

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Congleton

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111335

Headteacher: Mr Michael McKenna

Reporting inspector: Mr Peter Mathias
21945

Dates of inspection: 4 - 7 December 2000

Inspection number: 224401

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Belgrave Avenue Congleton Cheshire
Postcode:	CW12 1HT
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Norbury
Date of previous inspection:	July 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
P Mathias 21945	Registered inspector	Mathematics Art and design Music Physical education Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
P Edwards 10965	Lay inspector		How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
A Newman 31822	Team inspector	English Geography History Special educational needs	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils?
S Duggins 31819	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Foundation Stage	How good are the curriculum and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is smaller than most primary schools (185 pupils, compared with the average size nationally of 220). It is for boys and girls between the ages of four and 11. Nearly all pupils who begin their formal education in the reception class remain at the school until they leave for the next stage of their education. Children's attainment on entry to the reception class is broadly in line with that typically found nationally.

Within the school 14 pupils are identified as having some degree of special educational needs. Of these, ten are between Stages 1 and 2 of the Code of Practice. Of the others, three are at Stage 3 of the Code of Practice and one pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Need. These four pupils are considered to have moderate learning difficulties. Overall the percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs, including Statements of Special Educational Need, is well below the national average. Pupils come from homes with a variety of social and economic advantage. About six per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average. There are no pupils with English as an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is effective. It is making steady improvement and is soundly placed to improve further. Teaching is successful, particularly within Key Stage 2. There is a very positive ethos and sense of community. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 in the year 2000 assessments are well above average in English, mathematics and science when compared to schools nationally and above average when compared to schools considered similar. From the national information available the trend of improvement is similar in shape but above that of schools nationally. Generally pupils enter the school with average levels of basic skills and by the end of the Foundation Stage most are ready to begin the National Curriculum. Standards in classes at the end of Key Stage 2 are generally good in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and art, although standards are not as high in writing as in speaking, listening and reading. With the exception of design and technology, standards in the other subjects are satisfactory. In design and technology standards are below those expected.

What the school does well

- The teaching is good within Key Stage 2.
- Standards achieved in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and art are high at the end of Key Stage 2.
- There is a strong sense of community and an ethos of care and concern which is shared by all staff.
- Attendance levels are high and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good.
- Pupils' attitudes to the school and to each other are good.
- Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good.
- Pupils' personal development is well monitored and supported.
- Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and fulfil their statutory duties well.

What could be improved

- The curriculum for the Foundation Stage of children's education is not planned to meet the Early Learning Goals set for children under six years of age. In the reception class standards are not as high as they could be.
- Standards in the national assessments show a decline recently in writing particularly within Key Stage 1. Pupils achieve higher standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 than Key Stage 1.
- Standards in design and technology are too low because the necessary skills are not taught and the subject is not given enough time in the overall curriculum for this to occur. Overall the school does not set enough time for teaching in Key Stage 2.
- The headteacher and some co-ordinators do not formally and regularly visit classes to judge the quality of teaching and learning going on. The deputy headteacher is not fully involved in the management of the school.
- There is no senior teacher, other than the headteacher, with responsibility for overseeing the quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 and the Foundation Stage.
- The day-to-day assessment information which the school is now assembling is not used to identify individual targets for improvement for pupils which are known and understood by pupils and their parents. The detailed information the school has about standards pupils achieve in national and other tests is not used sufficiently to predict likely future standards and to help teachers address areas of individual concern.
- The governing body does not establish clear criteria to judge the success of its long-term spending decisions and is unaware of the spending patterns in other schools.
- The school's behaviour policy is not applied consistently across the school.
- The reference library contains many books which are out of date or worn.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When the school was inspected in July 1996 standards achieved by pupils were good, and the quality of education provided by the school was good. The school's climate for learning was very good, but the quality of leadership and management required some improvement. Since then there has been some progress in addressing some but not all of the key issues for action. The school is in a sound position to improve further.

Standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 are above average and are improving in line with those in other schools. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are average except in science where they are above average. The role of the deputy headteacher was effectively redefined, but, following a change in personnel, the current deputy headteacher is not yet fully involved in the management of the school. There are now clear job descriptions for co-ordinators and some but not all of these have visited classes to look at the quality of teaching and learning. The literacy and numeracy co-ordinators have had a major impact on the successful introduction of these initiatives and have helped to raise standards in English and mathematics. The school development plan is now well set out and is a carefully constructed document to which staff and governors have contributed. The governing body has good processes in place to ensure that it gets good value when making spending decisions, but does not set clear success criteria to judge whether its spending has been worthwhile. It is not aware of how most schools split up their overall budget. Currently new arrangements to appraise staff are moving ahead well. The school assembles much more information about the standards pupils achieve but does not use it sufficiently to set targets for pupils or to predict standards which individuals should achieve.

Overall, standards have been maintained in nearly all subjects, although national assessment results at the end of Key Stage 1 are not as good as they were. Standards in design and technology are lower now than in April 1996 because the school has not allowed enough time to teach the skills necessary for success.

The quality of teaching has remained a strong feature, particularly within Key Stage 2, where it is much higher than in the rest of the school. The governing body is involved much more in the life of the school and is aware of its strengths and weaknesses.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999 - 2000	2000	
English	A	A	C - A	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	A	B	B - A	B	
Science	A	B	C - A	B	

This shows that the standards in the tests in the last three years in English, mathematics and science are generally well above average when compared to schools nationally and above average for schools considered broadly similar. Children enter the reception class with typical levels of basic skills. Currently standards in classes at the end of Key Stage 2 are above average in English, except for writing, where they are average. They are above average in mathematics and science, and above expectations in information and communication technology and art. Standards are in line with expectations in geography, history, music and physical education, and nearly all pupils reach or exceed the expected standard in swimming (to swim 25 metres by the age of 11). In design and technology standards are below expectations. Standards in literacy and numeracy reflect the same pattern as in English and mathematics.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good - most enjoy coming to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory - although the school behaviour policy is not always followed consistently.
Personal development and relationships	Good - relationships between pupils and their teachers are good. There is a strong atmosphere of care and concern.
Attendance	Very good - there are very good procedures in place to maintain these above-average levels.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	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 satisfactory overall. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is satisfactory. Teaching is good within Key Stage 2, where nearly half the lessons are good and some very good. In these classes particularly, pupils learn well and make good progress. In only a small number of lessons is teaching unsatisfactory.

Teaching and support for pupils with special educational needs are good. The quality of teaching for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, although it is not always planned carefully to meet the goals for learning for these children. The time set aside to teach within Key Stage 2 is too short. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory.

Particular strengths in the teaching are: good subject knowledge; purposeful introductions which stress what pupils are expected to learn in the lesson and the time they have to complete their work; and good questioning which is appropriately challenging for each pupil and high expectations of what can be achieved which are made explicit, for example, by demonstrating well what pupils could achieve.

