

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HIGHFIELD COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Blacon, Chester

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 131421

Headteacher: Mr Andrew Woodman

Reporting inspector: Mr Keith Edwards  
21190

Dates of inspection: 12-15 February 2001

Inspection number: 230201

Full 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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Blacon Point Road Blacon Chester Cheshire
Postcode:	CH1 5LD
Telephone number:	01244 377455
Fax number:	01244 370278
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Councillor Brendan Doyle
Date of previous inspection:	13 July 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21190	Keith Edwards	Registered inspector	Art English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) the school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
19439	Doreen Shotton	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) pupils attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
31790	Merfyn Jones	Team inspector	Science Geography History Equal opportunities	
8316	Josepha O'Hare	Team inspector	English Music Special educational needs	
27679	Susan Twaits	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
15236	Morag Thorpe	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Physical education Foundation Stage	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Highfield Community Primary is a large school located in Blacon on the outskirts of Chester. The school draws most of its children from the immediate locality. There is a high incidence of single-parent families locally and the socio-economic circumstances of many families are unfavourable.

Overall numbers are similar to the last inspection. There are currently 356 boys and girls on roll, including the 51 part-time children who attend the nursery class and the eight infants who attend the school's Key Stage 1 Assessment Unit. At the present time, 40 per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is higher than the national average. Most, but not all, of the pupils are white and the overwhelming majority come from homes where English is the first language.

The pupils are admitted into full-time education in the reception class in the September of the school year in which they are five. Before this, most of the pupils have attended the nursery class on a part-time basis. Nevertheless, the attainment of most of the pupils in their reception year is below average. There are currently 95 pupils on the school's register for special educational needs, eight of whom have a formal Statement of Special Educational Needs. In each case it is a higher percentage than the national average.

In addition to the nursery and Assessment Unit there are 10 classes, most of which have more than one age group. In the mornings in the junior classes, the pupils are set for their English and mathematics lessons.

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

This is a rapidly improving school. The headteacher has provided a clear sense of direction for further development. The staff and pupils are well motivated and the climate for learning is good. The quality of teaching is good and the school provides good value for money.

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

- The headteacher provides excellent leadership and he has guided the school successfully through a period of rapid improvement.
- The Key Stage 1 Assessment Unit provides excellent support for those pupils with learning difficulties.
- The quality of teaching is good and it enables the pupils to make good progress.
- Relationships in the school are very good and the staff work very effectively as a team.
- The school has a strong commitment to community education and it is held in high regard locally.
- Procedures for child protection and for ensuring the pupils' welfare are very good.
- The pupils are very enthusiastic about their school.

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

- Standards in geography are too low.
- The school does not comply with statutory requirements with regard to the daily act of collective worship.
- The school does not make the most effective use of time in its organisation of the timetable.
- The annual reports on the pupils' progress are unsatisfactory as they lack individual comments for the foundation subjects.

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

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

The school was last inspected in July 1998. Since then the school has made very good progress. The headteacher has developed a very good balance between his strategic management and the pastoral elements of his role. In each respect he is very well informed. The school works with unity of purpose and has become very involved in the life of the community.

Action taken since the last inspection has been effective in addressing the key issues. Although standards in the core subjects are below average at the age of eleven, there has been a sustained improvement in the pupils' performance. This is reflected in the last two years' National Curriculum test results for pupils at the age of eleven, where there is continuing improvement in English, mathematics and science. The quality of teaching has improved as the teachers now know what they have to teach, when they are to teach it and to what standard. The school has used test data and other assessment information effectively to build detailed profiles of the pupils' performance and to set targets for individuals and groups of pupils. Furthermore, this information is used to group pupils by ability for their English and mathematics lessons in Key Stage 2. The teachers are clear about the learning objectives for each lesson and the higher-attaining pupils are appropriately challenged. The School Improvement Plan now provides a clear framework for the future development of the school. Initiatives are costed and there are clear success criteria and timescales. Subject co-ordinators are effectively managing their subjects in each phase. There is a strong sense of teamwork.

