Standards in English, mathematics, science, design and technology and geography at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Assessment procedures, use of assessment outcomes to inform planning and teachers' knowledge of levels of attainment in all subjects of the National Curriculum.
- The role of the co-ordinators.
- Provision in the Foundation Stage of learning.

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 inspected by HMI in 1999 and was taken out of special measures. From 1999 to 2001, improvement has been unsatisfactory, as previous management had not placed a rigorous emphasis on moving the school forward. Since March 2001, when the local education authority adviser intervened, improvement has been satisfactory, but there is still a lot to do. The recently appointed acting headteacher has been instrumental in moving the school forward and has identified the main issues that need to be dealt with. At present, the school's recording and assessing procedures still need to be improved and the school development plan is not rigorous enough in identifying the main priorities for improvement; it is too long and unmanageable. Schemes of work for the majority of subjects have not been written.

Satisfactory improvement has been made in revising job descriptions and both staff and governors are better informed about the school's performance. Good improvement has been made in involving parents in their children's education and the local family literacy initiative is having a beneficial effect on standards. Satisfactory improvement has been made in providing appropriate challenges for both lower and higher attaining pupils and high standards in art have been maintained. The quality of teaching has improved from sound to good, as has provision for pupils with special educational needs and information and communication technology. Leadership and management have improved. Good progress has been made in raising the profile of the school within the local community. Sound progress has been made since March 2001 in raising standards, but the new systems have not had time to make a big impact on standards at the end of Key Stage 2, although a promising picture is emerging. At present, due to stability in staffing, the school has the capacity to sustain further improvement.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	D	E	E	D
Mathematics	D	E*	E	E
Science	B	E*	E	E

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

2000 test results indicate that, by the end of Key Stage 1, standards in reading and writing were well below the national average in comparison with all schools and similar schools. In mathematics, standards were below the national average, but in line with the average for similar schools. At the end of Key Stage 2, test results show that standards in all core subjects of English, mathematics, and science were well below average in comparison with all schools. In comparison with similar schools, standards were below average in English and well below in mathematics and science. In 1999 standards in mathematics and science were in the bottom 5 per cent nationally.

Inspection findings show that attainment on entry to the nursery is very low; on entry to the reception class it is well below that expected of children of this age. On entry to Year 1 attainment is below the national average, as children do not attain the early learning goals in all areas of learning in spite of their good achievement. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards in speaking and listening, reading and mathematics are broadly in line with the national average, but standards in writing are below the national average. This is an improvement on test results and is attributable to the good quality of teaching. All groups of pupils are achieving well in relation to their prior attainment in speaking and

listening, reading and mathematics. Achievement in writing is satisfactory overall. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards in science are in line with the national average and pupils' achievements are good. Pupils attain above average standards in art and design at the end of both key stages and their achievements are very good. In both key stages, standards in information and communication technology are below the expectations for seven and eleven-year-olds, but pupils' recent achievements are satisfactory because the computer suite has only just become operational and the co-ordination of the subject is good.

At the end of Key Stage 1 standards in design and technology, history, geography, music and physical education are in line with national expectations and all groups of pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. In religious education, pupils at the end of both key stages meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and achievement is good. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing, science, design and technology, geography are below the national average. Pupils' achievements in relation to their prior attainment are satisfactory in English and science, but are unsatisfactory in design and technology and geography. In mathematics, standards are well below average and achievement is unsatisfactory. In history, music and physical education pupils, by the end of Key Stage 2, attain average standards and achievement is satisfactory. It is good in music and physical education. The inconsistencies of pupils' achievements and subsequent attainment are largely due to the fact that the present Year 6 have lacked stability in their learning, due to a high turnover of staff, and many pupils have joined this class in the later stages of the school year. Based upon the present good quality of teaching and stability of staff, standards are poised to rise. There are, nevertheless, weaknesses in both key stages in writing, problem solving, experimental and investigative science and presentation of work.

In 2000 the school met its targets for English, but did not meet its targets in mathematics.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils like coming to school and are keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Behaviour has improved, pupils are courteous and polite to one another.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibility and relationships throughout the school are very good.
Attendance	Good. Pupils arrive at school on time, lessons start promptly and parents work well with the school, ensuring that their children attend regularly.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good, overall, and it is having a positive effect on raising standards. At present, the quality of learning is only satisfactory because this group of hard working and dedicated teachers has been together as a team for only a short length of time and the impact of the good teaching has not had time to take effect. 17 per cent of teaching was very good, 59 per cent was good, 24 per cent was satisfactory; there was no unsatisfactory teaching. Very good teaching was seen in information and communication technology in Year 2 and Year 3, physical education and design and technology in Year 1, religious education in Year 2 and Year 6. Good teaching was seen in Year 1, Year 3, Year 4 and Year 5 in science, in Year 4 and Year 6 in music. Good teaching was seen in all classes in literacy and numeracy. Examples of very good teaching were seen in literacy in the reception class and teaching was satisfactory, overall, in the nursery. A strength in teaching in

both key stages is the management of pupils' behaviour. Teaching generally meets the needs of all pupils well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school provides a sound range of learning opportunities for its pupils, but schemes of work are not fully developed and continuity and progression cannot be assured.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. These pupils are well cared for and they make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good, overall. Provision for moral and social development is better than provision for spiritual and cultural development, which is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school cares well for its pupils, but further emphasis needs to be placed on making assessments of pupils' academic progress both manageable and meaningful.

Since the appointment of the acting headteacher, the school works well with parents and they are fully involved in school life.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The acting headteacher provides clear educational direction. The delegation to and contribution of staff with management responsibilities is satisfactory overall, but further training is needed to help them to judge standards in their subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are hard working and dedicated and support the acting headteacher well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The acting headteacher and local education authority link adviser monitor the school's performance well.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school employs the principles of best value to all of its spending, which has been both wise and cautious.

The school has an appropriate number of well-trained teachers and support staff, but the latter are not always effectively deployed; there is no help in the reception class. The accommodation is good and kept meticulously clean by the hard working site manager and domestic staff. Resources are satisfactory, but further provision needs to be made for books in the library and computer software to support all subjects.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

* The parents' meeting took place prior to the appointment of the acting headteacher, at which time parents were not pleased with their children's progress, the leadership and management of the school, homework and the quality of information they received. Since the appointment of the new acting headteacher, partnership with parents has improved and the many grievances, expressed during the parents' meeting and return of questionnaires, no longer apply.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers are accessible and the new acting headteacher is very approachable. The school now provides a good range of information. Children like coming to school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents are concerned about behaviour and the high turnover of staff. Setting of homework is inconsistent.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reports are detailed. | |
|---|--|

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views and reassure parents that behaviour has improved throughout the school. Inspectors agree that homework is not set regularly and the acting headteacher has recognised this as an area for improvement. Inspectors have also noted that relationships between parents and school management have improved and that parents are seen as true partners in their children's learning.

Prior to the appointment of the acting headteacher, parents had experienced communication difficulties.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

For the benefit of the audience reading this report, the inspection findings of the school's results are shown in table form for clarity.

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Inspection findings

		Standards	Achievement
Foundation Stage	Personal, social and emotional development	Below	Good
	Communication, language and literacy	Below	Good
	Mathematical development	Below	Good
	Physical development	Below	Good
	Knowledge and understanding of the world	Below	Good
	Creative development	Below	Good

	Key Stage 1 standards	Key Stage 2 standards	Key Stage 1 achievement	Key Stage 2 achievement
English	In line	Below	Good	Satisfactory
Speaking & listening	In line	Below	Good	Satisfactory
Reading	Below	Below	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Writing				
Mathematics	In line	Well below	Good	Unsatisfactory
Science	In line	Below	Good	Satisfactory
Information and communication technology	Below	Below	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Religious education	In line	In line	Good	Good
Design and technology	In line	Below	Good	Unsatisfactory
Art and design	Above	Above	Very good	Very good
Music	In line	In line	Good	Good
Physical education	In line	In line	Good	Good
History	In line	In line	Good	Satisfactory
Geography	In line	Below	Good	Unsatisfactory

- Children's attainment on entry to the nursery is well below average. Many children have poor communication skills and have difficulty in socialising. The nursery has only recently become fully operational and this is the first cohort of pupils, which is attending part time. Some pupils entering the reception class have not experienced nursery education; this accounts for the very low standards attained on entry to the reception class. On entry to the reception class, attainment is still well below that expected of children of this age. Pupils achieve well in all areas of learning, but do not attain the early learning goals in any area. By entry to Key Stage 1 standards are well below average, overall.
- The 2000 National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds show that in reading and writing standards were well below the national average in comparison with all schools and similar schools. In mathematics, standards were below the national average, but in line with the average for similar schools. Taking three years together, the figures show that the performance of pupils in reading and writing and mathematics fell below the national average, with no differences in attainment between boys and girls. In science, teacher assessments indicate that

standards were well below those expected of pupils of this age. Very few pupils attained the higher levels in English, mathematics or science.

4. The 2000 National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds show that, in English, mathematics and science, standards were well below average in comparison with all schools. In comparison with similar schools, standards were below average in English and well below in mathematics and science. In 1999 standards in mathematics and science were in the bottom five per cent nationally. Taking three years together, the performance of pupils in all core subjects fell below the national average for their age group, with no differences in attainment between boys and girls. The trend in the school's National Curriculum points, for all core subjects, was below the national trend, with very few pupils attaining the higher levels.
5. There has been significant underachievement throughout the school over the past four years, and long-term progress has been slow. This has largely been attributable to previous management not having placed enough emphasis on moving standards forward, especially in the period of 1999-2001. In spite of the considerable support that the school received from the local education authority in monitoring teaching, insufficient guidance had been given to teachers to improve standards, set targets for pupils and ensure that all staff were made accountable for the standards that pupils attained. This lack of momentum and focused management contributed to the low standards that pupils attained. There are, however, other factors that contributed to low standards. There has been a very high turnover of teachers, because of the difficulty in retaining permanent staff, and a high percentage of pupils is on the special educational needs register. The academic profile of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 has been skewed towards average and below average attaining pupils, affecting end of key stage results. Assessment has not been effectively developed and teachers have not had sufficient training in levelling work. Many of them have not had records passed on from previous teachers, therefore work was not appropriately matched to pupils' prior attainment. The curriculum has not been monitored for continuity and progression and staff have been planning without schemes of work. The lack of strategic systems, with a co-ordinated approach to raising standards, has not helped.
6. Since the recent appointment of the acting headteacher, standards are rising because staff are feeling valued and have taken on board the directives of the local education authority adviser, resulting in the quality of teaching improving significantly. Furthermore, permanent staff, who are talented teachers have been appointed and pupils are responding to their high expectations and consistency of good teaching methods. Standards are better in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2, because the teachers in Key Stage 1 have been working as a team for longer than those in Key Stage 2 and their good teaching is reflected in the improved standards. In Key Stage 2, standards are rising but, as yet, this is not reflected in test results as the present Year 6 has a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs and the levels of transience are high, with 38 per cent of this present year group of pupils not having started their education at the school. Furthermore, pupils have gaps in their knowledge because of the inconsistencies in teaching and teachers in Key Stage 2 are having to catch up on the basic skills that have previously not been taught. The good quality of teaching, permanent staff appointments, good purposeful leadership of the acting headteacher and very good partnership with the local education authority are the main contributory factors to the improved standards and rates of progress, especially at Key Stage 1.
7. Consequently, inspection findings show that, by the end of Key Stage 1, standards in speaking and listening, reading and mathematics are broadly in line with the national average. Standards in writing are below the national average, although there is evidence to suggest that standards are improving. Pupils who are higher attainers are attaining solid level 2Bs in writing. All groups of pupils are achieving well in relation to their prior attainment in speaking and listening, reading and mathematics; achievement in writing is satisfactory. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards in science are in line with the national average and pupils' achievements are good; they could be better in experimental and investigative science. Pupils attain high standards in art and design at the end of both key stages and their achievements are very good. In both key stages, standards in information and communication technology are below the expectations for seven and eleven-year-olds, but pupils' recent achievements are satisfactory. The computer suite has only just become operational and the co-ordination of the

subject is good. All teachers are making a concentrated effort at teaching subject specific skills of information and communication technology. However software resources are limited.