Areas for improvement are: planning lessons so that they provide children in the Foundation Stage with a range of opportunities to experience the full range of areas considered appropriate for children at this stage of their education; and the pace of lessons needs to improve so that lessons move forward purposefully and opportunities are not missed to review pupils work, or to 'cool down' at the end of hard exercise in physical education.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Broadly satisfactory with some weaknesses for example, the curriculum for the Foundation Stage is not planned in line with national guidance for this stage of children's education. As a result children do not experience the full range of learning goals set out for them and the curriculum for design and technology is limited. Teachers do not plan or teach the full range of skills necessary for design and technology. The time set aside for teaching the curriculum in Key Stage 2 is inadequate. At least 77 per cent of schools set aside more time for teaching the curriculum within Key Stage 2.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good - well organised and effective; staff are well aware of the Code of Practice.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual,	Overall provision for spiritual development is satisfactory; provision for moral and social development is good; provision for cultural development is satisfactory.

moral, social and cultural development	
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for monitoring personal development are good. There are satisfactory procedures for child protection and pupils' welfare. Arrangements for assessing academic progress are underdeveloped; procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher is very influential in setting the school's positive ethos and atmosphere of care and concern. There is a strong commitment from staff to work hard for their pupils. The newly-appointed deputy headteacher has yet to have an impact on the management of the school. There is no experienced teacher, other than the headteacher, with responsibility for Key Stage 1 and the Foundation Stage. Arrangements for some co-ordinators to judge the quality of teaching and learning have been effective, but in most subjects these arrangements are unsatisfactory. The headteacher is not regularly involved in ensuring formally that the quality of teaching and learning is high in all classes.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The chair of governors and some governors visit the school regularly and on the whole they are well informed about the strengths and weaknesses within the school. They are not so well informed about the levels of expenditure within the budget when compared to those in other schools.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has in place extensive procedures to gather together detailed information from national tests and other national initiatives. Using this information the school is rigorous in its approach to preparing pupils for formal national tests at the end of Key Stage 2. However, insufficient use is made of the data to track and predict individual progress.
The strategic use of resources	The school has in place procedures to link its spending decisions to the budget but does not establish agreed, pre-determined indicators to judge their success. The school uses grants and additional funds well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Children make good progress at the school. • Behaviour in the school is good. • Children get the right amount of homework. • The teaching is good. • The school is helpful with questions and problems. • The school sets high expectations of its pupils. • The school helps children to become mature. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information parents receive about their children's progress. • The links with parents. • The way the school is led and managed. • The range of interesting activities provided.

In response to the 185 questionnaires sent out by the school, 112 were returned. This is a high return rate. The evidence of the inspection confirms many of the parents' positive views of the school. Parents rightly appreciate the constructive atmosphere and high expectations generally set in the school. They are also rightly concerned about some aspects of the leadership and management of the school. However, information to parents is generally much better than it was, although they are not made sufficiently aware of what their children need to do to improve. There are good links with parents and the school derives considerable benefit from their support. The school organises a usual amount of clubs and after-school activities which are well attended.

A meeting was held between the registered inspector and parents. Twenty-six parents were present. They expressed wide-ranging views about the school; most of these were positive. They felt that standards in numeracy had improved. Without exception they felt that the school was much the same as at the time of the last inspection.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Standards within the school are generally average at the end of Key Stage 1 and above average at the end of Key Stage 2. These standards are closely related to the quality of teaching in these key stages. There was no significant variation between the performance of boys and girls in the lessons observed, although in the tests at the end of Key Stage 2 since 1998 boys have outperformed girls overall. The school is on course to meet the targets it is setting for itself at the end of Key Stage 2.
2. In the year 2000 assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 standards in comparison to those in schools nationally are average in reading and mathematics. In writing, results are well below average. When compared to results achieved by the school since 1996, standards have fallen at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading and writing and have stayed about the same in mathematics. Standards in 2000 fell dramatically in writing because of difficulties the school experienced in agreeing standards of work with the local education authority.
3. When compared to those in schools considered broadly similar, standards in reading and writing at the end of Key Stage 1 were well below average. In mathematics they were below average. Overall the pattern of improvement at the end of Key Stage 1 is below that of schools nationally.
4. At the end of Key Stage 2 the picture is brighter and pupils do better than they did at the end of Key Stage 1. The good results in the national assessments reflect the good quality of some of the teaching within this key stage and the considerable emphasis the school places on preparing pupils thoroughly for these tests. In the year 2000 tests at the end of Key Stage 2, results in English, mathematics and science were well above the national average. When compared to those in schools considered to be broadly similar, results at the end of Key Stage 2 are above average. Since 1996, results have been erratic, dipping in all three subjects to average in 1999 but returning to well above average in 2000. Overall the trend of improvement at the end of Key Stage 2 is broadly similar to but above that in most schools.
5. Nearly all pupils who enter the reception class remain at the school to the end of Key Stage 2, when they transfer to the next phase of their education. Children enter the reception class with levels of basic skills which are about typical of those found amongst children of this age. Currently they do not receive an appropriate curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage and their progress is limited because of this and they are unlikely to attain the expected goals in their knowledge and understanding of the world and in their physical and creative development.
6. Standards in English are average at the end of Key Stage 1 and above average at the end of Key Stage 2. There has been a fall in standards at the end of Key Stage 1 since the previous report. This was reflected in the national tests recently. Standards are average at the end of Key Stage 1 in speaking, listening, reading and writing, and at the end of Key Stage 2 they are above average in speaking, listening and reading. At the end of Key Stage 2 in writing standards are average. Pupils in Key Stage 1 learn to speak audibly and to develop the range of their vocabulary. They use verbs and a growing variety of adjectives in the correct context. Pupils show growing confidence in applying their knowledge to offer simple explanations in a range of

subject areas and in discussing their story books. In Key Stage 2, pupils make informed and articulate contributions to class discussions; they ask relevant questions when their interest is aroused. Pupils have a sound understanding of simple sentence structure and, by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils of above average attainment can begin stories appropriately, trying to vary the story line to make it more interesting.

7. Within Key Stage 2, pupils can use adjectives more effectively to add colour and interest to their writing, and descriptive writing shows sound progression. However, handwriting skills are underdeveloped; many pupils are still not writing in joined script and the overuse of pencils does not encourage the development of secure skills. In reading the majority of pupils in Key Stage 1 can make the sounds letters have to tackle unfamiliar words. However, many pupils have only limited skills in using a reference library and are unused to seeking information from printed sources. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have developed good reading standards. In writing, pupils have a sound understanding of the sequence of a story, but standards in handwriting and punctuation are variable.
8. In mathematics standards are average at the end of Key Stage 1 and above average at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards in numeracy reflect this pattern and pupils' standards in mental calculations and other work in numeracy are significantly raised within Key Stage 2 because of the thorough way these skills are taught. Standards are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection.
9. Within Key Stage 1 younger pupils are able to sequence numbers within 100 and to measure using counters as standard units, and are developing a sound understanding of how the number system works. They are able to recognise simple fractions. Within Key Stage 2, pupils are able to apply their knowledge of the four rules of number well and calculate quickly, using a range of strategies accurately. They are able successfully to undertake calculations using negative numbers and co-ordinates. They are able to think logically when organising information and use information and communication technology appropriately when handling and expressing data.
10. Standards in science are above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and 2. In science within Key Stage 1 the majority of pupils know about magnetism. Pupils know that various processes including squashing, bending, twisting and stretching can alter the shape of objects constructed from some materials. They record the process of their investigation and their findings clearly on prepared sheets. Pupils are able to devise and carry out experiments for themselves, and to apply their scientific knowledge in new situations. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are able to use appropriate scientific vocabulary to describe the work they are doing. They perform an investigation in a scientific manner.
11. Standards in information and communication technology are above expected levels at both key stages, which is the same finding as that of the last inspection. Pupils in Key Stage 1 can load and save files, and are familiar with mouse use and the keyboard to successfully support their work in language and mathematics. They make effective use of art programmes to support work with patterns and shapes. By the end of the key stage pupils can change the size of fonts to effectively present their work.
12. Within Key Stage 2, pupils build well on what they already know and can do; for example, make good progress in changing fonts, style, size and colour to present

their work, bearing in mind purpose and audience. Pupils are able to send and retrieve e-mail.