## STANDARDS

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

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

**Key**

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

The children start school with standards of attainment that are well below average. The children make good progress in the foundation stage but by the age of five few children reach the Early Learning goals for this age group in their communication and mathematical skills. Standards in the work seen in the core subjects are below the national average at the end of Key Stage 1. By the time the pupils reach the age of eleven, standards in the core subjects are still below the national average. However, standards have shown a rapid improvement over the last two years and the school is well set to sustain continuing improvement. The pupils are beginning to exceed the targets set for them. The pupils' achievements in English at the age of eleven are better than those in similar schools. This is a significant achievement for the school. Standards are similar in mathematics and below in science in comparison with similar schools. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and they make good progress in literacy and numeracy. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress across the curriculum. Standards in information and communications technology are improving as the pupils make good use of the new computers installed in the classrooms. Standards in religious education, history and design and technology are satisfactory. Standards in geography are unsatisfactory. The pupils achieve well in art and their work is displayed well to create a rich learning environment. Standards in music meet expectations and the quality of singing is good. The pupils reach satisfactory standards in physical education and achieve well in swimming and sports skills.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils' attitudes to school are good and have been maintained since the previous inspection. The pupils are happy in school and are eager to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school, as well as in the playground. There are very few exclusions.
Personal development and relationships	The personal development of the pupils is good. Relationships in the school are very good, especially between pupils and teachers. Pupils are courteous and polite and are aware of the impact of their actions on others.
Attendance	Attendance is close to the national average and levels have been maintained since the previous inspection.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The overall quality of teaching is good. It enables the pupils to make good progress throughout the school. In all of the lessons observed the teaching was satisfactory or better. Sixty eight per cent of the teaching was good or better with 25 per cent judged to be very good or excellent. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. The teaching of English and mathematics is good and this helps to ensure that the pupils make good progress in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. The teaching of the pupils in the Key Stage 1 Assessment Unit is very good as specific tasks are set to meet their needs. The staff introduce appropriate degrees of challenge for the pupils and this results in good, and often very good, progress in all areas of learning. The quality of teaching for those pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language is good.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is good. It offers a broad range of learning opportunities and the abilities of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are fully met. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of additional activities. However, the curriculum lacks balance in terms of the time allocation.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for those pupils with special educational needs is good and enables the pupils to make good progress in developing their skills in literacy and numeracy. The provision in the Key Stage 1 Assessment Unit is excellent.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional	The provision for the small number of pupils with English as an additional language is good.

language	
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes good provision overall. There is satisfactory provision for the spiritual and cultural development of the pupils, although too little attention is given to the multicultural dimension. The provision for the pupils' moral development is good and for their social development it is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for child protection and for ensuring the welfare of the pupils are very good and are a strength of the school.

The school works well with the parents and this has a positive impact on their children's learning. The parents hold the school in very high esteem.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides excellent leadership. He is well supported by senior staff and is guiding the school on a programme of continuing improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its statutory requirements and provides good support for the school. The governors work hard to ensure that the school maintains its standing in the community.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school includes success criteria in its improvement plan and has established clear priorities for development. It has taken very effective action to meet its targets.
The strategic use of resources	The school has good staffing levels and accommodation. Resources are satisfactory. The school makes very good use of its support staff but could make more effective use of time. It provides good value for money.

### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> <li>• The school expects their children to work hard and to do their best.</li> <li>• They would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The quality and range of homework.</li> <li>• The information about how well their children are doing at school.</li> </ul>