8. At the end of Key Stage 1, standards in design and technology, history, geography, music and physical education are in line with national expectations and all groups of pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. In religious education, pupils at the end of both key stages meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and achievement is good. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing, science, design and technology, geography are below the national average. Pupils' achievements in relation to their prior attainment are satisfactory in English and science, but are unsatisfactory in design and technology and geography. In English, pupils do not take home a broad range of reading books, their knowledge of authors is limited, pupils' speaking skills lack knowledge of subject-specific vocabulary, adjectives, adverbs and a sense of audience. Handwriting and spelling are weak and pupils experience difficulty in writing, using different genres. A contributory factor to low standards is the lack of schemes of work in the majority of subjects, which clearly define the progression of both skills and knowledge, but the implementation of the literacy hour is now starting to have a positive effect on raising standards. In mathematics standards are well below average and achievement is unsatisfactory. This is largely due to the fact that not all aspects of the National Numeracy Strategy are covered progressively. Because the curriculum has not been monitored for continuity and progression, there is an over reliance on worksheets, at the expense of pupils developing their skills of problem solving and using numeracy across the curriculum, especially in science. The school has been slow in responding to rigorous implementation of the numeracy framework and staff have not had sufficient guidance from previous management in implementing the strategy effectively. In science, standards are below the national average, but pupils' achievements are broadly satisfactory. In history, music and physical education, pupils, by the end of Key Stage 2, attain average standards. Achievement is satisfactory in history, but good in music and physical education. Standards in geography and design and technology are below national expectations and pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory. In information and communication technology, standards are below national expectations, but pupils' achievements are satisfactory, because of the lead given by the new co-ordinator, who has worked very hard at ensuring that, in spite of limited resources, the information and communication technology suite is functioning. Based upon the present good quality of teaching and stability of staff, standards are poised to rise. There are nevertheless weaknesses in both key stages in writing, problem solving, experimental and investigative science and presentation of work, which need to be addressed.
9. In 2000, the school met its targets for English, but did not meet its targets in mathematics. Evidence from lessons seen shows that, in spite of the lack of detailed, rigorous assessments, improvement has been made in matching tasks to pupils' needs and, generally, higher attaining pupils (with the exception of mathematics) are effectively challenged. This is because teachers know their pupils well and they are experienced enough to respond intuitively to their pupils' needs.
10. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. In general, they attain standards that are below those expected for their age, but are good in relation to their identified needs and targets identified on their individual education plans. Pupils needing additional help are identified at an early stage and are provided with well-designed programmes of work. Their achievement is good, because the work is planned at the right level for them. The learning targets are clear and manageable and pupils' progress in meeting them is monitored regularly. All pupils with special educational needs receive good quality support from teachers and from the well-trained learning assistant. Able pupils perform as they should, but there are times when they could be further challenged.
11. Since the previous inspection, standards in both key stages are continuing to rise, with the best improvement made in Key Stage 1, but rates of progress would be faster if the school ensured that assessments were linked to level descriptors and that information from these was used in planning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good, as is their behaviour both in and out of the classroom. Under the present leadership of the headteacher, the school is developing a positive ethos, evident in pupils' attitudes and good behaviour and pupils are beginning to feel valued and to respect others' views and opinions. Children make a happy and confident start to school when they join the nursery and reception class. They establish effective relationships with adults and with each other and they make good gains in their personal, social and emotional development because of the good routines that are set up for learning in both the nursery and the reception class. All pupils clearly enjoy coming to school and are keen to take part in the activities provided by staff after school.
13. Pupils of all ages have positive attitudes to their learning. They participate well in lessons, contributing comments and answering teachers' questions. The majority listen attentively, settle quickly to work and concentrate on their tasks. This is particularly evident when teaching is good. Pupils are interested and are keen to share their knowledge with others. For example, in a physical education lesson in Year 1, when working in pairs, pupils demonstrated their ability to use their imagination and devise a programme of movements, then demonstrate these, mirroring each other's actions. This activity demanded concentration and trust. There were good examples of pupils sharing their work with the class, for example in a Year 4 literacy lesson and during conversation time in the nursery and reception. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting expressed concern over pupils' behaviour. This was prior to the new acting headteacher's arrival. Inspectors were very happy with the attitudes and values the school promotes and the confidence it gives to pupils, who feel there has been a noticeable improvement in their behaviour in recent weeks. Pupils are very complimentary both of the acting headteacher and of the staff. They say that all staff care about them and help them to be good.
14. Behaviour in lessons is consistently good; a small number of pupils with behaviour problems are responding well to the support given and they did not disrupt the learning of other pupils. Overall, in the playground, in the dining hall and around the school examples of good behaviour were seen, pupils were polite well behaved and very helpful. This is because the acting headteacher has implemented support systems for teachers and pupils, reducing any disruption to learning. These enable pupils to think about the effect of their actions on others and great emphasis is placed on pupils resolving difficulties with each other before adult intervention.
15. No issues of bullying or oppressive behaviour were observed and parents are confident that any issue will be dealt with swiftly and satisfactorily. The acting headteacher works closely with parents and includes them at a very early stage if any problem arises.
16. Relationships, as at the last inspection, between pupils and pupils and adults are good. Pupils readily help each other and the adults they encounter. Pupils share resources, take turns, listen to one another and work well in groups and in pairs. This was particularly evident in the literacy and numeracy hours. The personal, social and health education programme and circle time are making a good contribution to pupils' personal development and helping to build strong relationships. Pupils in Year 1 share their feelings in a positive way, recognise their family unit and how they can contribute to the school community as individuals.
17. Pupils respond well to the opportunities they are given for personal development. They are involved in daily routines: for example in nursery and reception children give out milk and snacks and clear away afterwards. They are also very competent in using and tidying away resources. In Years 1 and 2 pupils respond well as monitors for general duties and as register monitors. By Year 5/6 pupils have a wide range of responsibilities, which they carry out well. Pupils from all year-groups are able to understand the feelings of others and the effects of their action on others, they share well, take turns and listen to one another. Parents rightly feel that this is a caring school where teachers take time to listen to problems and concerns and support pupils' welfare. However, inspection findings show that as yet pupils are not independent learners and are not provided with sufficient opportunities to carry out independent research.
18. Attendance levels are good and are above the national average. The level of unauthorised absence is above the national average, but this is being very well addressed by the acting headteacher and parents have been very clearly informed of their legal requirements. There

have been 13 fixed term exclusions in the last year and one permanent. The acting headteacher has monitored these, which were often the same pupils and has taken action to resolve the problems with a satisfactory conclusion. The school is inclusive in all of its practices and all pupils are equally valued by the staff. Pupils appreciate this and say in interviews that they are fairly treated.

19. Pupils with special educational needs are positive in their responses to their work. During lessons and in withdrawal session they concentrate well on their work and are willing to ask and answer questions to improve their knowledge and understanding. They are encouraged and supported to be independent and to tackle new tasks with determination and perseverance. They have good self-esteem and are well integrated into the life and work of the school. Their personal skills are developed well.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. The quality of teaching is good, overall, but learning is satisfactory because the teachers have been together as a team for only a short length of time and the impact of the good teaching has not had time to work its way up through the school to have a significant impact on standards. Over the past year, 17 supply teachers had been employed by the school, because of the difficulty of retaining permanent staff. This has had a negative impact on pupils' progress. At present, the best learning is in Year 1, Year 2 and Year 5, because these teachers have been with these pupils the longest and have established a sense of stability.
21. During the week of inspection no unsatisfactory teaching was seen; 17 per cent was very good, 59 per cent was good and 24 per cent was satisfactory. Very good teaching was seen in information and communication technology in Year 2 and Year 3, physical education and design and technology in Year 1, religious education in Year 2 and Year 6. Examples of good teaching were seen in Year 1, Year 3, Year 4, Year 5 in science and in Year 4, Year 6 in music. In all classes, good examples of teaching were seen in literacy and numeracy. In the reception class, very good teaching was seen in literacy. The nursery has been in existence only a very short time; therefore, the satisfactory quality of teaching has not had sufficient time to impact on standards. In the nursery, the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. A strength of teaching throughout the school is the way in which teachers manage pupils' behaviour and maintain classroom discipline. Given that the criteria for satisfactory or better teaching are more rigorous than when this school was last inspected, the school has made good progress in developing the quality of teaching. Staff have taken on board the advice of the local education authority and have worked with both dedication and effort to improve their skills. The quality of teaching of children in the Foundation Stage is good, overall; it is satisfactory in the nursery and good in the reception class. The teacher in the reception class defines very clear learning objectives, uses time well and intervenes in her pupils' learning. She also identifies groups of pupils who need specific help with their learning and ensures that appropriate emphasis is placed upon the teaching of basic skills.
22. In the nursery, the teacher plans exciting learning opportunities and works well with the classroom assistant, but there are occasions when learning objectives, in short and medium term planning, are too broad and are not rigorous enough in identifying precisely what pupils will learn. Children in the Foundation Stage are taught by staff who job share; during the week of the inspection the children in the reception class were taught by a part time teacher seconded from a nearby school for the duration of the inspection. Therefore, an accurate assessment of children's learning over time cannot be made. Short term learning is good. In both the nursery and the reception class, teachers create many good learning opportunities for speaking and listening, early reading, phonics, mathematical development and writing through practical work. Teachers plan for the early learning goals in all areas of learning, as well as the National Curriculum, in order to meet the diverse learning needs of their children, including the more able. These teachers have a good understanding of how to appeal to young children's interests and children's love of learning, but further development is needed in improving teachers' knowledge of baseline assessments in the nursery, because present assessments of pupils are too ambitious and do not reflect an accurate picture of the very low attainment on entry. Literacy and numeracy strategies are successfully taken into account and effectively implemented, but scrutiny of children's previous work shows that, prior to the reception teacher's arrival, this was not the case and expectations of these young children were too low.

23. Teachers in the Foundation Stage generally have secure subject knowledge and of how young children learn. This is reflected in the exciting learning environment that is created for them.
24. In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is good. Previous to the present appointment of staff, parents rightly expressed concern over the high level of supply staff that the school had previously employed. This has now been rectified and all staff in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are on permanent contracts.
25. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is generally good in both key stages, but there are occasions when teachers could help pupils by ensuring that they use the knowledge acquired in other subjects. Further emphasis needs to be placed on providing opportunities for pupils to develop their skills of speaking and listening, improving the presentation of work and insisting on correct spellings and letter formation. At present, opportunities for independent learning are limited. As pupils' behaviour has now improved, teachers are now well placed to develop pupils' skills of independence. A strong feature of literacy and numeracy lessons is the way in which pupils of all capabilities are fully engaged in learning, because teachers give good explanations and make the lessons interesting.
26. The majority of lessons in all subjects are well planned; extension activities for more able pupils are well matched to their needs in literacy, but further emphasis needs to be placed on developing more rigorous tasks for these pupils in numeracy. Work for lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, is appropriately targeted. However, the lack of schemes of work in the majority of subjects puts a strain on teachers, because they have to plan from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines for every subject and do not always know what has been covered previously. Coupled with the lack of assessment strategies, continuity and progression cannot be assured because teachers do not have a clear overview of the work previously covered. There are also weaknesses in teachers' knowledge of level descriptors in the majority of subjects of the National Curriculum when it comes to assessing, moderating and levelling pupils' work. This is particularly the case in Key Stage 2 where there are discrepancies in test results in English, mathematics and science and teachers' assessments.
27. Teachers have good subject knowledge of both the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. In the best lessons, teachers ensure that enough time is devoted to developing and consolidating pupils' mental skills, but further time needs to be spent on developing pupils' thinking skills, including problem solving. Teachers spend appropriate time teaching mathematics through whole class direct teaching, but, on occasions, do not provide enough time for pupils to talk through their thinking processes. Teaching in science is generally good throughout the school in both key stages. Teachers have a good knowledge of all of the programmes of study of the attainment targets, but are not as secure in teaching the investigative and experimental aspects of science. This results in pupils not fully understanding how to hypothesise, observe or draw conclusions from their work. Teaching in information and communication technology and religious education is good. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and are skilled at giving appropriate explanations and checking pupils' understanding. Artefacts are used well in religious education and teachers ensure that pupils understand the concepts of community and worship by visiting the local church. The chair of governors visits the school regularly and gave Year 5 pupils very good explanations as to the use of colour during the church year. Scrutiny of teachers' plans and evidence from pupils' exercise books suggest that there are, nevertheless, weaknesses in the planning of geography and design and technology in Key Stage 2, because insufficient emphasis is placed upon the teaching of subject-specific skills and coverage of work is limited. However, during the week of inspection no unsatisfactory teaching was seen in these lessons.
28. Teachers use the information and communication technology suite effectively; they give good explanations and ensure that all pupils have hands on experience, but the range of software to support all subjects of the National Curriculum is limited and, on occasions, the hardware is not fully operational. This is an area that has been recognised by the school that needs addressing further.