13. Standards in art are at expected levels at the end of Key Stage 1 and above expected levels at the end of Key Stage 2. This is broadly the same picture as at the time of the last inspection.
14. In geography, history, music and physical education standards are at expected levels at the end of both key stages. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. In design and technology standards were at expected levels then; now they are below. This decline is related to the limited opportunities found for pupils to acquire all the necessary skills of planning, making and evaluating in this subject. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 in design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education are not as high as in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. Overall, time is not allocated to all subjects in line with the current national guidance. Within Key Stage 2 the amount of taught time is less than for most schools, which further affects the standards achieved; for example, within Key Stage 2, pupils receive an hour and a quarter less teaching and learning per week than in at least 77 per cent of schools.
15. Pupils' special educational needs are not currently identified until they enter Key Stage 1. Early identification of special needs in the Foundation Stage has been recognised as a priority by the recently appointed special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) so that learning difficulties can be addressed at an earlier stage than at present. Pupils with special educational needs in Key Stages 1 and 2 have individual education plans; the targets set for their learning are generally appropriate. Most pupils with special educational needs make sound progress as they move through the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

16. From the Foundation Stage pupils' attitudes to the school and their work are good overall which pleases parents. Most pupils, but not all, work conscientiously and with enthusiasm in lessons, especially when they are well challenged. Older pupils listen well to their teachers and to each other; they are keen to respond to questions and to share their own views and ideas. In some class assemblies in Key Stage 2, for instance, pupils feel sufficiently involved and comfortable to be able to share their experiences of prayer with their peers. Pupils are keen to accept responsibility for duties in the classroom and around the school; they discharge these conscientiously. Teachers know their pupils well and in most classes there is a good working atmosphere which motivates pupils to give of their best and to approach their tasks with determination. However, the expectations teachers have of their pupils' behaviour are not always consistently high enough and in some cases the school's behaviour policy is not effectively applied. Pupils with special educational needs are provided with tasks which are matched to their abilities and they respond positively, working with growing confidence and well supported by their class teachers. Pupils generally collaborate well when given the opportunity. They learn to share resources, to support each other and to contribute positively to the group discussions. Generally pupils are keen to come to school and arrive purposefully. However, often pupils who travel to school by bus arrive late because of delay. Attendance is well above the national average, as found at the previous inspection. There are very few absences other than for illness.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In the school 95 per cent of the teaching is satisfactory or better and in 42 per cent it is good or very good. In five per cent of lessons teaching is unsatisfactory. This is broadly the same picture as at the time of the last inspection, when the quality of teaching was generally sound and sometimes good. Currently teaching in Key Stage 2 is better than in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 1, 35 per cent of teaching is good or very good. In Key Stage 2, 50 per cent of teaching is good or very good. The high proportion of good or very good teaching within Key Stage 2 is a strength of the school and has a significant impact on the standards achieved by the end of this key stage, despite the large class sizes and the consequent wide range of age and abilities within them.
18. In all lessons the teaching of literacy is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. Generally it is well planned to meet the structure of the literacy hour. Teachers have a firm understanding of how to teach reading. The National Numeracy Strategy is implemented satisfactorily and teachers take due regard on the whole of setting appropriately challenging work for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. These pupils are often well supported, particularly in Key Stage 2. Where there are some shortcomings in the teaching of numeracy, these relate to some difficulties in sustaining pupils' levels of concentration and application because lessons lack challenge. The quality of teaching for children in the Foundation Stage has some strengths and also some shortcomings. The reception teacher works hard to meet the needs of these children and generally plans closely with the nursery assistant to manage and assess how well these children are developing basic skills. However, because the school has not adopted the guidance set out for children in this stage of their education, there are insufficient planned opportunities for them to experience the full range of areas considered appropriate for their age. There is insufficient attention to planning and teaching a curriculum built around the stepping stones to learning for the Foundation Stage. This the school has recognised but has not yet addressed effectively.
19. Across the school, where teaching is very good, teachers display very good subject knowledge; for example, when looking at negative numbers in mathematics or when getting the best out of their pupils in physical education by first demonstrating, very clearly, how to perform a movement. The lessons begin purposefully because the teacher makes it plain to all the pupils what is expected of them and, as a result, when they do begin to work they know how much time they will have and the standard to aim to achieve. Questions are carefully matched so that they test each pupil's knowledge and all are made to feel part of the lesson. As a result pupils work eagerly and are anxious to please their teachers.
20. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, lessons are slow to move on because too much time is wasted in dealing with issues of behaviour because some pupils are slow to respond to their teachers' good-natured and friendly requests to concentrate. As a result lessons lack real pace and many pupils are under-challenged because they spend too much time waiting to work. Lessons end abruptly because the timings of the lessons are not well judged and as a result important opportunities are missed to review pupils' learning or, in the case of physical education, to 'cool down' effectively after hard exercise.
21. Pupils with some degree of special educational needs are well supported in classes, particularly in Key Stage 2, where work is carefully matched to their abilities. In the best examples, as in the numeracy lesson, the support teacher for special educational needs works closely with the class teacher to ensure that these pupils

concentrate well and make good progress. All staff are well aware of the individual needs of pupils and provide good support and appropriate help.

22. The quality of marking in general conveys positive messages that the efforts of individual pupils are valued. However, marking does not provide clear targets for pupils to work towards in order to improve. There are detailed arrangements for setting homework, some of which is returned by e-mail, and parents are well informed of what to expect.
23. Generally pupils are eager to learn and nearly all try hard. However, sometimes pupils find it difficult to concentrate and to work consistently for the whole of the lesson, despite the positive encouragement they receive from their teachers. The school's behaviour policy is not always followed consistently. As a result, sometimes pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.

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

24. With the exception of design and technology, the quality and range of the curriculum are wide and interesting at Key Stages 1 and 2. The skills of literacy and numeracy are effectively taught using the national frameworks for these subjects although standards in writing are not as high as they were. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is at present unsatisfactory. It is not planned with reference to the national guidance for children in the Foundation Stage. The planned curriculum does not give sufficient consideration to the areas of learning considered desirable for children of this age.
25. The ethos of the school stresses the importance of equality of access and opportunity for all pupils, including those who have special educational needs. These pupils receive a curriculum which is well matched to their needs.
26. The time allocated to the teaching of the curriculum at Key Stage 2 is well below the nationally recommended time. Time allocated to the teaching of design and technology is low throughout the school. The school makes appropriate provision for the development of pupils' personal and social skills. They learn about healthy lifestyles and develop an awareness of drug misuse. There is an appropriate policy for sex education.
27. Suitable policies for all subjects are in place identifying the knowledge, skills and understanding for each year group. This builds year on year throughout the school. Day-to-day planning is generally satisfactory and the teachers know their pupils well. In the best examples, work planned is specifically targeted to match the different abilities of pupils, which ensures that they all work to their full potential.
28. There is a typical range of after-school activities; for instance, in art and a range of sporting activities. Appropriate use is made of visitors and visits to enhance and contribute to pupils' learning. These include visits to sites of historical interest and visits by music groups and the local fire and police services.
29. Provision for pupils' personal development through the daily life and routines of the school is satisfactory overall. For example, pupils from each class return registers to the office on a rota basis. Older pupils support the younger children; for instance, at play times.

30. Overall provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. In line with its mission statement the school creates and fosters a caring community rooted in the gospel values. Pupils are helped to an understanding of themselves and their place in the world around them through challenges on the residential visits, and by the way teachers listen to them and value their ideas.
31. Provision for moral development is good and underpinned by the caring ethos of the school. Pupils have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. The use of a positive behavioural policy by teachers is generally effective in promoting pupils' understanding of what is expected. However, this policy is not always consistently put into practice effectively. Teachers sympathetically encourage pupils to take responsibility for their actions and deal sensitively with incidents of misbehaviour.
32. Provision for pupils' social development is good. There are many well-planned opportunities given for pupils to develop their social skills. Pupils are encouraged well to collaborate in lessons such as mathematics and science, and they respond accordingly. They learn social conventions through going on visits. The school provides good opportunities for older pupils to take responsibility for younger ones; for example, on their pre-school visit very young children are paired with a Year 6 pupil, 'a buddy', who shows them around the school and participates in a practical activity to make the young ones feel at ease. All staff show good models upon which pupils can base their own behaviour and relationships.
33. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Through visits in their own locality, to support history and geography studies, pupils are developing a satisfactory understanding of their own culture. This is further extended by links with a village in Ghana that the school supports successfully through various fund-raising events. This, as well as studies in religious education, is effective in developing an awareness of the beliefs and cultures of other people.
34. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning and the relationship with partner schools are satisfactory and broaden the curriculum. This is the same finding as at that of the previous inspection. The school has good links with the local church, and the parish priest visits school regularly. Pupils make educational visits to places of interest such as Manchester Science Museum and Capesthorpe Hall, while visitors to the school include theatre and music groups, all of which provide valuable links with the community and add to pupils' learning. Teachers from catholic schools in the area meet regularly to discuss and share curriculum ideas and issues. Students on initial teacher training are made welcome in the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. As found at the previous inspection the school provides a caring environment where every pupil is valued.
36. Most parents are happy with the support and guidance offered to their children. They rightly feel that teachers know their pupils well and are helping them to develop a growing maturity. Pupils' personal development is closely monitored by teachers' emphasis on raising pupils' self-esteem and making them aware of their individual achievements.
37. The recording and reporting of attendance meet statutory requirements and the school effectively promotes very good attendance. There are thorough and

comprehensive procedures followed. Administration is effective and reasons are always sought for pupils' absence.