The parents' views of the school are that it is very good. Those parents who attended the parents' meeting and who were spoken to during the inspection praised the school highly and thought it was much improved since the previous inspection. All parents who replied to the questionnaire agreed that the teaching is good and the school expects all children to work well and give of their best. Almost all of the parents replying to the questionnaire agreed that the school is well led and managed and is helping their child to become mature and responsible. Inspectors support these views held by the parents. Inspectors agree that the quality of reports on the pupils' progress could be improved but find the homework provision to be satisfactory.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Baseline assessments indicate that, on entry to the nursery and the reception classes, the attainment of most children is well below the average for their age. The speaking skills of the children are well below average, with many children having a limited vocabulary. However, the consistently good teaching in the nursery and reception classes results in the children making rapid progress. Whilst this progress is good and sometimes very good, the attainment of children at the end of the foundation stage remains below average in most areas. The majority of children are unlikely to reach the nationally agreed Early Learning Goals for the foundation stage in their communication and mathematical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Although this represents a similar picture to the last inspection, there has been a significant improvement in the progress made in these areas.
2. The National Curriculum Key Stage 1 assessments for 2000 indicate that the pupils' attainments were well below the national average in reading, below in writing and close to the national average in mathematics in terms of the percentage of pupils attaining the expected level (Level 2). However, this cohort contained a significant number of pupils who had attended the school's Key Stage 1 Assessment Unit. Only a small percentage of pupils achieved the higher levels and overall their performance was well below the national level in reading, writing and mathematics. The analysis also shows that the pupils' achievements were below average in reading and writing when compared with similar schools. Their achievements in mathematics are broadly in line with pupils in similar schools. An analysis of the pupils' work across the curriculum confirms the results of the national tests. However, the pupils respond well to the quality of teaching and make good progress in relation to their prior levels of attainment. Pupils with special educational needs are sensitively supported and helped to make good progress, particularly in literacy and numeracy.
3. The National Curriculum assessments for eleven-year-olds in 2000 show that overall the pupils' attainments were below the national average in English and well below in mathematics and science. However, in a continuing trend more pupils achieved the expected level (Level 4) than ever before. This represents a significant success for the school. The school's 2000 performance data show that very few pupils are achieving the higher levels. The school's focus on raising standards of literacy has been successful and the pupils' achievements were above average in English overall when compared with similar schools. In mathematics, standards were close to those achieved by pupils in similar schools. In science, standards were below. The school has been successful in raising standards since the last inspection and over the last two years in particular. The test results for eleven-year-old pupils indicate that standards in English, mathematics and science have risen sharply and show a marked improvement in all three subjects on the previous year. Indications from an analysis of the work of the pupils in the Years 3, 4 and 5 show that standards are set to continue to rise. However, the girls achieve better than the boys. The school is aware of this and is taking steps to raise the achievement of boys through its programme of personal and social education.
4. Standards in the work seen in Key Stage 2 confirm the National Curriculum assessments for eleven-year-olds. The introduction of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and the more effective teaching have made a significant contribution to the improvement in the pupils' performance. The school has made very good use of assessment data for target setting for groups of pupils of different abilities and has made good use of booster classes. Although standards are below average in English, there are clear signs that the pupils are gaining from the emphasis on the teaching of basic skills. The school's careful monitoring of the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is combined with a determination to continue to raise standards.
5. Although the pupils make good progress in speaking and listening, standards are below average

at the age of eleven. The pupils make good progress in reading. By the time they leave school, most pupils have the basic skills. This includes skimming text to gain an overall impression and scanning to locate information. Their literacy standards enable them to work satisfactorily in subjects where they need to use their reading skills. Most pupils enjoy reading and have developed appropriate skills to enable them to research information independently from a reference library. However, reading standards are below average.