29. Teachers teach basic skills well, but, at present, pupils in Key Stage 2 have gaps in their learning because of the inconsistency of earlier teaching. Scrutiny of work reveals that, on numerous occasions, pupils have repeated work. Teachers now need to ensure that further opportunities are provided for pupils to learn skills of reading and writing in a range of contexts across the curriculum, using literacy objectives from lower year groups to support gaps in pupils' knowledge. Teachers use a wide range of teaching methods, such as direct teaching, focused group work teaching and individual intervention, ensuring that all groups of pupils make sound gains in learning. On occasions, in mathematics, pupils who are higher attainers could be challenged more, but the present assessment procedures, which are unsatisfactory, overall, do not always identify these pupils. Teachers give positive verbal feedback to pupils during lessons, helping them with their learning, but there are weaknesses in teachers' marking, because, too often, pupils' mistakes are not used as teaching points and insufficient pointers are given to pupils to improve the quality of their work, such as their skills of presentation, which are often unsatisfactory. Teachers' expectations are satisfactory, overall, but there are occasions in mathematics when higher attainers are not sufficiently challenged.
30. All teachers give good support to pupils who have special educational needs and plan work effectively to match the targets set in pupils' individual education plans. These targets are specific and detailed and allow teachers to plan work at the right level. Good support is given to pupils in class and when they are withdrawn to work with the learning support assistant. The pace of work is good and expectations of pupils' capabilities are suitably high. There is very good liaison between the special educational needs co-ordinator, learning support assistant and class teachers in all aspects of the work, benefiting the progress made by pupils.
31. Homework is satisfactory, overall, but inconsistently set. Several parents at the parents' meeting rightly complained about this and the school has recognised this as an area to be addressed. At present, pupils' own knowledge of their learning is barely satisfactory, because the school has only just started using individual target setting. In spite of the good teaching, pupils' learning is only satisfactory, although well placed to improve, because teachers have been working together as a team only for a short time and the good quality of teaching has not had a full impact on long term learning, especially at the end of Key Stage 2. Since the previous inspection, the quality of teaching has improved from being satisfactory to good, overall.

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

32. The curriculum is satisfactory, overall. Sound improvement has been made since the last inspection, as more work is now covered by pupils in history and religious education, but there is still a weakness in the coverage of geography and design and technology at Key Stage 2. The school provides pupils with an appropriate curriculum covering all National Curriculum subjects and religious education, as well as personal, social and health education across both key stages. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage of learning is satisfactory, overall. It is better in the reception class than in the nursery, because the teaching of basic skills is rigorously planned for. The curriculum takes full account of the recent guidelines for the Foundation Stage of learning and all areas of learning are catered for. In both the nursery and the reception class, many good learning opportunities are provided for children to learn, using their senses. For example, in nursery, children touched fish, brought from the fishmongers, in relation to their project "Under the sea", and commented upon how slippery and shiny their scales were. Teachers are generally good at providing opportunities for pupils to learn. They are knowledgeable about most aspects of the National Curriculum and of the national strategies for raising standards in literacy and numeracy and adequate time is devoted to all other subjects.
33. There are, however, weaknesses in curriculum provision across both key stages, but particularly in Key Stage 2. The curriculum is broad and relevant to the pupils' needs, but not fully balanced at present, because schemes of work, which clearly identify subject-specific skills progression, are not written for the majority of subjects. The mathematics curriculum is limited, because insufficient emphasis is placed upon the teaching of data handling and problem solving and insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to use and apply their

- mathematical skills across the various subjects of the National Curriculum. This is similar in the science curriculum. Here the transferable skills of scientific enquiry are insufficiently provided for and, consequently, children are not given adequate opportunities to form hypotheses and raise questions, decide how answers might be found, or explain evidence carefully. In the English curriculum, provision for the programme of study for speaking and listening is also limited. Too often teachers do not plan for this aspect either in English lessons or in other subjects. These weaknesses are linked to inadequate provision for the more general learning skills that underlie the National Curriculum, such as higher order thinking skills, developing the skills of enquiry, problem solving and communication, and to insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their independent learning skills.
34. Planning for the teaching of subject skills progressively across the whole school is also not effective. Sometimes there is duplication of provision, because previous management of the school had not placed a high enough emphasis upon:
 - (a) developing the role of subject co-ordinators;
 - (b) monitoring the curriculum for the successive development of skills; and
 - (c) responding adequately to the previous inspection report of HMI.
 35. Planning, in the long and medium term, in literacy and numeracy has benefited from the national strategies. The implementation of both the literacy and numeracy strategies is effective and is having a positive impact on standards, although at present the literacy strategy is proving to be more successful. Similarly, the provision for art and for religious education is well served by the adoption of appropriate schemes of work that are used across the school. However, in other curriculum areas, schemes of work are either not yet operational, as in physical education, geography, music, and in information and communication technology, or inadequate, insofar as they are used by teachers who have been expected to work in isolation. Individual teachers are resourceful at planning lessons and can identify appropriate learning objectives that the current headteacher monitors weekly. Too often, however, because the work is often planned in isolation, teachers have been expected to elaborate upon the content and resource implications of the various schemes of work alone and to plan for the short term. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and other schemes of work, that have been given to teachers by subject co-ordinators, have not been adequately discussed by the teaching staff, many of whom are new, adapted to accommodate the school's particular needs and visions, or elaborated upon sufficiently in terms of specific content. They are, thus, not used effectively for supporting the medium and long term planning across the school and continuity and progression in pupils' learning is insecure. This is one reason for pupils' low attainment, especially in Key Stage 2. Inspectors note that there has been a high turnover of staff and, without schemes of work, it was very difficult for new teachers coming into school to know precisely where to pitch pupils' learning due to the unsatisfactory assessment procedures. Consequently, scrutiny of pupils' work reveals that, all too often, learning has been repeated. Previous management had not monitored curriculum provision adequately.
 36. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum. The planning and provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The requirements of the Code of Practice are met and pupils have appropriate education plans. The special educational needs co-ordinator is knowledgeable and learning assistants generally provide good support within classes. There are currently no pupils with English as an additional language within the school.
 37. The school's personal social and health education policy is having a positive effect. Provision is good across the curriculum and a range of agencies is invited into school to support the programme. These include the police, school nurse and community and religious leaders. Sex education is taught across the school, parents are given the opportunity to view the policy and in Year 6 to see any lessons planned, especially those involving the school nurse. Circle time and registration time are well used to continue the teaching and this is also extended to other curriculum areas, including science and English. Overall, the provision for the teaching of personal social and health education is satisfactory.
 38. The school has good links with the community through taking part in a family literacy initiative. Year 2 pupils attend the local music festival, the school hosts adult classes for information and communication technology and there are good links with the feeder secondary school. The

school has good links with local churches and a good range of visitors come into school, especially to support and lead acts of collective worship. Pupils have participated in residential, although, this year, this has not been organised because of the many staff changes.

39. Extra-curricular provision is adequate and is satisfactory, overall. Inspectors do not fully support the views of parents, who complained that the range of activities is limited, because the majority of staff give of their time freely to provide a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities. There is a club to support pupils' reading development in Key Stage 1, a cookery club that produces a very good quality biscuit, a football club that both boys and girls attend, a netball club and a line-dancing club that is attended by enthusiastic pupils. Pupils are provided with opportunities for home study. These mainly involve pupils reading and learning spelling, but other opportunities are sporadic and not well planned across the curriculum. The present management of the school has addressed this issue, which, previously, rightly gave cause for parental concern.
40. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, overall. The previous HMI report did not make reference to spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision, so improvement since the last inspection cannot be judged. The provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. School assemblies seen during the period of the inspection were often awe inspiring and allowed pupils time for stillness and reflection. Pupils learn about the Torah Scroll in Year 2 and about the festival of Id-ul-fitr as part of their work on Islam in Year 3. Key Stage 2 pupils attend the carol service at Saint Andrew's church during the Autumn Term and Year 6 take part in inter-school carol singing at Saint Mary's in Nantwich. In some classes pupils show wonder and excitement, as in Year 2 when their teacher explains that their lesson is going to be about the writing and sending of e-mails to another school. However, systematic planning for spirituality across the curriculum has not been established.
41. Provision for pupils' moral development is good overall. The school currently emphasises a policy of praising pupils about their moral achievements. For example, pupils are permitted to attend the Lunchtime Play Club, to play snooker and other games, but which advertises that 'You've got to be good to get in!'. The midday supervisors are skilled at promoting appropriate behaviour and set high standards. The attention of Year 2 pupils is drawn to the school rules that are prominently displayed in their classroom as well as to class rules that pupils have negotiated. In this class, pupils also vote for the pupils who they think have been the most caring, the most polite and the most hardworking during each half term. Year 3 pupils aim at 'Bee-ing Good' and the attractive wall display declares this clearly; systems of merit cards and rewards enhance the provision for their moral development. Year 4 pupils are shown clearly the importance of right and wrong through their system of 'Building blocks to brilliant behaviour and wonderful work'. There is good provision for Year 5 pupils to learn about the real hazards and moral issues surrounding drug dealing.
42. Good provision is made for pupils' social development. Throughout the school, pupils show that they can work collaboratively. For example, pupils work well together in the school's computer suite. Year 1 pupils show that they can collaborate well in dance lessons. Years 1 and 5 pupils come together periodically to work collaboratively and read to one another. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is effective, such as when a Year 2 pupil voluntarily picks up a discarded crisp packet on her way back from assembly and when a Year 5 pupil, without fuss, offers his spare physical education kit to a fellow class member who had forgotten his.
43. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Year 2 pupils visit the Lyceum Theatre and take part in singing festivals, such as the one at a local primary school during the period of the inspection. There is provision for pupils to learn about cultures other than their own through the work of artists from other countries. Year 5 pupils learn about Kenya and know about indigenous musical instruments, such as the Mbira, and sing songs and read poems and stories from other cultures around the world. Provision for developing pupils' awareness of other cultures across the school, however, is not generally strong, nor does it draw sufficiently upon the resources of the local community.

44. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils with special educational needs have equal access to the curriculum. Their needs are clearly set out within very good and detailed individual education plans. The programme of work for the pupils emphasises the acquisition of basic literacy and numeracy skills. Additional lessons in spelling, handwriting and the use of letter sounds to read unfamiliar words are undertaken in withdrawal groups and on an individual basis by the learning support assistant. Such lessons are usually undertaken at the same time as similar activities in the classroom, so that pupils with special educational needs do not miss out on work in other subjects. Their ongoing work is monitored continuously and there are very good systems in place for the regular review of their individual educational plans.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45. The school cares well for its pupils and now provides a good standard of health and safety and care for pupils' welfare, safety and personal development. Pupils are well known to all members of the school staff and, whilst being confident that their class teacher will support them, there are equally good relationships with other staff including the site manager and particularly the acting headteacher. Child protection arrangements are good, comply with statutory requirements and follow local guidelines.
46. Health and safety provision is good, well used by all staff and monitored by the governors' premises committee and subsequently the full governing body. Risk assessment is up to date and all equipment is well maintained, with recorded checks. During the inspection, no health and safety concerns were noted. There are clear notices to support procedures for fire evacuation and fire drills are taken regularly and are logged. There is an adult who has a current first aid certificate and first aid provision is good; however, the need has been recognised to provide training for more first aiders in the autumn. All serious accidents are reported correctly and parents are quickly informed if their child is ill or has an accident.
47. The school promotes healthy and safe living through a programme for personal social and health education, circle time and across the curriculum. The school has good relationships with a range of outside agencies and works successfully with them to secure pupils' welfare and provide a valuable input to pupils' health education.
48. Personal development for pupils is good. In circle time, registration periods and personal, social and health education, opportunity is provided for a sharing of any anxieties, either personal or about school work; good quality debate takes place and often it is other pupils who provide the support, rather than just the teacher. Pupils are very aware of how to receive help, both for work and for personal reasons. They have great confidence in the teaching staff and in the acting headteacher and feel very supported by them as this present team of teachers, under the leadership and management of the acting headteacher, work very well as a team.
49. Procedures for monitoring behaviour are good and well known to pupils and parents. Procedures for ensuring that oppressive behaviour is eliminated are good. Teachers give much praise for good work and good behaviour, following the school policy consistently; pupils respond well to the rewards system and show real pride when they are praised. Information on the school policy is provided in the school prospectus, and parents have received information this term to support the school's work to maintain good standards of behaviour. At present, the school's open door policy encourages parents to play a full part in pupils' welfare, both at home and in the school, but, previously, 42 per cent of parents (as evidenced by the responses to the questionnaires) had reservations about the way the school encouraged them to be involved in their children's learning.
50. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance and punctuality are good and are closely adhered to. Registers are correctly completed both morning and afternoon. The school is working hard to reinforce the procedures, continuing to give reminders in school letters about the importance of regular attendance. There has been one permanent exclusion in the last year. The school is fully inclusive in its practices and every attempt is made by the acting headteacher to monitor attendance by gender and race, also ensuring that pupils, who have special educational needs, receive their full entitlement.