38. The provision for promoting the health, safety and well-being of pupils is satisfactory overall. Staff are aware of the appropriate child protection procedures. Drugs awareness and a topic on 'growing up' form part of the school's up-to-date health education programme. The school makes effective arrangements for notifying parents of any accidents involving their children and of any treatment given.
39. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress have weaknesses. In the Foundation Stage, staff observe and record children's attainment and progress in language and mathematical development, but systems for assessing their attainment and progress in the other areas of learning are underdeveloped. Planning is not sufficiently focused upon identifying individual strengths and weaknesses to enable teachers to set realistic targets which are designed to improve the performance of each child in the Early Learning Goals.
40. Systems for identifying pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2. There are regular reviews of pupils' individual education plans, appropriate targets are set to help pupils overcome their difficulties and their progress is monitored. Support services are appropriately involved in the identification, assessment and teaching of pupils with special educational needs.
41. There is a useful computerised system for tracking the progress of individual pupils across the curriculum but it is not yet fully used to inform teachers' planning or to help raise standards of attainment for pupils of all abilities. There are no collections of pupils' work to show the standards to expect and obtain from each year group. Reports to parents address the specific attainment targets of the National Curriculum, especially in English, mathematics and science, but they do not set targets to help parents and pupils understand what the next step in pupils' learning should be.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. There are satisfactory links with parents, which is the same finding as that of the previous inspection. The quality and quantity of general information are good; for example, the prospectus gives useful information and a practical introduction to the school. However, a significant minority of parents do not feel that the school works closely enough with them. Inspection findings tend to support this view. Parents do not receive written information on topics to be studied. They are insufficiently informed about their children's progress. However, a parent-teacher meeting is held in the spring term to discuss academic progress. Parents are also made well aware that they can arrange a mutually convenient time to discuss their children's annual progress reports with the class teacher at the end of the summer term. Parents of children with special educational needs are kept up to date about their work and progress. Appropriate systems are in place to involve parents in the drawing up and review of pupils' individual education plans.
43. Parental involvement in the work of the school is satisfactory. The school welcomes parents to help and a reliable nucleus of them assist regularly in class, on trips and with extra-curricular activities. This help is much appreciated by the school. The active Parent Teacher Association raises significant amounts of money which are used well to supplement the resources of the school. This makes a valuable contribution and adds to pupils' learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

44. The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory overall, but with some weaknesses. At the time of the last inspection it was also satisfactory, and in some important areas leadership and management were less effective; for example, the governing body did not have a long-term strategic view of the future of the school; the role of the senior management team was unclear; there were no agreed job descriptions and co-ordinators had little influence on the curriculum. Not enough attention was given to monitoring, evaluating and supporting the curriculum and to focusing additional training for teachers on the needs of the school. The school development plan was too short and lacking in sufficient detail to make it a useful working document. The cycle of teacher appraisal had broken down. Nearly all the key issues for action contained in the last inspection report related to these weaknesses. In addition the school was asked to improve the quality of assessment to inform the planning of future work in science, music and physical education.
45. Since July 1996 the school has made good progress in some but not all of these key issues. Following the last inspection the role of the deputy headteacher was re-defined and there were effective arrangements for the deputy headteacher to play a significant role in the management of the school. However, there has been a recent change of deputy headteacher and the newly appointed deputy headteacher has yet to take a full part in the management of the school. Specific roles and duties for the new deputy headteacher have yet to be defined. There is no member of staff with particular management and leadership responsibilities for pupils in Key Stage 1 and the Foundation Stage.
46. There are now clear and agreed job descriptions for co-ordinators. Some but not all co-ordinators have had opportunities to look at how teachers teach and pupils learn in their subjects in the classrooms; for example, as part of the literacy and numeracy initiatives. The English and mathematics co-ordinators have carried out a detailed and thorough audit of the strengths and weaknesses in the way literacy and numeracy are taught. These co-ordinators have had an effective impact on standards and on training other teachers.
47. As part of an initiative to encourage staff to evaluate the school for themselves, other lesson observations have been carried out by the headteacher and other staff. However, this is not done on a regular basis. There are plans for other co-ordinators; for example, for science, to have opportunities to visit classes and to judge the effectiveness of the school's policies and schemes. These have yet to be put into effect.
48. The school development plan is now a well set out and carefully constructed working document containing appropriate time scales, clear indications of costs, responsibilities and anticipated outcomes. Governors are appropriately involved in its construction and are kept up to date. However, not all spending decisions are related to the school development plan; for example, co-ordinators have no figure agreed annually within the school development plan for them to spend. Often they ask in hope rather than through a rigorous process of defining needs and careful costings.
49. Since the last inspection, as a result of national initiatives the school is well placed to put into effect its system for the performance management of teachers. There has also been some success in assembling procedures to assess and record pupils' achievements in science, music and physical education. However, while the school now gathers a considerable amount of data about pupils' achievements, it does not

use the data to predict the likely future standards which individual pupils should reach. It does not use the system it has in place to provide prompt and effective support where necessary. Bearing in mind the recent changes in the senior management team, the school has improved steadily since the last inspection and has the potential to improve further.

50. A particular strength at the time of the last inspection was the positive ethos of the school and the caring and secure environment created, which was appreciated by parents. This is still reflected in the school's daily life. The school continues to run smoothly and day-to-day administration is effective and unobtrusive. However, the school has not been audited for some considerable time. While parents have generally positive views about the school which are expressed in the high number of returned questionnaires and in the parents' meeting, about 38 per cent of parents who responded to the questionnaire did not feel that the school was well led and managed. This is a high figure and reflects some parents' genuine concerns. For example, the amount of taught time for pupils within Key Stage 2 is significantly less than in most schools and than the amount of time recommended. Currently at least 77 per cent of schools exceed the amount of time set aside for Key Stage 2 in this school. Many pupils travel some distance to school and, as a result of transport difficulties, the school day does not always start and end promptly. The school has not addressed the needs of children under five either in terms of planning in the previous areas of learning for these children or in the most recent guidance set out in the Foundation Stage. There is no experienced member of staff, other than the headteacher, with direct responsibilities for the leadership and management of younger pupils and children under five.
51. The school is making good progress to the targets it is setting for itself in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2, although standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are less secure recently, particularly in writing. The headteacher works hard with other staff to ensure that pupils are well prepared for these assessments. Pupils who are considered capable of achieving higher levels are helped effectively towards them by a system of booster classes. However, while the school assembles a substantial amount of information about the performance of individual pupils through a national initiative and through its own procedures, this information is not used to its maximum potential. The headteacher has been trained in the use of associated computer programs for this but does not, as yet, use them, for example, to identify and predict rates of progress for individual pupils and to ensure that all pupils are fulfilling their potential.
52. There has been some improvement in the role of the governing body since the last inspection. The chair of governors is now regularly involved in the life of the school and on the whole governors are kept well informed; for example, some regularly visit classes and some have attended additional training days for teachers. The chair of finance is very active in keeping an overview of the budget and providing good advice and guidance when considering the long-term needs of the school; for example, when weighing up the options available to resolve the problem of large class sizes in Key Stage 2. There are appropriate arrangements to ensure that the school is achieving best value in its spending decisions. However, the governing body does not set sufficiently clear criteria to judge the success of its spending decisions. It does not have sufficient knowledge of national trends; for example, in spending on teaching resources, and in the length of the school day, when making decisions.
53. Funds set out for specific purposes such as the support of pupils with special educational needs are well used. Resources overall are satisfactory, although in

English reference books are often old and in poor condition, and in music there is an insufficient range and number of untuned instruments, both of which the school has identified as a priority. There are inadequate resources for the Foundation Stage; for example, in the supply and availability of large apparatus, wheeled toys and practical equipment. In contrast resources in physical education are very good.