6. Although pupils work in a range of forms including stories, poems, factual accounts and instructions, at the end of both key stages their attainment in writing is below average. They do become increasingly confident in their use of spelling and grammar and can write for a range of purposes but their work lacks maturity. Standards of spelling and handwriting are improving but the pupils' progress is limited by their range of vocabulary.
7. Standards in mathematics are below average when the pupils leave the school. The school has successfully introduced the Numeracy Strategy and is making good use of assessment information to target the teaching. The co-ordinator monitors the pupils' work rigorously and ensures that the subject has a high profile. Consequently, the school is well placed to continue to raise standards. The pupils are responding well to the Numeracy Strategy and its emphasis on mental mathematics and are making good progress in calculations involving tables and measurement. They apply their skills in numeracy satisfactorily in other subjects such as design and technology and history.
8. Standards in science are below average at the age of eleven. However, the pupils make satisfactory progress and standards are improving. Younger pupils engage in practical investigations and can classify materials according to their properties. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils engage in investigations and most know how to apply the concept of a fair test. However, many pupils lack a secure depth of understanding of basic scientific principles and this restricts their progress.
9. By the time most pupils leave the school, standards in information and communication technology are in line with national expectations. They benefit from the regular opportunity to work on the new class-based computers. The pupils have experience of word processing, using computers to research information and for data handling. The teachers plan very effectively for the pupils to use information and communication technology to support work in other subjects such as art.
10. The pupils achieve well in religious education. Standards meet the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus by the time the pupils leave the school. The pupils have a sound understanding of the Christian faith and are able to discuss festivals of other world religions. The school provides visits to local churches to support learning. The pupils' progress is further promoted by the school's emphasis on personal and social development.
11. Standards in history are satisfactory. Learning is supported by a clear scheme of work and field visits that stimulate the pupils' interest. However, standards are below expectations in geography. The pupils have limited understanding of maps; they have difficulty in identifying countries on the globe and have a limited knowledge of their own environment.
12. Standards in art are above average. The pupils develop a range of skills and are sensitive in their approach to their work. Art is used well to support learning in other subjects such as mathematics and history. The pupils' work is well displayed and it is a real strength of the school. The pupils' work in design and technology is supported by a clear scheme of work and standards are in line with expectations. The pupils achieve satisfactory standards in physical education and music. The pupils enjoy singing and the choir has reached a very good standard. The pupils swim well and develop a good range of games skills.
13. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress through the good teaching and the modification of classwork to meet their needs. The teachers ensure that the tasks set are both challenging and achievable. Consequently, pupils with special educational needs rise to these

high standards and make good progress. Equally, those pupils with English as an additional language are well supported and make good progress.

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

14. Pupils' attitudes to school are good and have been maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils are happy in school and are eager to learn. Parents attending the pre-inspection meeting, and those who completed the questionnaire, indicate that their children enjoy school and are keen to attend. They are involved in the community of the school and take interest, not only in their lessons, but also in the wide range of activities which the school provides.
15. The pupils with special educational needs have good attitudes to their work. They are proud of what they produce, through the encouragement they receive from their teachers. A very good example of this was observed in a lesson in personal and social education, taken by the behaviour support teacher, who gave the pupils help to cope with everyday situations, such as feelings of uncertainty or fear. Strategies for dealing with these feelings were very successfully explained to the pupils.
16. Pupils behave well in lessons, around the school and in the playground. For example, in both the infant and junior playgrounds, pupils are sociable and join in games together. In lessons, they listen attentively and are eager to answer questions. They show an interest in their work and concentrate well. Pupils try hard and co-operate with each other in working collaboratively. There have been three exclusions in the last year.
17. Relationships in the school are very good, especially between pupils and teachers. Pupils are courteous and polite and are aware of the impact of their actions on others. For instance, pupils in a Key Stage 2 lesson who were interrupting when others were speaking, responded well when other pupils could not hear the teacher. They show respect for each other, as well as for adults, and take care of property and equipment.
18. The personal development of pupils is good. Pupils are willing to take on responsibilities when they are asked and they are encouraged to exercise self-control. During the inspection week the theme was self-control and pupils learnt about choosing the right thing to do. Year 6 pupils help with the organisation of assemblies and take initiatives when offered. Pupils in the junior playground picked up the litter and put it in a bin, although there is no rota duty to do this. There is a playground council of pupils, who suggest developments. As a result a maze has been built and a flowerbed sitting area has enhanced the facilities available at break-times. In the Assessment Unit, pupils enjoyed a visit from the lollipop lady and learnt the basic principles of road safety in a very practical way. These examples show how personal development is part of the routine of school life.
19. Attendance is close to the national average and levels have been maintained since the previous inspection. Registers are marked in an orderly manner and with care and accuracy. Scrutiny of attendance records shows that unauthorised absence is higher than the national average but the school makes every effort to keep this to a minimum. Apart from a few families, there is no problem with lateness and lessons start and finish on time.