51. The school has only recently set about tracking pupils' performance. At present, the procedures for the assessment of pupils' academic performance are unsatisfactory. Some effective examples are in Year 2, but this is not the picture throughout the school and is a major contributory factor to the low standards that pupils have historically attained. Previous management has not set up appropriate systems to monitor pupils' performance rigorously, in spite of HMI recommendations, and the conscientious staff have diligently used their own individual systems. There now needs to be a common format for assessment, rigorously linked to National Curriculum level descriptors, which will clearly identify the various stages of pupils' attainment and outcomes need to be used in setting targets for pupils. In the Foundation Stage, staff have started to develop assessments, using the stepping-stones of the Foundation Stage. However, there is a need for further training in the use of baseline assessments. There are no central ongoing records through which pupils' progress can be tracked. In addition to statutory tests in Years 2 and 6, pupils take optional national assessments in some other year groups. Individual teachers use the results, and their own informal assessments to monitor pupils' attainment and progress, but there is no rigorous approach to the identification of underachievement and the setting of targets to raise standards. The majority of pupils in Key Stage 2 are not aware of what they need to do to improve their work. Samples of work in English, mathematics and science are kept in pupils' individual files to provide a record of progress towards expected standards in the National Curriculum. These are useful but sometimes there is a mismatch between the quality of work in the file and the level indicated by the teacher. This suggests that closer moderation of standards is required and teachers need to improve their knowledge of level descriptors to judge pupils' attainment more precisely. This is supported by the mismatch of pupils in Year 6 who attain higher levels in teacher assessments than in actual tests. Assessment procedures and practices were identified as in need of further improvement at the time of the previous inspection. This still applies.
52. Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for. Teachers ensure that pupils' needs are fully considered when planning lessons, and the learning support assistant provides additional good quality support to help and guide their progress. The day-to-day assessment of the work of pupils with special educational needs is good. There is an effective system for the regular review of progress towards the targets set and parents are closely involved at each stage of the process. Pupils' individual educational plans are of good quality and contain targets that are suitably challenging, but manageable.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

53. Present partnership with parents is good, but, according to the questionnaire issued prior to the acting headteacher's arrival, this has not always been the case. The school is continuing to develop a closer relationship with parents and a closer involvement in home school learning. Parents now feel welcomed into the school, that they are being listened to and included whenever possible. At the pre-inspection meeting, critical views were expressed about a number of areas; these included low standards, poor communication, under-challenging of pupils, issues of homework not being marked and of parents not being listened to, and pupils' unsatisfactory behaviour. They were positive about the good involvement of parents in literacy initiatives. Since the acting headteacher joined the school, parents feel there has been an improvement in all these areas. This was confirmed by the inspection findings and the issue of consistency of homework is presently being addressed by the school.
54. The quality and quantity of information provided for parents has improved. Through a good range of methods, including a detailed school prospectus, regular parents' evenings and informal meetings with teachers there is clear communication between home and school. Parents are well informed of school events by regular newsletters. These have improved and now reach parents in good time for them to make use of the information they contain, not always so in the past. Home school agreements have been well received by parents and are being used to strengthen the partnership between home and school. Parents say the school is now welcoming and staff are always willing to listen to them. Parents are invited to assemblies and value this opportunity to be part of the school day and see the responsibility their children take. Home visits are given to nursery pupils and these are well received by parents.

- Homework diaries and home reading records are much appreciated by parents who feel they ensure that there is a real communication between them and their child's teacher.
55. Parents support the school. They help on school visits and trips and as classroom helpers, making a positive contribution to learning. The school places a priority on ensuring that parents are actively involved in all aspects of school life. Friends of the school is a group of parent helpers not functioning at the present time, but the funds raised by the last group are still making a very positive contribution to pupils, who are all provided with a book bag and pencils on entry to the school.
 56. The acting headteacher has established good relationships with parents and sees them as true partners in their children's learning. Although parents were concerned about the lack of knowledge relating to the progress that their children make, inspectors found the quality of reports to be satisfactory, overall.
 57. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept fully informed and involved in the progress of their children. They are invited to discuss their children's individual education plans at regular intervals and are encouraged to provide additional support at home. Reports completed by staff are shared with parents. The previous report made a key issue of involving parents more in their children's education. Under the present leadership this is now happening and parents are better informed about the work that their children cover.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

58. The leadership and management of the school are good. The acting headteacher had been in post barely two months when the inspection took place. In that short time, he has ensured that all staff have the support that they need to carry out their duties well. The previous HMI report noted that agreed procedures had not always been adhered to and meetings, aimed at school development, had been cancelled or not planned for sufficiently. This is a contributory factor to low standards at Key Stage 2. Staff have not had the guidance needed to move the school forward, in spite of repeated requests in relation to levelling of pupils' work. He has worked very well, both with the governors and the local education authority, in ensuring that a purposeful learning atmosphere has been established in the school and that new staff are familiar with whole school procedures. He has established good working relationships with parents, who now feel truly involved in their children's learning. He has ensured that all pupils are aware of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and he has established a clear educational direction for the school to move forward, based upon detailed evaluation of national performance data. He has monitored teaching and learning and provided valuable points for improvement for all staff. All staff are united as a team with a common purpose of raising standards. The acting headteacher is instrumental in promoting high standards, effective teaching and learning, and ensuring that the school is inclusive in all its practices. In spite of the very short time that he has been at the school, he has taken effective action to secure improvement based upon a detailed analysis of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The previous school development plan was not sufficiently focused on raising standards. At present, the acting headteacher, governing body and the local education authority are drawing up a much tighter school development plan, which reflects the present training needs of the newly appointed staff.
59. The acting headteacher has very good interpersonal skills and values his staff, pupils and parents. He has restored high morale very successfully and this is having a positive effect on standards, because teachers are believing in their own capabilities.
60. The governing body is taking a more active role in moving the school forward, because they are given detailed information about the school's performance. The chair of governors works well with the local education authority adviser and values the hard work that has gone into ensuring that systems are in place to move the school forward. Governors fulfil their duties well and are taking a more active role in shaping the direction of the school. All committees are well informed of their duties and statutory requirements are fully met. Governors take an active interest in the life of the school and understand the school's strengths and weaknesses well. For example, the governor with responsibility for religious education had regular meetings with the

co-ordinator and is well informed of the contents of the scheme of work and recent developments in the subject.

61. The role of the co-ordinators is satisfactory, overall; several co-ordinators are new to their post. Audits of subjects have been undertaken, but not all co-ordinators have monitored standards in their subjects. A very effective example of monitoring has been undertaken by the religious education co-ordinator, a practice which now needs to be adopted by other subject co-ordinators. Interviews with co-ordinators revealed that not all are secure in moderating and levelling pupils' work and require further training on judging the effectiveness of teaching on the standards that pupils attain.
62. The school's strategy for appraisal and performance management is satisfactory, overall, and recent priorities, identified for improvement, are supported by sound financial planning. All grants are presently deployed, but, previously, pupils in Year 6 missed out on booster classes because the standards fund had not been effectively managed. Governors have now managed the budget effectively in light of falling rolls and have wisely made contingency plans to ensure that the present level of staffing is maintained. Money held in reserve has been used largely to refurbish the nursery and keep mainstream staff employed, in spite of falling rolls. They are seeking ways of rectifying the job share in the reception class so continuity of learning and good quality of teaching can be maintained. Governors employ the principles of best value in all of their spending.
63. The school has an appropriate number of qualified teachers and support staff, but the latter are not always effectively deployed as there is no help in the reception class in the morning, when literacy and numeracy are taught and this, on occasions, restricts children's progress because the teacher cannot fully intervene in all of the children's learning. Induction procedures are satisfactory, overall, and new staff are now briefed of their duties.
64. Accommodation is good; it is kept meticulously clean by the hard working site manager and domestic staff. Resources are satisfactory, but further provision needs to be made for purchasing more books for the library and computer software to support all subjects. At present, all grants are effectively used and the budget is kept well under control by the acting headteacher and the governing body.
65. The co-ordinator for special educational needs provides high quality leadership. She gives effective support for colleagues and liaises well with parents. She is knowledgeable and enthusiastic about her role and has a good oversight of the work undertaken across the school.
66. Since the previous HMI inspection, a new acting headteacher has been appointed and the quality of leadership has improved from sound to good.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

67. In order to raise standards further, the governors, headteacher and staff, with the help of the local education authority, need to:

(a) Raise standards in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and foundation subjects, particularly in speaking and listening (Key Stage 2), reading (Key Stage 2), writing, problem solving and experimental and investigative science (Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2) by: (paras **7, 8, 17, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29,31, 33, 35, 64, 100, 128, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 95, 96, 101, 102, 104, 106, 112, 114, 116, 117, 128, 138, 140, 143**)

- providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills in all subjects by implementing rigorous guidelines for teachers to follow which focus on pupils acquiring new vocabulary, listening to one another, talking for a range of purposes with an audience in mind;
- ensuring that basic skills of literacy and numeracy are effectively taught in a range of contexts across the curriculum;
- ensuring that the highest possible standards are set for the presentation of pupils' work;
- ensuring that further emphasis is placed upon the rigorous teaching of spelling and handwriting;
- providing opportunities for pupils to take a range of reading books home to develop their reading skills;
- limiting the use of worksheets and providing more opportunities for pupils to work independently;
- further challenging higher attaining pupils;
- ensuring that skills and knowledge of experimental and investigative science are progressively taught throughout both key stages;

(b) Develop rigorous schemes of work for all subjects, which clearly identify skills and knowledge to be taught in each year group, and ensure appropriate coverage of information and communication technology skills. (para **35**)

(c) Develop rigorous assessment procedures, which are clearly linked to National Curriculum level descriptors and ensure that the outcomes from these are used consistently to identify underachievement, aid teachers' planning, set individual and group targets and provide further training for teachers in levelling and moderating pupils' work. (para **51**)

(d) Develop the role of the co-ordinators so that they can monitor standards in their subjects and develop schemes of work and assessment procedures effectively. (para **61**)

Improve standards in the Foundation Stage by: (paras **51, 63, 68, 69, 75**)

- ensuring that medium and short term planning in the nursery is specific in identifying learning objectives;
- ensuring that staff are familiar with baseline assessments and are realistic in their evaluations.

- seeking to resolve the job share situation in the Foundation Stage, so that pupils experience continuity of learning and support staff are present at morning sessions.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	54
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	18

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	17	59	24	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)	9	174
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	55

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	55

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	35
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	23

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	2.3
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.9
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
	2000	17	6	23

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	10	12
	Girls	5	6	6
	Total	14	16	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	61 (74)	70 (89)	78 (80)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	11	13
	Girls	6	6	6
	Total	16	17	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	70 (83)	74 (80)	83 (74)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

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
	2000	14	19	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	8	9
	Girls	13	11	14
	Total	20	19	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	61 (45)	58 (41)	70 (41)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	7	9
	Girls	13	11	15
	Total	18	18	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	55 (45)	55 (45)	73 (41)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	4
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	3
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	145
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	13	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	149.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	21.9

Number of pupils per FTE adult	10
--------------------------------	----

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	418,130
Total expenditure	425,202
Expenditure per pupil	2,336
Balance brought forward from previous year	56,981
Balance carried forward to next year	49,909

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	183
Number of questionnaires returned	63

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	40	41	11	5	3
My child is making good progress in school.	33	43	10	8	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	16	46	16	17	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	29	19	21	3
The teaching is good.	43	33	14	6	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	27	27	17	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	35	41	6	16	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	29	51	11	3	6
The school works closely with parents.	16	35	17	25	6
The school is well led and managed.	13	22	22	30	11
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	24	43	13	13	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	14	40	17	21	6

These figures are related to parents' views prior to the appointment of the acting headteacher.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

68. Children in the Foundation Stage of learning are taught in the mornings only in the nursery, those of reception class age are taught full time. Children in the reception class are taught, in the mornings, by a part time teacher and in the afternoons by the teacher who teaches the morning nursery class. Due to problems in staff recruitment, the local education authority had seconded a part time teacher from a local school for the duration of the inspection, as the previous teacher left, just before the inspection, to take up employment in another school. The school has recently appointed a teacher to teach in the Foundation Stage, who will be on a short-term contract. The present arrangements of a job-share are not wholly adequate, because children are not assured of continuity of learning, even though the nursery teacher knows these children well. Children enter the reception class in the term in which they are five and they enter the nursery after their third birthday.
69. Attainment on entry to the reception class is well below that expected of children of this age, especially in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and personal and social development. Attainment on entry to the nursery is particularly poor in all areas of learning. In spite of the good teaching, children do not attain the early learning goals in all areas of learning, due to their low starting points and attainment on entry to Year 1 is below that expected of this age group, nationally. The curriculum is satisfactory, overall, but further rigour is needed in medium and short term planning in the nursery. All the areas of learning are covered, but there are weaknesses in baseline assessments, because they do not fully represent a true picture of pupils' attainment on entry, as they are over generous in their evaluation of pupils' starting points.