54. Pupils enter the school with average levels of basic skills. By the time they leave at the age of 11, many achieve above average standards in English, mathematics and science. They make good progress in these subjects, particularly within Key Stage 2. Taking this into account and the generally sound quality of education provided, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

55. The headteacher, staff and governing body, with the support of the local education authority, should:
- (1) raise standards in writing across the school by:
 - analysing why standards in this area are not as high as in other areas in English;
 - putting in place strategies to address these shortcomings and regularly evaluating the long-term success of the actions taken;
(paragraphs 7 and 72)
 - (2) raise standards in English, mathematics and science further by:
 - using the day-to-day assessments which the school assembles and the information which the school has from national tests and other standardised data to set targets for pupils to achieve, and share that information with pupils and their parents;
 - using the information technology that the school has to predict the likely standards pupils should achieve and taking effective action to support individual pupils where any underachievement is observed;
(paragraphs 22, 39, 41, 49, 74 and 82)
 - (3) provide children in the Foundation Stage of their education with an appropriately planned and resourced curriculum which meets in full and is taught in line with the national guidance;
(paragraphs 5, 18, 50, 56, 65, 67 and 68)
 - (4) improve the management of the school by:
 - establishing an agreed role for the recently appointed deputy headteacher and include in the senior management team an experienced teacher with initial responsibility for Key Stage 1 and the Foundation Stage;
 - setting clear ways to judge the success of the school's spending in relation to national figures;
 - increasing the role of the headteacher and all co-ordinators in judging standards and progress in the school by regularly monitoring teaching and learning;
(paragraphs 45, 47, 51, 52, 89 and 99)
 - (5) increase the allocated teaching time within Key Stage 2 so that it is in line with national guidance and raise standards in design and technology by giving teachers sufficient opportunities and time to teach the skills in this subject consistently across the school.
(paragraphs 14, 50 and 92)

Minor key issues

- (1) Review the effectiveness of school's behaviour policy and put in place strategies to ensure that it is followed consistently throughout the school. (paragraphs 16, 23 and 74)
- (2) Improve the range and quality of books in the school's library and bring this

resource up to date. (paragraphs 53 and 75)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	40
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	42

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	5.0	37.5	52.5	5.0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR - Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	185
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/A	11

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR - Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational need	N/A	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	14

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	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	2.9
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	14	11	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	9	14
	Girls	11	10	11
	Total	21	19	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84	76	100
	National	83	84	90

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	10	10
	Girls	10	13	10
	Total	20	23	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80	92	80
	National	84	88	88

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	14	14	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	13	14
	Girls	13	11	14
	Total	26	24	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93	86	100
	National	75	72	85

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	13	13
	Girls	10	11	12
	Total	22	24	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79	86	89
	National	70	72	79

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	185
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR - Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Average class size	31

Education support staff: YR - Y6

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	47

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/A
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/A

Total number of education support staff	N/A
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/A

Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/A
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999 - 2000
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	£
Total income	301,818
Total expenditure	311,671
Expenditure per pupil	1,741
Balance brought forward from previous year	25,237
Balance carried forward to next year	15,384

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	185
Number of questionnaires returned	112

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	44	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	25	61	6	1	7
Behaviour in the school is good.	32	60	3	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	63	9	0	3
The teaching is good.	35	57	2	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	18	37	32	10	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	43	41	13	3	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	39	52	4	4	2
The school works closely with parents.	19	43	29	7	3
The school is well led and managed.	20	42	15	15	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	29	60	4	3	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	17	38	22	16	6

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

56. The provision for under-fives in the Foundation Stage, in the reception class, is generally unsatisfactory. Children attend school on a full-time basis, remaining in this class for the whole year. Generally, standards of attainment on entry to the reception class are in line with those expected of young children. Children generally achieve sound standards in line with their abilities in the areas of personal, social and emotional development, and communication, language and literacy. Their mathematical development is above that usually found. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world, and their physical and creative development, are below expected standards. In all areas, with the exception of children's knowledge and understanding of the world and their physical and creative development, children are on target to achieve expected standards.

Personal, social and emotional development

57. Standards are in line with those expected. The suitably-organised induction procedures ensure that most children enter school with an appropriate measure of confidence. They respond very well to an ethos that promotes good behaviour and care for others. This was well illustrated by a child comforting another who had bumped himself when preparing for playtime. Most children can take turns and offer help to each other. Children are keen to learn and concentrate well when their interest is engaged. However, they have too few opportunities to learn how to work together independently.
58. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory. All staff work very well together and provide good role models for the children. Perceptive use of praise and encouragement gives children a feeling of self-esteem and pride in their achievements.

Communication, language and literacy

59. Standards are in line with those expected and children are on their way to reaching the Early Learning Goals for their areas of learning. Children listen very well, show interest and make sound progress. They talk with increasing confidence in a range of formal situations, using an increasing range of vocabulary. Adults in the classroom effectively encourage children to discuss the activities being carried out.
60. During the inspection a small group of children demonstrated good progress in recognising initial letter sounds and shapes and the beginnings of recognisable letter formation. Most children hold pencils correctly, make good attempts at copying letters, recognise their names and make efforts to write them. Children handle books confidently and correctly. They enjoy sharing a book with a friend while waiting for their milk. Children know that pictures and words convey meaning. They discuss pictures fully and make predictions of what might happen. More-able children can recognise a few key words from the reading scheme.
61. The quality of teaching in this area is satisfactory. Expressive story-telling skills are well supported through the use of Big Books that successfully act as a focus point for children. Effective questioning is used to make teaching points. Bookshelves of suitably colourful books are only accessible to children at given times. Daily planning

is unclear and there are insufficient clear, sequential, learning steps based on attention given to recording individual children's progress. Where records are kept, they relate to coverage rather than progress. Too many activities are led and controlled by the teacher and there are insufficient opportunities for children to choose and be in charge of their own learning; for example, in 'pretending' to be in a particular situation.

Mathematical development

62. By the time children come to the end of the Foundation Stage, standards are above those expected for the age group and progress is good. Children confidently count to ten, with a significant majority reaching twenty. Many children make attempts to count further and a small group of children are able to count to 60 with limited support. They are beginning to recognise some numbers to ten, with good progress being made by the more able children. Many children can recognise circles, squares and triangles. Less able children can sort according to size. Children can sing and recite a range of number songs and rhymes, and are beginning to use their fingers for counting.
63. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory. Activities are practical and sustain the interest of most of the class. Tasks are not always appropriately matched to children's abilities. Insufficient use is made of opportunities in the school day to use mathematics in a meaningful way to extend children's knowledge and understanding. There are only limited opportunities for children to choose for themselves activities that involve counting work skills, knowledge and understanding.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

64. Standards are below those expected. Children are satisfactorily developing a growing awareness and knowledge of the world around them through a suitable range of activities. They know about their immediate surroundings and develop a sense of location and direction. During the making of salt-dough teddies, children successfully roll the dough and use cutters to make the required shape. They use computers confidently to support work in mathematics. Children can use the computer mouse with an appropriate degree of accuracy to move the cursor and click to match shapes. During the time of the inspection children considered the meaning of 'set' and 'melt' in the context of change. Through practical activities with the teacher and nursery nurse they successfully make jelly and chocolate rice cakes. At the end of the activity children show only a limited understanding of the word set. A satisfactory sense of time is developing because of children's progress in knowing the daily routine.
65. The quality of teaching in this area is unsatisfactory. Planning is structured under subject headings such as science and not under knowledge and understanding of the world, as is expected for reception children. Subsequently it lacks a structured programme of learning suitable for this age group. Activities lack suitable, clear learning objectives. Organisation is inappropriate, with large groups where children are sitting for long periods of time and not being sufficiently involved. Insufficient consideration is given to the good practice of wearing aprons and washing hands before food preparation.