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

20. The overall quality of teaching is good. It enables the pupils to make good progress throughout the school. In all of the lessons observed the teaching was satisfactory or better. Sixty eight per cent of the teaching was good or better with 25 per cent judged to be very good or excellent. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. The teaching of English and mathematics is good and this helps to ensure that the pupils make good progress in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy.
21. The quality of teaching in the foundation stage is good and this reflects a similar picture to the

last inspection. However, there has been a good improvement in the use of baseline assessment information to plan appropriate work for the children. The teachers set challenging and interesting tasks, which are well linked to the Early Learning Goals. The staff work well as a team and successfully integrate the children into the welcoming atmosphere of the nursery and reception classrooms. The staff clearly understand the needs of young children. They have high expectations of the quality of work and behaviour. All members of the team place a strong emphasis in the use of good quality language. They encourage the children to work independently and to make choices in their work.

22. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is good and builds successfully on the children's achievements in the foundation stage. The teachers' planning is well structured and lessons have clear learning objectives. The planning takes account of the range of ability of the pupils in each class. The Literacy and Numeracy Hours are taught effectively. In all classes, the teachers and classroom assistants work effectively together. Support staff are involved in the planning and provide good support for individuals and small groups of pupils. For example in an art lesson in Year 1, support staff help the pupils to understand the idea of weaving in group work; in other lessons they guide pupils individually when working on the computer. Throughout the infant classes, the teachers make skilful use of questioning to challenge the pupils' level of thinking and have high expectations of the pupils' achievement. They ensure that the pupils present their work as well as possible. The quality of the display of the pupils' work reflects the value that is given to it. Praise and ongoing assessment are used very effectively to motivate the pupils and to raise their achievement. In almost all of the lessons the pace of learning is good.
23. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is good as it builds successfully on the pupils' earlier achievements and enables them to make rapid progress in the core subjects. The teachers manage the ability setting arrangements for English and mathematics lessons well. There is clear evidence of well-structured planning that enables the system to work smoothly. However, in a few lessons, particularly in the afternoon, lessons are too long and the time is not used effectively. Within each literacy and numeracy lesson, the pupils are further grouped according to ability and this helps the pupils to reach the learning targets that have been set for them. For example, in a successful literacy lesson in the lower juniors, the lower attaining pupils make good progress in identifying compound words whilst the higher attainers explore the complexities of the "ear" sound. The emphasis that all teachers give to the pupils' personal and social development is a strength; it raises the pupils' confidence and self-esteem and nurtures a very positive attitude towards learning. The teachers integrate the use of computers into their lessons. The pupils word process their work, explore pattern in art and research information using the Internet. The quality of teaching of information and communication technology is at least satisfactory and often good throughout the school.
24. Throughout the school the teachers provide good role models for their pupils. The behaviour of the pupils is managed very well. The teachers provide constructive oral feedback and their marking is of good quality. In the best examples the teachers indicate clearly what the pupils need to do to improve. The most successful teaching occurs when teachers assess effectively what the pupils have understood and then give them appropriate work to follow on. Homework is used satisfactorily to support learning, although a number of pupils are reluctant to follow up their studies outside the school day.
25. The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Planning for their needs is taken carefully. Their specific needs are assessed analytically and programmes of work are planned accordingly to meet them. This is undertaken regularly and systematically to ensure that these pupils make the maximum progress of which they are capable. As far as it is possible, pupils with special educational needs are taught within their classes, with support from staff specifically designated for the purpose. A particular strength of these arrangements is the close liaison and planning between all staff that takes place, on a weekly basis. The very good management of these pupils contributes to their good progress. It is firm, encouraging but, nevertheless, demanding. The pupils are valued as individuals by all the staff. Self-esteem is built through the carefully planned activities and the deliberate way that the staff plan strategies towards this end. The quality of teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is good.

The pupils are successfully integrated and effectively supported.

26. The teaching of the pupils in the Key Stage 1 Assessment Unit is very good as specific tasks are set to meet their needs. The staff introduce appropriate degrees of challenge for the pupils and this results in good and often very good progress in all areas of learning. These pupils are very well integrated through the welcoming environment that the school and staff provide. This enhances the pupils' confidence when contributing to class discussions and supports their involvement in the curriculum. A very good example was observed during the inspection when the pupils from the unit joined the music lessons of two classes. They participated fully in the singing activities. In a physical education lesson, the pupils joined in with all activities and made very good progress.