Personal, social and emotional development

70. When children enter the nursery, the majority have poor skills in relation to working with others. Many of them do not know the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and do not share their toys readily. During their time in the Foundation Stage, they make good progress and achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and quickly become used to classroom routines, but they do not attain the early learning goals. They tidy up after themselves, dress and undress themselves for physical education and are very keen to pass around biscuits to visitors during snack time. They are polite, they say "please" and "thank you" and they enjoy making their own choice of activity and persevere until tasks are complete. Children have a good awareness of the part they play in the wider school community, as when they proudly present an assembly to parents and the rest of the school, sharing their learning of "We're going on a bear hunt".
71. The quality of teaching is good. The teachers provide well for children's personal development by giving useful opportunities to develop independence. Resources are well organised so that children can help themselves to implements, such as pencils and glue spreaders. Children's opinions are listened to and valued. The effective measures that have been established to support children on entry to the school help them to form a positive attitude to school from an early age. The teachers and support staff work together to create a stimulating and ordered environment and children are happy to come to school.

Communication, language and literacy

72. Pupils enter the Foundation Stage with many barriers to learning. They have underdeveloped speaking and listening skills and their vocabulary lacks descriptive words. They find it difficult to stay on task and many of them are unfamiliar with classroom routines. During their time in nursery and in the reception class, they make good gains in learning, especially in the reception class, because the teaching of literacy hour is good and pupils are taught the basic skills of speaking and listening, reading and writing well. By the time they enter Year 1, many children

still have difficulty in forming their letters, identifying initial sounds, their speaking skills are underdeveloped and standards, overall, at the end of the Foundation Stage are below those expected nationally. This is because of their low starting points on entry. Children are happy to chat about themselves and their families; they enjoy role-play, especially when acting out the story of Goldilocks and the three bears. They can empathise with how baby bear felt when his bed was broken and they are keen to write letters of apology to the three bears from Goldilocks.

73. Children are keen to make marks and they ascribe meaning to them, they can recognise rhyme in spoken words and they listen and join in with stories, poems and rhymes. They are beginning to be aware of the way stories are structured and the few higher attaining children can recognise familiar words. Children are attempting to form letters correctly and they can use clockwise movements and retrace vertical lines. Higher attaining children can write their names.
74. The quality of teaching is good, overall; it is satisfactory in the nursery and good in the reception class. Both teachers know how young children learn, but the teacher in the reception class has very good knowledge of the teaching of basic skills and has effectively implemented all the elements of the literacy hour. She has high expectations of these pupils and, during the week of inspection, children made good gains in learning, because they were inspired, both by the very good quality of teaching and by the well prepared resources. In nursery, the teacher and support assistant work well together, they plan interesting activities for the children and offer good opportunities for the children to develop their vocabulary. However, there is a need for a more focused approach in order to target groups of children to move them on in their learning, rather than letting them choose activities for themselves.
75. A weakness in the reception class is the lack of adult support in the mornings. At present, the reception class teacher does not have a classroom assistant to help her teach groups of pupils. The acting headteacher has recognised this as an area to be addressed.

Mathematical development

76. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children will not attain the early learning goals, but they do nevertheless achieve well in relation to their low starting points. Children count confidently to 20, but average attaining children can recognise numbers up to 10, whilst below average attaining children struggle with numbers up to 5. Higher attaining children can count up to 30 and recognise numbers up to 20. All children can identify common solid shapes and use cubes to measure long and short lines. They are making good gains in understanding the concept of one more than and one less than.
77. The teaching of mathematics is good, overall. Teachers provide frequent opportunities to use number rhymes, sort, order, match and count. Children learn to apply their mathematical knowledge to everyday situations as, for example, they work out the total number of children present and how many are absent, when the register is being called. There are regular mathematics sessions in the reception class that promote good learning. Questions are well directed to children's individual needs and learning is enhanced as their self-esteem is raised through the regular praise they receive. In the nursery, number activities are well supported by practitioners, who intervene appropriately, to improve numeracy skills. Good use is made of resources and children have good opportunity to learn through their senses. They write numbers, using chalk and paint, and trace numbers in sand.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

78. Children make good gains in their learning through well-planned activities; they achieve well in relation to their prior attainment, but they do not attain the early learning goals at the end of the Foundation Stage. Children use the computer effectively, they know how to match pictures and use paint programs to create pictures associated with under the sea. They know that birds fly in the air and fish live in water. They understand the difference between now and then and are starting to develop a sense of their own identity in relation to their siblings and peers. They are keen to make honey sandwiches for their picnic and describe the colours and smell of fish that

- they have handled in lessons. They are able to describe where they live and how they get to school.
79. Teaching is good in this area of learning. Children are provided with a very wide range of materials and experiences, lessons are well planned and efficiently organised. Children concentrate well on all activities that they are engaged in. Lessons are well planned and efficiently organised, resulting in children frequently concentrating well for long periods.

Physical development

80. Children do not attain the early learning goals on entry to Year 1, but, throughout the Foundation Stage, they achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Children have underdeveloped cutting skills and have difficulty in working with small materials, such as sequins. Children in the nursery do not have appropriate pencil grip, but, by the time they reach the reception class, they have made sound progress. Children show good awareness of space as they move around the hall in response to the teacher's instructions. They demonstrate good co-ordination as they hop, skip and jump and increasing dexterity as they move over benches.
81. The teaching of physical education is good. Teachers give clear instructions and encourage all children to participate fully. Children, both in the nursery and in the reception class, are provided with good resources so that their fine motor skills are appropriately developed.

Creative development

82. At the end of the Foundation Stage, children demonstrate sound competence in a range of materials and media, but they do not attain the early learning goals, in spite of the good gains that they make in their learning, because of their low starting points on entry to the nursery.
83. Children love singing and they readily join in favourite songs. They can tap out simple repeated rhythms and they can sing many nursery rhymes. They readily engage in imaginative role play based on their first hand experiences, such as asking for money in the shop and explaining to clients that new stocks of shoes have not yet arrived due to postal strikes. They are very eager to measure the shoe size of adults, saying that at present there are no giant shoes available. Children in the reception class explore what happens when they mix colours and they make collages representing transport. However, their paintings, whilst showing an appropriate use of colour, do not always represent approximate shapes. Pupils do not clearly express and communicate their ideas, because their speech and language skills are underdeveloped.
84. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers use a range of interesting materials to engage children's attention. Children print, using a variety of materials, including fruit, vegetables and fish. They squeal with delight when they put gold paint onto a mackerel and see the print as an end result. Teachers manage pupils well and ensure that they experiment with a range of media.
85. Nursery and reception pupils have produced effective camouflage paintings of animals, such as elephants and giraffes blending into their backgrounds. Their tree silhouettes, made by blowing brown paint through straws and adding felt leaves, are also of good quality.

ENGLISH

86. Inspection findings show that standards, at the age of seven, are broadly in line with the national average in speaking and listening and reading, but they are below in writing. Overall, standards are average and this reflects the judgements of the HMI inspection of 1999. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are below the national average in speaking and listening, reading and writing and, whilst there has been improvement in the standards that pupils attain, they are not as high as they could be. There has been a lowering of standards since the previous inspection of 1999, which judged standards to be broadly in line. This is largely due to the lack of leadership of the previous management in moving the school forward in developing

assessment procedures, analysing national data to inform curriculum planning, the high turnover of staff, previous disruptive behaviour of pupils and the lack of focused target setting in raising pupils' standards of attainment.

87. These concerns have now been resolved, thanks to the hard work of the local education authority adviser and the governing body who, in a very short space of time, appointed an acting headteacher to move the school forward. The previous headteacher had not secured sufficient progress since the HMI inspection of 1999 and many of the weaknesses identified have only just been addressed by the acting headteacher, the local education authority and the governing body.
88. The national test results of 2000 at the end of Key Stage 1 show that in reading and writing standards were well below the national average in comparison with all schools and in comparison with similar schools. By the end of Key Stage 2, test results show that standards were well below average in comparison with all schools and below average in comparison with similar schools. Very few pupils attained the higher levels and the percentage was well below the national average. Taking three years together, the figures show that the performance of pupils in Key Stage 1, in reading and writing, fell below the national average and in Key Stage 2 in English, it also fell below the national average. There was no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Inspection findings show an improving picture. This is because pupils in Key Stage 1 have had continuity of learning since January of this year, when a new teacher was appointed. In Key Stage 2, there has been a marked improvement in the short-term progress pupils have made, because two new teachers have been appointed for Year 3 and Year 4 and, as a result, teamwork in Key Stage 2 is good, with all teachers working for a common purpose. Pupils' achievements are good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2, but there are signs of improvement. The good quality of teaching seen in Key Stage 2 has not had time to have a full impact on standards, but standards are now poised to rise because teachers have high expectations of their pupils. In both key stages, pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.
89. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with underdeveloped skills of speaking and listening. In Year 1, they are encouraged to talk about their experiences and to develop their vocabulary. By the age of seven, pupils speak with developing confidence and standards are broadly satisfactory. Their listening skills are generally appropriate for their age and they make suitable responses. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have difficulty in expressing opinions and their ability to debate and discuss arguments is weak. For example, pupils in Year 6 were encouraged to discuss in groups how they could set up a fair test. It became clear that they lacked confidence in group work. It also became evident that they had little opportunity to do this previously, especially in Year 3 and Year 4 and this has had a cumulative effect on standards in Year 6.

Reading

90. Standards in reading are in line with the national average at the end of Key Stage 1 and pupils' achievement is good. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are below the national average, but pupils' achievement is broadly satisfactory in relation to their prior attainment, which was well below the national average in Year 3 and Year 4. In Year 2, pupils read simple words appropriately and talk about key characters in their reading books. The higher attaining pupils are able to work out words by recognising sounds and are able to "read on" to gain meaning. This is because, in Year 1, a very high emphasis is placed upon teaching pupils phonic attack skills. Pupils in Year 2 explained how difficult words could be worked out by spelling out the first phoneme of an unknown word.
91. By the age of 11, only the higher attaining pupils are fluent and accurate readers, but they have not developed a critical appreciation of a range of different books and authors, because, until now, pupils were not allowed to take library books home. This, coupled with the high turnover of staff, has resulted in underachievement. Pupils in Year 6 know that libraries can be used for finding information; they are making sound gains in their usage of indexes and glossaries. However, pupils in Year 3 have a better understanding of the Dewey classification system than those in Year 6. This is because the recent good teaching seen in this year group is already starting to have a positive effect on standards.

Writing

92. Standards in writing at the end of Key Stage 1 are just below the national average, whilst those at the end of Key Stage 2 are below national average. This is, however, an improvement on 2000 test results. The school has identified that standards need to be raised and staff are working very hard at providing a good range of learning opportunities for the pupils. The weakest standards are in Year 5, because these pupils had been taught by a large number of supply teachers who had been unable to match tasks to pupils' prior attainment, due to lack of assessment data which they could use to inform their planning. Pupils' achievements, in relation to their prior attainment, are good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. There is recent evidence of good achievement in Year 3 and Year 4.
93. Pupils in Year 1 write simple stories, both on their own and using their teacher as scribe. They are making a good attempt at using descriptive words in their openings of stories, such as "One dark, frosty, windy night". This is further developed in year 2 where pupils are making good gains in using punctuation, such as full stops and capital letters, but their use of speech marks is limited. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in relation to their prior attainment because of the good quality of adult intervention. The previous HMI report noted that further challenge should be provided for below and average attaining pupils; this has been done.
94. Contributory factors to pupils' good gains in learning are largely to do with the fact that there are many examples of good and very good teaching seen in Key Stage 1. Furthermore, there has been stability of staff over the past two terms in Year 1 and this is having a positive effect on pupils' achievements. Support staff are well involved in lessons and there has been a good level of parental support, especially in Year 1.
95. By the end of Key Stage 2, writing standards are below the national average, but there has been improvement, as demonstrated by the scores on optional tests that pupils take. All groups of pupils are making sound gains in learning in relation to their low starting points. Throughout the key stage a high emphasis is placed upon improving pupils' spelling and handwriting, which at present are weak. Pupils have difficulty in writing the correct spellings of words with common letter strings with different pronunciation, such as wood, food, poor, and alternative ways of writing the same sound, through, flew, shoe.
96. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 experiment with writing opening sentences, paragraphs and detailed chapters, but they lack proof reading skills. Average pupils struggle with presenting information in an organised and succinct way and their use of a range of verb tenses, including conditional, is limited. The majority of pupils struggle with elaborating nouns with a range of adjectives, and few use complex sentences in writing. It is evident, from the scrutiny of pupils' work, that phonics have not been rigorously taught until now. Pupils in Year 6 successfully sequence stories into the appropriate "beginning, middle, end", they use punctuation sporadically and only the higher attaining pupils achieve appropriate standards in writing. Story structure appears to be repeated in Year 5, particularly the use of story templates, and this indicates a lack of progression in skills and weak planning. Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology skills to promote their learning in all aspects of literacy, because, at present, the range of software is very limited.
97. A contributory factor to pupils' low standards is that teachers' knowledge of level descriptors of the National Curriculum is not secure, restricting teachers' capability to match tasks to pupils' needs. In spite of staff's requests to undertake joint moderation and levelling of pupils' work, previous management had not provided appropriate training.
98. Presentation skills are satisfactory in Key Stage 1, but unsatisfactory in Key Stage 2; they are particularly poor in Year 4 and Year 5. This is because these pupils have had many disruptions to their learning due to the high turnover of staff.
99. Inspection findings show that, due to the efficient monitoring of the acting headteacher and local education authority link adviser, the quality of teaching and short term learning is good in