Physical development

66. Children achieve standards in their physical development that are below those expected for their age by the time they begin Key Stage 1. During physical education

lessons they illustrate a satisfactory control of movements. Children listen well to instructions and respond quickly, showing an appropriate use of space. They demonstrate suitable interpretations in their movements to illustrate 'Going on a Bear Hunt'. Children use scissors with increasing confidence in cutting and sticking activities.

67. Teaching is unsatisfactory because lessons are not sufficiently well thought out to teach the necessary skills systematically. The school hall is used for physical activities twice a week. Daily physical activities are not available. Children do not have any access to large toys such as tricycles, scooters and prams, or suitable climbing apparatus to develop their control of large movements.

Creative development

68. Generally children's standards in their creative development are below those expected for their age by the time they being Key Stage 1. In music-making children achieve good standards. They enjoy singing and making music. They successfully make a range of sounds through striking, shaking or rattling a suitable range of percussion instruments. There are only limited opportunities for artistic activities using a wide choice of materials to promote the development of children's imaginative skills.

ENGLISH

69. In the national assessments attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was close to the national average in reading and well below the national average in writing. In comparison with that in schools in similar contexts, attainment in reading is well below average and attainment in writing is very low. The results in writing were low in the assessments because of difficulties the school experienced in agreeing standards of work with the local education authority. By the end of Key Stage 2, the school's performance is well above the national average. In comparison with those in schools in similar contexts, standards are average at the end of Key Stage 1 and above average in Key Stage 2. Attainment in reading is average at the end of Key Stage 1 and above average at the end of Key Stage 2. The quality of pupils' writing is average overall at the end of both key stages.
70. In Key Stage 1, pupils are able to speak audibly and to develop their range of vocabulary. They use verbs and a growing variety of adjectives in the correct context. Pupils show growing confidence in applying their knowledge to offer simple explanations in a range of subject areas and in discussing their story books. Within Key Stage 2, pupils make informed and articulate contributions to class discussions; they ask relevant questions when their interest is aroused. In history and geography pupils discuss colourful events and their oral comments are often perceptive. During class assemblies, pupils speak confidently of spiritual values and experiences and are ready to share their views and feelings with others. At the end of Key Stage 2 there is a readiness amongst pupils to take into account the views of others.
71. Standards of reading are average in Key Stage 1. The majority of pupils can use the sounds letters make to tackle unfamiliar words, though lower-attaining pupils are still at an early stage in applying these skills. Many pupils have underdeveloped library skills and are unused to seeking information from printed sources. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have developed good reading skills. They show growing proficiency in discussing characterisation and plot and they use prediction, inference and deduction more confidently. By the end of Key Stage 2, many pupils are becoming independent

- readers with pronounced tastes and preferences for authors and different styles of literature. Within Key Stage 2 pupils can explain the purposes of indexes and glossaries and are generally aware of how to access books in a library. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have a growing recognition of the differences between works of fiction and non-fiction and many can access information for projects from the Internet and other information and communication technology sources. However, because of the limited nature and age of the school's reference library stock, pupils are discouraged from using this resource enthusiastically.
72. In writing in Key Stage 1, pupils have a sound understanding of simple sentence structure and, by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils begin stories appropriately, trying to vary the story line to make it more interesting. However, many pupils find writing difficult. They have only a limited command of vocabulary, and spelling standards are insecure. Work is not always presented neatly. Within Key Stage 2, pupils choose a suitable style of writing to suit a particular purpose and can record their learning appropriately in subjects across the curriculum; for instance, they generally write instructions accurately in science and design and technology and they can write dialogue for their work in literacy. However, handwriting skills remain underdeveloped; many pupils are still not writing in joined, neat script. Pupils generally make sound progress in the drafting and redrafting of their work which is sometime linked to other subjects, such as history. Pupils often use computers to help them refine their work. The school has already identified writing as an area requiring attention.
73. Suitably-adapted tasks for pupils with special educational needs are always carefully planned in Key Stage 2 but not in Key Stage 1. Within Key Stage 1 tasks are not sufficiently interesting to promote a high level of pupils' interest and effort in class. The co-ordinator for special educational needs and the learning support assistant know pupils well and target their learning difficulties well, especially in reading.
74. In the best teaching, tasks are well matched to pupils' abilities, and pupils are made aware of learning objectives. The pace at which lessons are taught varies across the school. Where the teaching has weaknesses, younger children are kept sitting on the carpet for too long and this results in a loss of concentration and involvement in the lesson. Some lessons do not have enough activities to sustain concentration. Pupils do not give of their best. In the best teaching in Key Stage 2, teachers challenge pupils rigorously with well-targeted questioning, backed up by good subject knowledge. The pace of lessons and the degree of challenge offered are appropriate. Work is marked regularly and in the best examples comments are informative and designed to help pupils raise their standards by pointing out what they need to do to improve. In other examples teachers do not give enough help when marking so that pupils do not have a clear picture of what they should do.
75. Resources in English are adequate to deliver the literacy scheme of work, but library provision is inadequate, many books are old and unattractive and there is a very limited choice of works of fiction and non-fiction. Increasing use is made of the school's information and communication technology resources to develop pupils' information seeking, word processing and presentation skills.
76. The literacy co-ordinator has produced detailed guidelines and plans to support her colleagues in the delivery of the National Literacy Strategy. The co-ordinator has a good overview of teachers' planning and a scrutiny of pupils' work has helped the co-ordinator identify the variation in standards of writing across the school. At present there is no process to help teachers arrive at a common understanding of the levels of attainment expected in the National Curriculum.

MATHEMATICS

77. Standards in numeracy and in all areas of mathematics are average at the end of Key Stage 1 and above average at the end of Key Stage 2, which is the same picture as at the time of the last inspection. The year 2000 assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 and the national tests for Year 6 for this year bear this out. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils achieve average results in mathematics. At the end of Key Stage 2, results in mathematics are well above average. When compared to schools which are broadly similar, the school's results at the end of Key Stage 1 are below average. Results at the end of Key Stage 2 are above the average for these schools.
78. Since 1996 standards in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 have varied widely. In 1996 standards were above average. In 1997 results rose steeply but fell back to average in 1998. From 1998 until the present, results have improved at about the same rate as in other schools and are currently average. This wide variation is limited to the abilities of different groups of pupils. The pattern of results for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 shows a similar trend. In 1997 they rose from just above average to well above. Standards fell in 1998 to just above average. Since then they have remained above average. The trend of improvement since 1998 is in line with national trends.
79. Within Key Stage 1 younger pupils are able to sequence and add numbers within ten. They use standard units such as counters to measure. They can identify number patterns, halves and quarters. They recognise simple place values. Pupils are confident in naming regular two- and three-dimensional shapes. They can work out simple problems involving time. Within Key Stage 2, pupils are able to recognise the role of the denominator in simple fractions. They have a sound understanding of negative numbers and can find different ways to calculate quickly and accurately when multiplying large numbers. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 are able to plot accurately, using four-figure co-ordinates, and rotate regular shapes using grids. They can identify the symmetries of two-dimensional shapes and solve problems logically. There are good opportunities for all pupils to use mathematics for practical investigations and in handling information collected in other subjects; for example, in graphical representation. Pupils are generally well supported in their lessons, so the work that is planned is well matched to their abilities; for example, support for pupils with some degree of special educational needs is well organised so that the teacher for special educational needs is able to work closely with pupils who are experiencing difficulties.
80. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Some of the best teaching is found towards the end of Key Stage 2, where it has a significant impact on raising standards effectively. Where teaching is good or very good the lesson is well planned to meet the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy. The lessons begin briskly with purposeful and challenging questioning to prompt pupils to remember what they have learnt previously; for example, about 'rounding up'. Individual pupils are warmly encouraged and targeted so that all feel part of the lessons and work hard to improve the standards of their work. The teachers move the lessons on smoothly and remind pupils regularly of what they should learn and the time they have to complete their tasks. There are well-prepared resources readily to hand to help pupils think. Work is carefully matched to individual abilities and as a result all pupils work purposefully and enthusiastically.
81. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, the lessons start purposefully and the teachers pose questions clearly, but the pace of the lessons is slow because the teachers

spend too much time explaining unnecessarily. As a result pupils become bored and talk. The lessons are brought to an end abruptly and pupils are not provided with enough time to review what they have achieved during the lessons. In some lessons, while the teacher tries hard to make the work interesting and gives encouragement to individual pupils, other pupils lack the ability to concentrate and have to be asked repeatedly to “keep the noise down”. In these circumstances pupils do not all give of their best.