both key stages. Teachers have taken on board the advice offered to them and this has had a positive impact on pupils' learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge and, very recently, the structure of the literacy hour has ensured that basic skills are appropriately taught; further rigour is needed to ensure that progression in phonics is rigorously implemented across both key stages, so that pupils in Key Stage 2 can catch up on what has not been previously taught. Lessons are well planned and learning objectives are appropriately shared with the pupils. These are revisited to ensure that pupils have acquired new knowledge and skills. Work is broadly planned to meet the differing groups of achievement in spite of the lack of assessment data. This is because teachers are knowledgeable and know their pupils well. Appropriate methods are used to ensure that pupils are able to increase their learning, such as group work, individual work, demonstration and appropriate adult intervention. For example, in good literacy lessons in Year 3 and Year 4, teachers' explanations were successful and their periodic summaries ensured that lessons were well paced. In good lessons in Key Stage 1, class teachers included all pupils in their questioning. In both key stages the management of pupils is very good and all pupils stay on task. Where support staff are present, they make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Analysis of work over time shows that marking has not always been used to best effect to improve standards. For instance, work is not always marked regularly and, although some positive comments are made, there is little evidence to indicate that areas of improvement are suggested or acted upon as teaching points.

100. Teachers' files indicate that copious records have been kept on pupils' achievements, but these are not linked to National Curriculum level descriptors and are not sufficiently informative to enable teachers to move pupils on in their learning. This has made handovers, at the end of the year, problematic because records have been unmanageable in helping teachers plan the next steps in pupils' learning. The most detailed records of pupils' assessments are seen in Year 2. Co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory, but it has the potential to be good. This is because the co-ordinator has had to deputise for the previous headteacher on too many occasions and has been unable to fulfil all of her duties rigorously. Resources are satisfactory, but the library needs to be restocked as, at present, there are insufficient books in all subjects for pupils to develop their research skills and literacy is not used well to support other subject areas, because of the lack of schemes of work which do not identify opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy skills in a range of contexts.
101. Since the HMI inspection of 1999, standards did not rise sufficiently until March 2001, when the local education authority undertook a detailed analysis of why the school had not been making sufficient progress. Standards, under the leadership of the new headteacher, are rising and all groups of pupils are now more effectively challenged. Rates of progress are faster in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2, due to gaps and disruptions to previous provision largely due to high turnover of staff. However, there is still room for improvement in developing pupils' spelling, handwriting and presentation skills in both key stages.

MATHEMATICS

102. From inspection findings, standards of work are average at the age of seven. Pupils achieve well from a low level of attainment on entry. Standards have improved during the course of the year, due to the establishment of greater stability in the teaching provision in Years 1 and 2. This has not been the case until very recently in Years 3 to 6. Consequently, standards of work are well below average by the time pupils are eleven and there is a high proportion of underachievement, particularly in the middle ability range. Pupils' achievement has improved in the latter part of the current term, because all classes now have permanent teachers who are knowledgeable in the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. The progress of pupils in Years 3 to 6 has been affected by discontinuity of teaching at various stages in their education. Overall achievement is good at the end of Key Stage 2. Learning has been fragmented, so pupils have not been able to build satisfactorily on prior knowledge and understanding. This is detrimental to progress, mathematics being a subject, which is so dependent on cumulative learning.
103. Pupils' results in national tests for seven-year-olds in 2000 were below the national average, but the proportion exceeding the level expected for their age was well above average. This was the result of additional intensive support given to the higher-attaining pupils. The results

- were average compared to schools of similar background. The upward trend in results since 1996 is greater than the national rate of progress. In 2000, pupils' performance in national tests for eleven-year-olds was well below the national average and that of similar schools. Results have fluctuated year-on-year. Taken over the past four years, they have not improved as fast as the national trend. Pupils do not achieve as well in mathematics as in English and science. There are many reasons as to why pupils underachieved, including instability of staffing, a lack of a clear educational direction in raising standards, insufficient target setting and poor financial management of the standards fund, which resulted in pupils not having access to booster classes.
104. Standards in Years 1 and 2 are improving, now that learning is based on the progressive acquisition of knowledge and understanding and steady teaching. In Year 1, emphasis on developing pupils' understanding of basic number concepts, and applying them, builds up confidence. By the end of Year 2, most pupils use mental recall satisfactorily for simple addition and subtraction, recognise sequences and order numbers to 100. Many understand place values beyond this. Attainment in shape, space and measure is satisfactory and information technology skills are used satisfactorily to reinforce fundamental concepts. The impact of the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy shows in the pupils' quicker response in mental mathematics. This is equally applicable in Years 3 to 6. Pupils' numerical skills are average and better than attainment in other aspects of mathematics. Lack of continuity and liaison between teachers, many of whom have been temporary, has left pupils with gaps in their knowledge and insufficient practice in its application. For example, pupils' retention of basic information about angular measure and geometric constructions is poor. Teachers often find themselves repeating earlier work before they can progress to new material. Over time, work has been too superficial. It has lacked rigour and depth. By Year 6, many pupils still find difficulty in translating a word problem to its numerical equivalent.
 105. Pupils' attitudes are good and they are keen to learn when they know what is expected of them. Until recently, expectations have been inconsistent, particularly in Years 3 and 4. Throughout the school, pupils are disadvantaged by over-reliance on the use of worksheets. These are well prepared, but do not provide pupils with points of reference to past work, nor do they provide adequate opportunities for pupils to master independent recording of written work. In addition, the use of unlined exercise books is resulting in poor presentation of work. Pupils are not learning to set their work out logically and neatly, nor are they learning to interpret questions and think through different methods of solving them. Some pupils show little sense of urgency in completing the work. Pupils would benefit from the teachers' use of a whole-school assessment system to facilitate the tracking of progress on a regular basis throughout the year, and year-on-year. At present, not all teachers are secure in matching National Curriculum levels to pupils' work and underachievement is not being identified early enough, so that pupils can be told what to do to improve. The homework system works satisfactorily for those pupils who return work regularly. It encourages parents' involvement in their children's learning.
 106. There is no whole-school policy for incorporating numerical skills into work across the curriculum. Consequently, opportunities are missed for pupils to practise applying these skills in unfamiliar circumstances. For example, in science, there is insufficient evidence of the analysis of quantitative data from experiments. In geography, in Years 3 to 6, pupils rarely use measurements and scales to enhance their understanding and explanation of features extracted from maps.
 107. Currently, because of the strong complement of new teachers, the quality of teaching is good, but this does not reflect the situation that has applied for most of the current year. In Years 1 and 2, teaching has been more consistently good and staffing has been stable for the greater part of the year. In Years 3 to 6, scrutiny of documentation and pupils' work indicates that, overall, teaching has been unsatisfactory for a significant part of the year due to discontinuity in staffing in all classes except Year 5. Expectations have not been high enough and too little attention has been given to ensuring that pupils are provided with the full range of learning experiences. Pupils have been presented with routine exercises, some of which have been repetitive of earlier work at the expense of 'moving on'. In contrast, too few opportunities have been provided for independent work where pupils have to think for themselves and work through more complex problems. New teachers in Years 3 and 4 have to work particularly hard to boost pupils' confidence in their ability to work independently. The process is slow, but

essential for pupils' future progress. A typical example of the teacher's patience and determination to inculcate her ideals was in the Year 4 lesson in which pupils were made to read and re-read instructions to provide answers exactly matched to the questions. Pupils worked on problems related to mapping and compass points and were directed to think carefully about the difference between 'location' and 'direction'. Five of the six lessons observed during the inspection were good, one being very good. The other was satisfactory. The impact of the current standard of teaching is not yet reflected in overall standards in Years 3 to 6, but it is noticeable in pupils' more positive attitudes and confidence to attempt challenging work. All teachers now provide work which is suitably linked to pupils' prior attainment and extra work is always available to challenge those who work quickly.

108. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve as well, and sometimes better, than might be expected. They receive good support and benefit from the slower pace sometimes adopted by teachers because of the wide ability spread in most classes. On occasion, this results in higher-attaining pupils 'marking time' when they could be engaged in higher level work.
109. The school has made satisfactory improvement in mathematics in Key Stage 1 since the previous inspection, but improvement in Key Stage 2 has been slow. A new curriculum leader has very recently been appointed to implement more rigorous procedures. To date, monitoring of teaching and pupils' progress has been unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Planning has not been well informed and the assessment of pupils' standards has been inconsistent. The appointment of new teachers, to complement the permanent staff, has led to higher morale and ambition for pupils to achieve better. There is good capacity for further improvement, especially in Key Stage 2, through the sharing of the best teaching practices, staff development and the implementation of a whole-school assessment policy to provide targets for individual pupils.

SCIENCE

110. During the last inspection in 1999, standards were said to be rising generally, but no specific reference was made to science. In 2000, teacher assessments of pupils' attainment in science in Key Stage 1 indicated that while 83 per cent of pupils reached Level 2, no pupils attained a higher Level 3. While pupils attaining Level 2 represented a rise on the previous year's results (74 per cent), the absence of pupils achieving Level 3 meant that overall standards were well below national average.
111. Key Stage 2 test results for the year 2000 showed that 70 per cent of pupils attained Level 4 or above, with 15 per cent achieving the higher Level 5. This indicated good progress on the previous year, where only 41 per cent were awarded a Level 4 or above, and only 3 per cent attained the higher Level 5. But despite sound progress, because of the lack of higher attaining pupils, standards, by the end of the key stage, were still well below national averages.
112. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 is now broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils in Year 1 know about the forces of pulling, pushing and twisting and are starting to develop observational skills well. They can apply their knowledge and extend it to other contexts and suggest solutions to basic problems that involve similar forces. In Year 2, pupils know about scientific changes, for example how eggs and ice change their state with temperature, but the lower attaining pupils do not evaluate evidence properly, use insufficient scientific language and cannot communicate their finding other than in basic charts. The higher attaining pupils recognise that scientific ideas are based upon evidence and can structure a 'fair test' with help, although opportunities for considering evidence and evaluating results are limited and diminish attainment. All groups of pupils are struggling with experimental and investigative science and opportunities for independent research are limited.
113. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 is generally below national standards and, while there has been progress during the past year, it has not been as rapid as in Key Stage 1. Overall achievement is now satisfactory in relation to pupils' prior attainment. Part of the reason for previous underachievement has been transitory staffing and a lack of clear direction for the subject, because schemes of work have not been fully developed and used. Pupils in Year 3 know about teeth, such as molars, incisors, and canines, and of their different functions. They can also use a computer programme to draw the diagram of a flower and label its parts. In

Year 4 pupils know about the human skeleton and have learnt to name many of the parts, such as the patella and the humerus bone, and can explain how elbow and knee joints move in different ways. They also know that liquids are 'runny', but too often have not learnt to explain why, scientifically. For example in an exercise book the following explanation was given: 'It's not very easy to tell solids from liquids. Sometimes you have to think very hard about it'. While pupils know that pushing, pulling and gravity are forces, Attainment Target 1 of the science curriculum has not been taught sufficiently rigorously. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their targets identified in individual learning plans.

114. Expectations of pupils' learning have too often been low and insufficiently clear learning objectives identified. With the present complement of staff this is now changing and teachers' planning indicates that learning objectives are more specific. Pupils in Year 5 can investigate how the pulse rate varies with exercise and the teacher's positive relationships with the pupils help capture their interest. They can name and label the internal organs in the human body but their drawings and labelling of plants is immature. They know how sounds are made and they make good links with music. They start to use the experimental framework and can name the method and resources used but, generally, do not predict sufficiently or evaluate the outcome of their work and lack these skills. Pupils in Year 6 know about forces, but have problems naming the parts of a flower accurately. They know that light travels in straight lines, but are unsure about which materials block light. They can name the parts of an eye and understand well the meaning of reflection and transparent. They know how shadows are formed, but are not sufficiently experienced in hypothesising and in evaluating their work. They know how to make a bulb brighter, but their drawings of electric circuits are basic and not well labelled. They can predict and raise questions about scientific matters but too often confuse this with the process of scientific investigation. While they are starting to develop the skills of enquiry and investigation and while the more able make good progress in Attainment Target 1, the majority of pupils do so at a level below that expected for pupils at the end of this key stage. This is partly because teachers have not adequately developed a whole school approach to planning and to teaching scientific skills progressively.
115. Across both key stages pupils' attitudes to science are good. In many lessons there is a sense of real enjoyment and enthusiasm. Pupils are very attentive and generally behave well. Year 3 pupils are particularly keen to explain what they know. Pupils throughout the school are skilled at working together and demonstrate good collaborative skills when working in groups.
116. Teaching is generally good throughout the school. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject, but are not as secure in teaching the investigative and experimental aspects of science. As a consequence, pupils too often do not learn to hypothesise well, or observe scientific processes systematically, or draw appropriate conclusions from their work. Too often, pupils recount what they have done during an investigation rather than report the outcome scientifically. Teachers are skilled at holding pupils' attention and drawing upon their first-hand experiences. The pace of lessons is brisk, although, occasionally, this is at the expense of a quiet classroom ethos and the learning of the lower achieving pupils. Teachers provide good opportunities for group work and support pupils with special educational needs well. Teachers are skilled at telling pupils what they are going to learn in a lesson and then discussing what they have learned with them at the end. Pupils' work is generally marked satisfactorily, although this has not been consistent during the past year in Year 4 especially. Pupils in both key stages are now making sound gains in learning because the quality of teaching has improved significantly.
117. The co-ordinator has good specialist skills in science and is providing an effective lead. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority scheme of work has been distributed, as well as a publisher's scheme that supports teachers' planning in terms of classroom ideas, approaches and activities. The outline scheme of work is generally well adhered to by teachers and there is agreement about which parts of the programme of study are to be taught in various years across the school. Coverage of the curriculum is, therefore, generally good, but there are exceptions and pupils are occasionally expected to repeat work, for example the skeleton in Years 4 and 5. Teachers have been largely expected to plan their work for science in isolation and, with the recent flux of teaching staff, what is potentially a valuable scheme has been not been adequately discussed, adapted to the school's particular aims for science teaching, or

elaborated upon sufficiently with regard to its content and resource implications. Furthermore, it has not been fully matched to pupils' learning needs. The co-ordinator is fully aware of these issues and has a clear view of how standards in science should be improved. There is a need for time to be allocated for the proper dissemination of the science policy and scheme of work across the school; the co-ordinator to monitor coverage and progression of the curriculum; the co-ordinator to be trained to monitor planning and teaching, identify good practice and offer support to teachers where needed; and to develop procedures for the assessment of pupils' achievement across the school and to use this information for planning teaching.

ART AND DESIGN

118. By the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, the majority of pupils attain standards above those expected nationally and achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. The 1999 HMI inspection made no judgement about art; therefore, comparisons cannot be made. The quality of teaching is good. All teachers have very good subject knowledge, plan their work effectively, have very high expectations of pupils and teach subject specific skills well. This is reflected in the good quality of displays around the school.
119. Pupils make very good progress in their skills and understanding of art and design. They successfully learn a wide range of techniques and incorporate this knowledge into imaginative, lively and vibrant work. Close observational sketches of bean plants grown in the classroom and of artefacts, such as a radio and a bus, by Year 1 pupils display their increasing awareness of line, shape and tone when recording their work in art form. Very good quality illustrations of characters from stories and poems, written by a favourite author, have been made by Year 2 pupils and they have also designed and made Torah covers in relation to their study of Judaism. Through such work, good cross-curricular links have been developed. Mendhi hand-pattern designs have also established good cross-curricular links with their religious education studies on Islam
120. Pupils across the school make very good progress in their understanding of the work of famous artists. For example, Year 3 pupils, inspired by the work of Henri Rousseau, have created exotic landscapes of very good quality, using wax crayons, pastels and coloured pencils. Individual and group interpretations and reproductions of some of Monet's paintings by Year 4 pupils are of excellent quality.
121. Portraits of Tudor monarchs and African art designs on posters to 'Save the Whale' by Year 5 pupils are of good quality and are effective in developing cross-curricular links with history and geography. Year 6 pupils make good progress in their understanding of perspective and some are able to create three-dimensional effects in their paintings. Good quality book covers have also been designed and illustrated by them. Pupils' work shows care and attention to detail.
122. Information and communication technology is used effectively across the school to support and develop the work. Visiting artists have also been used effectively to enhance the curriculum and collages of the finished work are displayed effectively around the school and have been used publicly to celebrate the Crewe and Nantwich Arts Festival. Sketchbooks are used effectively and there is evidence to show the good progression of pupils' observational skills.
123. The subject is well co-ordinated. The co-ordinator has devised useful guidelines for the subject and is knowledgeable on what each teacher is covering in the curriculum over the year. Useful progression sheets have been adapted for each year group and these enable the progress of pupils to be monitored as they move through the school. Resources are of good quality and are used effectively, but, as yet, assessments rely upon informal teacher observations and there are inconsistencies in recording. The school has recognised the need to develop assessment procedures.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

124. Judgements are based on scrutiny of pupils' work and discussion with teachers and pupils. These indicate that pupils are achieving well and standards are in line with the national average by the time they are seven. This is because effective examples of good teaching were seen in Year 1. Standards are below average at eleven and pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory. Pupils do not achieve as well as they could in Years 3 to 6 because the scheme of work is inadequate and does not provide for the progressive acquisition, development and advancement of skills.
125. In Year 1, pupils develop design skills through observation, making, evaluation and improvement of the final article. This represents good achievement for pupils of this age. It was particularly evident in the lesson in which pupils chose materials from which to model buildings of their own choice. For example, pupils experimented with spires for churches, adding bottle tops for clocks, continually reviewing and refining the appearance of their work. They were totally engrossed for the whole lesson and surprised and saddened at how quickly it came to an end. Pupils' willingness to share the materials available and to discuss ideas was an indication of the teacher's subtle and effective manner of promoting good attitudes. The quality of work seen in Year 2 highlights the development of pupils' analytical and practical skills. Cross-curricular links are well utilised, for instance when pupils made models of mini-beasts and used electrical circuits to demonstrate the connection between pairs of legs. The good progression of skills and knowledge in Years 1 and 2 is not followed through in later years. Apart from bookbinding and the making of masks in Years 5 and 6, there is little evidence to suggest that pupils appreciate the full range of techniques and processes available for making and evaluating the effectiveness of products. This is because previous management has not ensured that effective systems are in place to track both continuity and progression and build upon pupils' prior attainment, although there is evidence to suggest that the school has rightly recognised this as an area for improvement and teachers' planning shows evidence of a more rigorous approach to teaching design and technology skills, but this is very sporadic and is an area which needs to be addressed.
126. Teaching is good in Key Stage 1. Teachers have a good knowledge of what is required. Their high expectations are transmitted to pupils. A wide range of resources is provided to stimulate interest and develop pupils' manipulative skills. From scrutiny of teachers' planning, there are weaknesses in Key Stage 2. Training opportunities for staff have not had a high priority and this is a contributory factor to pupils' underachievement at the end of Key Stage 2. Teachers do not have sufficient knowledge and expertise to develop pupils' design and technology skills to the level expected for their age. Also, the subject does not have a high profile.
127. Provision was inadequate at the time of the previous inspection. This is still the case in Key Stage 2. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory, because there is no detailed scheme of work, overview of progress or provision of training to enhance teachers' expertise and understanding of what is required. Resources have improved to a limited extent, but are not used extensively in Key Stage 2. Opportunities to use information technology to aid design are also being missed and, furthermore, assessments are unsatisfactory.

GEOGRAPHY

128. Standards of work are average at the end of Year 2, representing satisfactory achievement for all pupils. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils underachieve in older year groups and standards are below average. Provision for the learning and application of precise geographical skills is inadequate. The scheme of work is minimalistic and too much is left to individual teachers' interpretation of its demands. These are the main contributory factors to pupils' underachievement.
129. In Key Stage 1, geographical studies are based on local and environmental issues. Where relevant they are linked to cross-curricular work. For example, pupils focused on the implication of living on an island subsequent to looking at the writer Katie Morag's work in English lessons. Pupils are beginning to understand the purpose of maps and their usefulness in identifying locations and providing directions. They are not yet building on such skills to progressively extend their knowledge in Key Stage 2. Apart from Year 5 comparative study of

life in Kenya and Britain, there is little evidence to show that pupils are advancing their knowledge and appreciation of the subject. That is, until very recently when a new curriculum co-ordinator was appointed. In a good lesson in Year 3, pupils demonstrated how well they could use their observational skills, given the opportunity. Using good quality photographs of landscapes, they described salient features well enough for the teacher and other pupils to identify which photographs had been used. The quality of this lesson was enhanced because pupils learned about places through the use of analytical skills.

130. During the week of inspection overall teaching was satisfactory; in Key Stage 1 teaching is better than in Key Stage 2. Teaching is good in Years 1 and 2, but there are weaknesses in the satisfactory teaching seen in Key Stage 2 due to a number of contributory factors; teachers do not fully build upon pupils' prior attainment, subject knowledge is barely satisfactory, insufficient emphasis is placed upon the teaching of subject specific skills and, for some time, there has not been a curriculum leader to oversee the development of the subject. The lack of co-ordination has resulted in fragmentation of learning. Much of the work has focused on description, with very little emphasis on the advancement of geographical skills, such as measurement, scale, and interpretation of maps. Pupils are not adept at recording their findings and they do not make sufficient use of information technology skills to research for themselves. Opportunities for pupils to develop their skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are limited. This is because there is a lack of a rigorous scheme of work which clearly defines knowledge, skills and content to be covered. Assessments are unsatisfactory, so teachers are not aware of what pupils have covered. As this group of teachers is knowledgeable, lessons seen were satisfactory, overall. In Key Stage 1, teachers use good questioning skills which keep pupils on task. They give good explanations and use humour effectively.
131. The quality of provision in the current year has depended on individual class teachers' determination of what might reasonably be expected of pupils in that age group. Consequently, there is a lack of progression and purposefulness, particularly in Key Stage 2. The recent appointment of a curriculum leader bodes well and there is now good capacity for improvement. No mention of geography was made in the previous inspection report.

HISTORY

132. Standards of work and pupils' appreciation of the past and its influence on the present are similar to those found in the majority of schools and standards at the end of both key stages are in line with the national average. However, displays and presentation of pupils' work are of a higher quality in Years 1 and 2. Pupils achieve well in Key Stage 1 and satisfactorily in Key Stage 2 in relation to their prior attainment.
133. By the end of Year 2, pupils are beginning to understand the importance of sequencing of events. They realise that factual knowledge sometimes needs to be interpreted in the light of other events before predictions can be made. For example, pupils in Year 2 compared changes in Crewe in general and the school in particular, over the last century. Through collecting evidence themselves and devising their own questions to ask of older people, they amassed sufficient information to present a fascinating, annotated display of archive material.
134. By the time pupils are eleven, they have an expanding knowledge of the history of Great Britain and the wider world. They recognise the value of different techniques for finding out about the past. The work seen in Years 5 and 6, involving in-depth studies of the Tudor period and Britain since the 1930's indicated that pupils had researched for themselves and come to their own conclusions. They are beginning to understand the impact of religious and political complexities on historical events. Pupils' work in Years 3 and 4 is patchy, but there is evidence of a superficial understanding of The Romans and Egyptian history. The quality of pupils' written work in these two-year groups is inconsistent and is undoubtedly affected by discontinuity in teaching and variation in expectations. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, overall, because scrutiny of their work shows that they have been effectively supported by staff.