82. Teachers carefully mark pupils’ work and much of this marking is constructive and helps to indicate what pupils need to do to improve. However, formal targets for improvement are not shared sufficiently with pupils and their parents. Teachers assess pupils’ work regularly and use a variety of tests to make them familiar with the format of the national end of key stage assessments. However, while this information is recorded accurately, it is not used sufficiently well to predict the standard each pupil can achieve and to monitor regularly if this is the case. As a result some pupils are under-challenged. The co-ordinator has conducted a detailed review of the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and gives a good lead to other teachers. Practical resources are good and there are well-taken opportunities to use information and control technology to reinforce skills and to enhance work in graphs and datahandling.

SCIENCE

83. Standards in science are above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The school has maintained standards since the previous inspection. In the national tests for 11 year olds in 2000, standards were above average nationally, and well above the average for similar schools. At the end of Key Stage 2 overall, the school’s performance is improving faster than the national trend.
84. Within Key Stage 1 the majority of pupils know about magnetism. From a range of materials they record their predictions indicating which materials they think will be attracted to a magnet and which will not. They know that all materials are not attracted and, through their investigation, successfully prove that all metals are not attracted. Pupils know that various processes, including squashing, bending, twisting and stretching, can alter the shape of objects constructed from some materials. They record the process of their investigation and their findings clearly on prepared sheets.
85. Within Key Stage 2, pupils have a sound knowledge of foods that can damage teeth. Opportunities are provided for pupils to devise and carry out experiments for themselves, and to apply their scientific knowledge in new situations, as in Years 3 and 4 when an experiment was set up to see which liquids damage teeth the most. The majority of pupils are beginning to understand the term ‘fair test’ and ensure that some things, such as the amount of liquid, remain constant during an experiment. Pupils have a good understanding of how substances like tobacco, alcohol and other drugs can be harmful. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are able to use appropriate scientific vocabulary to describe the work they are doing. They are able to perform an investigation in a scientific manner.
86. Pupils’ attitudes to science are generally positive. From an early age they begin to work successfully in groups. Pupils listen to others’ ideas and reasons before agreeing amicably how to set about their task. Pupils take turns and successfully involve everybody in the group. They readily ask and answer questions that are

sensible and relate to the focus of the lesson. Pupils enjoy science and display curiosity and interest, especially when involved in practical activities.

87. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In Key Stage 2, teachers plan a two-year cycle of topics that effectively support teaching mixed-age classes and meet the National Curriculum requirements. Teachers have secure subject knowledge. At both key stages teachers prepare lessons thoroughly, and methods of classroom management and organisation are as expected. Teachers make appropriate use of resources and supporting adults to provide first-hand experiences and equal access to all activities for all pupils. All pupils receive suitable support from the teacher and assistants when in class. Information technology is planned and used to support science where appropriate. Insufficient opportunities are given to pupils to consider and evaluate evidence.
88. Assessments of what pupils know and can do are not carried out consistently. An assessment pack has recently been introduced but it is not fully used throughout the school. The skills of carrying out investigative and experimental science are not systematically built upon to allow pupils to reach their full potential in this area.
89. There is an appropriate policy statement for the teaching of science that sets out clearly what the school's intentions are for pupils' learning and the strategies teachers should use to teach them. The curriculum co-ordinator has correctly identified the needs of the subject, through analysing Key Stage 2 standardised test results, for example, to improve the use of specific scientific vocabulary. There are no regular planned opportunities for the co-ordinators to visit classes to judge the quality of teaching and learning and to help raise standards further.

ART AND DESIGN

90. Only a small number of lessons in art were observed during the inspection. However, from a scrutiny of pupils' work and by talking to pupils and teachers, the inspection shows standards in art are at the levels expected of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 and higher at the end of Key Stage 2. They remain the same as at the time of the last inspection. Pupils within Key Stage 1 are able to use a range of techniques and materials to express their ideas; for example, in mixing and blending colours in their pictures. They are beginning to observe carefully as they draw and take pride in mounting their work in their sketch books. Within Key Stage 2, pupils are able to investigate and combine different materials to produce an effect similar to that achieved by well-known artists; for example, in copying 'The Snail' by Matisse. They carefully blend colours to fit the shapes and discuss their ideas confidently.
91. The recently appointed co-ordinator has assembled a scheme of work in line with new guidance and places considerable emphasis on ensuring that pupils' finished work is carefully displayed. As a result pupils feel and show a sense of pride in the way that their work is recognised.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

92. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection and that was in Key Stage 2. From evidence in teachers' planning and the very limited evidence available of pupils' work, inspectors found that standards in design and technology are below those expected and usually found at the end of both key stages. Skills are not taught systematically and pupils have too few opportunities throughout the school to effectively develop and apply their knowledge and understanding.

93. No evidence of pupils' work was available in Key Stage 1. Within Key Stage 2, pupils had successfully made a pop-up book for a young child. In the lesson seen, pupils successfully design a colourful poster to advertise healthy sandwiches. However, one group designing a wrapper worked hard to develop their designs, but had little idea that the wrapper might be used to identify the contents of the sandwich. This work was appropriately linked to the science topic of healthy eating, but links with numeracy are unsatisfactory.
94. The subject co-ordinator has a suitable action plan for improvement using the recent national guidance qualifications. However, there is no system for the assessment of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.
95. Resources in design and technology are adequate and of reasonable quality. The range of resources is appropriate and they are easily accessible to both teachers and pupils.

GEOGRAPHY

96. Standards are in line with national expectations at both key stages and remain the same as at the time of the last inspection. The scheme of work and teachers' planning are well focused on developing the essential geographical skills.
97. Within Key Stage 1, pupils are able to draw and interpret simple maps. Within Key Stage 2, pupils have a secure knowledge of how to use co-ordinates on a map and correct symbols. However, the rate at which pupils complete the tasks set varies considerably and some take too much time to record their findings.
98. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Most teachers have secure subject knowledge and are well informed about the geography and economy of the locality. They use this knowledge well to extend pupils' understanding and in most classes there is appropriate challenge to encourage pupils to seek information for themselves and to become more-confident learners.
99. The co-ordinator has not yet had time in which to look at how the subject is taught in classes. Teachers across the school do not have a common understanding of what standards they should aim to achieve. Learning objectives are appropriately identified in lessons and there are sound links with the other subjects, for example, with numeracy through the use of scales, co-ordinates and directions. Sound use is made of information and communication technology to support learning, for example, to store and retrieve data.

HISTORY

100. Only one lesson in history was observed during the inspection, but a scrutiny of work and teachers' plans, and conversations with pupils and teachers, indicate that standards are in line with national expectations in both key stages. This is the same picture as at the time of the last inspection.
101. Within Key Stage 1 pupils are able to sequence events and stories accurately and are familiar with the concepts of 'old', 'older' and 'oldest' through their work on toys, past and present. They have a growing awareness of the differences between life in the past and their own lives; pupils have sound recall skills and can compare and contrast household objects from the Victorian period with those commonly found in today's homes. They are increasingly aware of change taking place over time and are able to provide some reasons for these changes. They begin to understand how historians know about events in the past, by looking at pictures and other sources of evidence.
102. Within Key Stage 2, pupils build appropriately upon the knowledge, understanding and historical skills acquired in Key Stage 1. They develop their skills of historical enquiry through examination and evaluation of a range of artefacts related to, for instance, the World War II. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 have sound background knowledge and can recall and select information accurately. Project work on the Tudors in Years 4 and 5 shows a sound ability to access and use relevant information. They understand how power was exercised in the Tudor court under Henry VIII and how and why the king was able to effect change in the church.
103. They use information and communication technology tools effectively to enhance and present their work. Many pupils are acquiring the ability to use subject-specific vocabulary accurately and in the correct context.