135. No complete history lessons were seen during the inspection, but scrutiny of work and discussion with pupils and teachers indicate that pupils enjoy learning about the past. Evidence implies that teaching is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in other years. Teachers are endeavouring to provide opportunities for pupils to make decisions based on primary and secondary sources of evidence. Artefacts are sought from a variety of sources, but the school's own supply is sparse and needs to be extended.
136. The overall plan of topics to be studied by each year group is based on a simplistic scheme of work. Teachers know what they are expected to teach and when, but planning and procedures for assessing the quality of teaching and learning are not yet used effectively to target further improvement. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory, but, as yet, assessments are underdeveloped and regular evaluation of pupils' progress has not yet taken place. No mention of standards in history was made in the previous report, so comparisons cannot be made.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

137. Pupils' attainment is below national expectations at the end of both key stages. This is because the school has not had the correct hardware to facilitate pupils' learning. Only very recently has the computer room become fully equipped, wired appropriately for Internet services and timetabled to ensure the systematic teaching of skills to pupils across the school. Standards are low, because pupils are now starting to learn ICT skills from a low base. Also, teachers do not generally have good subject knowledge and there is insufficient software, which makes teaching the full ICT curriculum difficult. However, in spite of these limitations, achievement by all groups of pupils is satisfactory in relation to their prior attainment.
138. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils can plan and give instructions to make things happen, such as when they use the Roamer and plan its route through a maze towards the pirates' treasure. They know how to use a painting programme called Colour Magic to generate simple pictures by importing images, erasing them and by spraying and filling. Most can save their products. They can compile a data collection sheet and can investigate various graphs, import random data as well as different fonts. They have elementary word processing skills, can use a mouse, know how to switch the computer on and how to close it down correctly. They can use the CD-ROM to access information from encyclopaedias.
139. In Key Stage 2, Year 3 learn to use email and quickly understand how to write an address and save uncompleted text. Their rapid progress is largely attributable to the skills of the teacher and her confidence and good subject knowledge. Pupils in Year 4 can use a spreadsheet to record data. The higher attaining pupils know about bar charts and axes, can explain the benefits of various forms of display and know how to save documents in various ways. Pupils in Year 5 know about the purposes of 'floppy discs' and can use the Compose program to write and play simple musical phrases. They can use a painting program, have good word process skills and can use a CD-ROM to retrieve information about musical instruments from around the world. Pupils in Year 6 have satisfactory word processing skills, but, in lessons, progress poorly in their learning to access information on the Internet because of technical problems. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have very limited skills of desktop-publishing, using the Internet for publishing, using email to send and receive messages and of using ICT for control purposes.
140. Pupils respond well during their lessons in the ICT suite and have good attitudes to learning. Year 2 pupils show real excitement when their fellow class members program the Roamer accurately and succeed at finding the treasure. Pupils in Year 3 also are excited by the subject, when they are taught to send e-mails for the first time. In all lessons seen, pupils co-operate well in groups and are calm and supportive of their partners. Behaviour is good.
141. Teaching is always at least satisfactory and sometimes very good in lessons. It is good, overall. It is most successful when pupils are given time to explain what they have done and asked to share their knowledge and understanding, when teachers plan for the development of skills in a systematic and progressive manner and when they give clear explanations about

what pupils are expected to learn. Teaching is least satisfactory when well planned lessons are disjointed because of technical difficulties that reveal inadequate subject knowledge and low levels of teacher confidence and when teachers do not assess pupils' prior learning adequately to provide appropriately challenging tasks for higher achievers.

142. The co-ordinator is a recent appointment to the staff, but has previous experience in setting up the new computer suite and is clear about the direction the subject should take. She is knowledgeable and has already established links with a local support centre that provides good technical help, has prioritised the need for development and training to raise the knowledge and confidence of the teaching staff, has written a scheme of work that now needs further dissemination and has recognised that she needs time to monitor curriculum coverage and support teachers to raise pupils' attainment further. She has identified the need for systematic assessment of pupils' knowledge, which at present is unsatisfactory. All this bodes well for the future.
143. Since the previous inspection, the school has been slow to respond to inspection findings, which found weaknesses in provision, but with the clear educational direction given by the new acting headteacher and experienced co-ordinator, the school is well placed to raise pupils' standards of attainment.

MUSIC

144. Attainment at the end of both key stages is in line with national expectations and pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Music was not mentioned specifically in the last inspection report.
145. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils can sing with great enthusiasm. Year 2 pupils perform well in front of Year 5 as well as in front of the whole school. They take part in local music festivals, such as during the period of the inspection and do so with enthusiasm. They sing tunefully and anticipate the humour of the words, such as a song in Yorkshire dialect with appropriate accent, as well as a Standard English version with exaggerated Received Pronunciation. Pupils in Year 4 are able to keep time to four beats, using tuned and un-tuned percussion. They can improvise and can explore melody, perform it to their class and evaluate what they have done. In Year 5, pupils can compose basic short pieces, using simple symbols, and evaluate their work. They can sing pieces like 'Chum Chum Pah', a song linked with their Kenyan project and know about appropriate accompanying instruments like the Mbira. They are skilled at finding out more about what Kenyan instruments sound like, using a CD-ROM. Some children are skilled at improvising a syncopated rhythm to accompany their singing. Pupils in Year 6 can use a variety of tuned and un-tuned percussion to experiment with, and become knowledgeable about, the pentatonic scale, and are able to perform their compositions to their class effectively. Across both key stages pupils' singing in whole school assemblies is enthusiastic and tuneful, full of expression and their words are clearly articulated. The older pupils can sing an echo.
146. Teaching is satisfactory, overall, in both key stages. Some teachers have a good knowledge of the subject, as in Year 4, and are able to deepen pupils' understanding well. Overall, teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory. Children's behaviour is good, even when noise levels are allowed to become too high, as in one lesson observed. Pupils' attitudes are also good, especially when they come together as a school to sing; they will sometimes break into spontaneous clapping. Gains in pupils' learning are most obvious when the teacher plans for pupils to perform to an audience. Resources for music teaching are not sufficient in quantity or variety and this diminishes opportunities for pupils to learn more.
147. There is no subject co-ordinator at present following the recent promotion of the post holder. However, one has been designated for the start of the Autumn Term and is well qualified to take on this role, having acted as subject co-ordinator for music in her previous school. She is clearly aware of how to raise standards in relation to disseminating the scheme of work throughout the school, monitoring teaching and identifying the training needs of staff and to augment the provision for musical resources. The school has very few pupils who are taught to play instruments with visiting peripatetic teachers. Augmentation of this provision and the

expansion of pupils' interest across the school would enrich the music curriculum further. Pupils in Key Stage 1 take part in musical festivals with other schools, but their involvement in playing in orchestras or belonging to a choir at Key Stage 2 is underdeveloped.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

148. Standards at the end of both key stages are in line with national expectations and pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. No specific mention was made of physical education in last inspection report.
149. In Year 1, pupils are taught dance and to recall what was learnt in previous lessons. They can repeat basic skills from memory and can investigate the movement of animals, using their bodies inventively by varying direction, action and speed. They respond well to music, using it to find space and to jump, turn and twist imaginatively. Pupils in Year 2 have satisfactory skills of throwing and are able to intercept a ball by jumping and anticipating its speed and direction. The higher achieving pupils have learnt to dodge and defend when in possession. Most pupils in Year 3 can jump, using their arms to add distance, both from a standing jump and in long jump. Year 5 pupils can sprint short distances at speed and know why exercise is good for a healthy body. They have also learnt how to improve their performance and evaluate how they can improve on the quality of their work. Pupils in Year 6 can throw balls accurately. Higher attaining pupils can catch balls at pace, at considerable distance and with one hand. Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment in physical education is rewarded when they receive many certificates for their performance in the local Town Sports event during a school assembly. By the time they leave school, pupils can swim the nationally recommended 25 metres and a significant proportion of pupils in Year 3 received their award in school assembly for their swimming achievement during the inspection.
150. Teaching is good, overall, and occasionally very good. In these lessons, the learning objectives are clear and shared with the pupils, teachers plan for progression in the development of skills, they use praise well, they group pupils in imaginative ways that avoid friendship or gender imbalances and have high expectations regarding pupils' ability to collaborate. Despite occasional exceptions, pupils have learnt to bring appropriate dress and change quickly and efficiently. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are always good during lessons and often very good. They like the subject, are enthusiastic and, without prompting, provide good social support for their colleagues when kit has been forgotten.
151. The subject co-ordinator is new to the role, but during the short time in post has revised the policy and is consolidating an appropriate scheme of work. He is correct in his judgement that the most important priority now is to disseminate the scheme and to organise training for staff who are least confident in teaching the subject. He has already audited resources and has purchased new stock, so that now there is a good range of equipment. He has developed good links with neighbouring schools, has nurtured links with Crewe Alexander Football Club and runs an active football club, which both boys and girls attend. In the recent past, the school has regularly sent Year 6 pupils to a centre for outdoor pursuits. Arrangements for this in the coming year are not currently known because of recent changes in the school leadership and management.
152. Resources for the subject are good.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

153. Standards are broadly in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus at the end of both key stages, based upon the work of pupils seen during the inspection. However, it is only recently that the subject has received appropriate coverage. Scrutiny of pupils' books in both key stages indicated that there has been erratic coverage of topics and that, until now, teachers' expectations have not been high enough and subject knowledge has been insecure. Since the appointment of the acting headteacher, a concerted effort has been made to improve coverage, and now achievement by all groups of pupils is good, because the co-ordinator has rightly identified where the weaknesses are in her recent audit. .

154. Since the recent appointment of new staff, an improving picture is emerging, but further work still needs to be done on implementing assessment procedures, ensuring that opportunities for pupils to develop their skills of literacy are identified in planning, tasks set are appropriately matched to pupils' needs, pupils' work is regularly marked, with informative comments given on how improvement can be made, and that the scheme of work is systematically covered in each year group.
155. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils know that the Bible is a special book for Christians. They know the major festivals of Easter and Christmas and have visited the local churches. They know that Jesus was a teacher who taught through stories and they can retell the story of the Good Samaritan and explain how we must be kind to one another regardless of our colour and creed. They understand the meaning of the symbols of water, candles, cross, and know why they are used. They know that there are many similarities between Judaism and Christianity. For example they know that Jews believe in one God, that the Torah contains sacred writings, that the Ten Commandments were given to Moses, but they have difficulty in explaining the meaning of the commandments in our everyday life. They know that the Passover is a very special time and they understand the meanings behind the foods eaten at that time. For example, they know that bitter herbs represent the toil and sorrow of the people and that honey represents the promise of a better life. When visiting the local church, they can describe furniture, different roles that ministers and priests play and they know that these people have devoted their lives to God. Pupils' written work is limited and there are very few examples of extended writing. Overall, throughout the key stage, all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress.
156. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils know the meaning of baptism and the symbolism of water. They know that John the Baptist was Jesus' friend and they can retell the events leading up to both the birth and death of Jesus. They understand the concept of community and how beliefs are expressed through symbols, which have meaning for the community. They know which colours are used during the various religious feasts in church, and they know that Christians, Jews and Hindus uphold the importance of respect and honesty. They know what happened during the various stages of the Stations of the Cross but they have difficulty in explaining the concept of courage which people need in order to stand up for what they believe in. They know that God is described in many ways, such as The Creator, The Father, The Almighty, and they know that good conquers evil, as demonstrated in the story of Divali. Presently, pupils' achievement is good, but scrutiny of work reveals that, until recently, expectations have not been high enough, there has been an over reliance on worksheets and on colouring in of pictures, and a lack of matching task to pupils' needs, with all groups of pupils executing the same work.
157. Pupils have good attitudes to learning, they ask questions, they are keen to learn and appreciate the contribution of the teaching of the chair of governors, who is the local church minister, who is actively involved in developing the subject throughout the school.
158. The quality of teaching is good. Two very good lessons were seen in Year 2 and Year 6. In these lessons, teachers made very good links with literacy, focusing on subject-specific vocabulary, developing pupils' skills of research and independence, ensuring that all groups of pupils stayed on task by asking questions to test their learning and giving help where needed. In Year 6, the teacher used extracts from the Bible to help pupils develop their skills of genre recognition. Pupils with special educational needs were well supported by the classroom assistant and expectations of all groups were high; this resulted in pupils making good gains in their learning. In Year 2, the teacher used flash cards to help pupils both read and spell the various contents of the Seder plate and the pace of the lesson was brisk. The teacher gave very good explanations. In a good lesson, in Year 5, all groups of pupils listened intently to the explanations given by the local vicar on how different colours were used in the church to represent different feasts. Pupils took great delight in trying on the various ornate garments. This "hands on" approach brought religion to life for the pupils. However, scrutiny of work reveals that previously there have been gaps in pupils' learning and insufficient time was devoted to teaching religious education.

159. The co-ordination of the subject is good. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and executes her duties well. The governor with responsibility for religious education receives regular updates from her and pupils' work and teachers' plans have been monitored, with appropriate points for improvement identified. Resources are satisfactory; the school is building up an appropriate selection of artefacts, covering all religions studied and the local environment is used well. However, links with multi ethnic schools would be valuable, so that pupils can gain a better understanding of life in a multicultural society.
160. The previous HMI report identified that there was little written coverage of religious education and that staff needed further in-service training. Recording of pupils' work has improved slightly; the co-ordinator has attended courses, but now needs to disseminate this information for the benefit of all staff. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory, overall.