104. Teaching in history is satisfactory in both key stages. Most teachers have good subject knowledge, and an appropriate emphasis is placed on the development of the historical skills to give pupils a firm foundation in the subject. Useful links are made, for instance with literacy, in order to encourage pupils' writing skills. Pupils are generally interested in and enthusiastic about their studies in history. They are keen to ask and answer questions, and enjoy class discussions.
105. Resources are adequate, if limited. There are a variety of reference books accessible in classrooms and pupils can examine artefacts and other source material. Wall displays are colourful and well linked to the curriculum; these add a further dimension to pupils' knowledge and understanding.
106. The scheme of work for history appropriately addresses the National Curriculum. Appropriate cross-curricular links with other areas such as geography, literacy, art and religious education add a further dimension to pupils' work. Visits to local sites of interest such as Little Moreton Hall and the Roman remains at Chester encourage pupils' enquiry skills. Visitors are invited who present a Victorian Day at the school; pupils can dress up in the costumes of the period and this role play enhances their view of life in the past.
107. The co-ordinator has no allocated time to look at teaching and learning in history. The lack of a collection of work to indicate the standard to expect in each year means that teachers have no opportunity to arrive at a common understanding of what to expect or how to assess standards.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

108. Standards are above those expected by the end of both key stages. The school has successfully maintained the pupils' above-average attainment since the previous inspection. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the use of information technology are improving rapidly.
109. Within Key Stage 1 pupils can load and save files, and are familiar with mouse use and the keyboard to successfully support their work in language and mathematics. They make effective use of art programs to support work with patterns and shapes. By the end of the key stage pupils can change the size of fonts to effectively present their work. Pupils successfully collect, enter and store information before presenting it in computer-generated pictograph form. Pupils are able to program a robot to make a sequence of moves forwards, backwards, and turning left and right, and record the sequence on the computer.
110. The opportunities found in Key Stage 1 are successfully built on in Key Stage 2. Within Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress in changing fonts, style, size and colour to present their work, bearing in mind purpose and audience. They enter facts into a fact file and successfully use the database to produce information in a pie chart or other graphical formats. If information is incorrect pupils correct it, understanding the need for accurate information. Pupils in Year 4 entered and corrected information taken during a science lesson on the importance of exercise for good health. Pupils are making good progress with sending and retrieving e-mail. This is a recently-introduced initiative and already some older pupils send their homework to school via the e-mail. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 confidently use a Polaroid camera to record evidence of tooth samples before their investigation into which liquid damages teeth

the most. Pupils use CD-ROMs successfully to extract information to support other subjects such as history and geography.

111. Pupils' attitudes to information technology are consistently good. They listen attentively to the teacher or adult supporting them. Pupils are well motivated and have a clear understanding of the tasks they are undertaking. They show high levels of interest and concentration when using information technology. Pupils readily ask for help when needed and are always eager to help other pupils in difficulty. They behave well and respect the equipment they are using.
112. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are suitably planned to include information technology when and where it is suitable. Equal access is assured for all pupils. There has been a recent improvement in the availability of computers, and software is in full use throughout the school. Teachers' knowledge, understanding and skills are steadily improving. They make concerted efforts to keep abreast of the fast changing world of technology.
113. The curriculum for information technology is satisfactory. There is an appropriate policy that includes clear aims and objectives. The school has a suitable resource bank of hardware and software, much of which is newly in place and funded by money from the National Grid for Learning. The subject is well supported by a co-ordinator who has a clear aim to raise pupils' standards further and to introduce an efficient and effective form of assessment.

MUSIC

114. During the inspection only a small number of lessons in music were observed. However, from a scrutiny of pupils' work and through talking to teachers and pupils, it is clear that standards in music are at expected levels at the end of both key stages, which is the same picture as at the time of the last inspection. In assemblies pupils sing well with expression and clarity, are able to perform effectively in two-part harmonies and enjoy the experience. Older pupils can match sounds they hear from different instruments to characters in 'The Carnival of the Animals'. They have a good awareness of pitch and rhythm and can use simple percussion and untuned instruments to produce appropriate sounds when performing to other pupils. Pupils listen attentively and can appraise others' efforts accurately. There are good opportunities for individual pupils to learn a range of instruments through the services of visiting music teachers. There is a music club, 'The Elastic Band', which provides a growing number of pupils with opportunities to perform; for example, at Christmas and Easter.
115. The co-ordinator has been recently appointed and has a very good understanding of the subject. There are well-advanced plans to form a choir. There is now a scheme of work which is closely aligned to the recent national guidance, and the school development plan correctly identifies the need to expand the range and number of instruments available. Currently there are a small number of percussion and untuned instruments which are stored centrally. These are insufficient to meet the ambitious plans being made to raise standards further.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

116. Standards in physical education are at expected levels at both key stages, and at the end of Key Stage 2 nearly all pupils achieve at least the standards expected in swimming (to swim 25 metres). Many exceed it. This is much the same picture as

at the time of the last inspection. There is no difference between boys and girls in the standards achieved. Now there is a comprehensive policy and scheme of work which enable the school to plan a balanced range of activities and experiences for each class. This was a point of criticism in the last report which has been successfully addressed. Pupils in Key Stage 1 work enthusiastically in gymnastics and are able to develop a sequence of rolls, travelling and using space sensibly. They can apply these skills to different apparatus or when working on the floor. They can perform and develop a series of movements which contrast in their speed, direction and type. They are developing the ability to evaluate their own and others' movements and modify them. In dance activities they rehearse and perform enthusiastically, responding to the story of 'Jack and the Beanstalk' expressively. Pupils within Key Stage 2 confidently build on what they have previously learnt. They can devise and perform fluent sequences on the floor and on apparatus, which they use safely and well as they build sequences as individuals and in pairs. They make good progress in learning how to evaluate their work and that of other pupils, and learn to be positive in this by beginning their criticism by saying, "This is what I like" and, "I think I could do something to change this". They make good progress in swimming using a range of recognised strokes and, when on residential visits, participate in outdoor activities enthusiastically; for example, by following trails. There are appropriate opportunities for pupils to experience team games in cricket, soccer and netball. Both boys and girls have equal opportunities to take part which they do successfully; for example, in local tournaments.

117. The quality of teaching is good. In the best lessons teachers set good standards by demonstrating energetically what they expect their pupils to achieve. As a result pupils have a good picture of what to perform. Due emphasis is given to a vigorous 'warm-up' and the importance of taking care when exercising. Pupils are encouraged effectively to try to achieve very good standards and to 'finish well'. They are also encouraged to find the lesson fun; for example, in a movement lesson they demonstrate 'a posh walk' enthusiastically, and try hard to behave well and please their teachers.
118. Where the teaching is less successful, teachers start the lesson purposefully but do not consistently expect and obtain high standards of behaviour. As a result in some lessons pupils do not try their best and waste time 'talking' rather than 'doing'. The pace of learning does not sufficiently challenge them to exercise hard. While pupils are successfully trained to take responsibilities for putting out and putting away apparatus, this is achieved at the expense of appropriately planned 'warming-down' exercises and the lesson ends abruptly.
119. The co-ordinator is very well informed and has worked hard to assemble a detailed scheme of work which all teachers use effectively to plan a balance of activities. There is a very good range of resources, including an extensive store of sports equipment. For example, there is a large supply of cricket balls, bats, pads and gloves as well as equipment for Kwik cricket. The hall is large and contains a good range of fixed and moveable apparatus and mats. These and the outdoor grassed areas are well used.