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

27. Overall, the curriculum is good. It offers a broad range of learning opportunities and the abilities of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are fully met. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught and work in religious education follows the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Some subjects do not have an appropriate time allocation, which causes the curriculum to be unbalanced. The school has sensibly increased the teaching time for English and mathematics in order to raise standards in these areas but there are often overly long mathematics lessons, which has the effect that many pupils find difficulty in sustaining their concentration and interest. Information and communication technology and religious education lessons are often too brief and this adversely affects the coverage of subjects and what can be achieved in the time allowed. This needs to be re-evaluated in order to restore the balance of the curriculum.
28. The curriculum is enriched by a comprehensive range of visits and visitors to the school, such as musical quartets, theatre groups, artists in residence and church links, and the Year 6 pupils benefit from a week long residential visit to Anglesey. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to engage in problem solving activities and open-ended investigative work.
29. There is often some loss of teaching time, for example for subjects that follow physical education due to changing time and before lunch in Key Stage 1 when children are getting ready for dinner. Curriculum time is below that recommended as a minimum requirement for Key Stage 2 and this needs to be addressed in order to ensure that all National Curriculum subjects have an adequate amount of teaching time available. Not all statutory requirements are met because a daily act of collective worship is not provided.
30. The curriculum for under fives is good and arrangements are in progress to incorporate the present curriculum with the new foundation stage. There are many opportunities for good quality talk, enquiry and play, which develops and encourages a positive attitude to learning.
31. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is good. This is delivered through in-class support, withdrawal groups or within the Assessment Unit. Appropriate procedures are in place to identify pupils at an early stage and Individual Education Plans are drawn up to address their needs. In the best practice, objectives are broken down into smaller achievable steps so that progress can be carefully monitored. Teachers and ancillary staff support these pupils effectively within the classroom. The Assessment Unit is a strength of the school and practice here will inform future development in this area. Subjects are taught in mixed ability groups throughout the school except English and mathematics, which are taught in ability sets based on prior attainment. These arrangements enable the pupils to make good progress. There are no barriers to these pupils' full access to their learning opportunities. They are encouraged and participate in extra-curricular activities, such as the choir and sporting activities. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been appropriately modified to meet their specific needs successfully. Targets are set on the basis of pupils' achievements.

32. The provision for extra-curricular activities is very good. There is a range of clubs and activities, which the school has organised and co-ordinated for all ages to attend. These are varied and range from football and netball to chess, recorder and choir. The school also enlists support from outside agencies, who provide breakfast clubs, after school care, homework clubs and construction clubs. Volunteers, teachers and members of the community support these activities and they are justly popular; for example, Chester City football team provides coaching sessions for interested youngsters. The contribution the community makes to the school is very good, with a range of good quality links from which all pupils benefit. The strong links with parents and the local community are a real strength of the school.
33. Information and communication technology is used well to support learning in other subjects but is not taught as a discrete subject throughout the school. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully introduced. There is good emphasis given to the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects such as science and information and communication technology. The curriculum overall provides a language-rich environment.
34. Personal, social and health education is satisfactorily represented in the curriculum; however, there are few planned opportunities within the curriculum for pupils to develop initiative and responsibility. Some of the older pupils help in assembly and play with the younger members of the school during lunchtime. A healthy eating initiative has been introduced recently. There is a sex education policy and drug awareness scheme in operation and the school nurse is actively involved in the delivery of both of these. Theatre groups have been involved in communicating drug awareness messages to the pupils in Key Stage 2.
35. The curriculum committee of the governing body meets termly and members of staff regularly keep them informed of curricular changes and plans. The school ensures that there is equality of access and opportunity for all pupils.
36. Curriculum planning has developed well since the last inspection and is now thorough and consistent in both key stages. The teachers' planning contains clear focused learning objectives that are linked to National Curriculum levels to assist learning and ensure that pupils make the progress of which they are capable. Medium-term plans are carefully transposed into weekly and daily plans that identify what pupils are expected to learn and how this is going to be achieved. National schemes of work have been largely adopted for all subjects. There is a range of policy documents that give guidance to members of staff, which are reviewed as part of the school's programme of development.
37. The provision for personal and spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good overall. Spiritual awareness is satisfactorily developed through religious education lessons, circle time and in some assemblies. Acts of worship develop the theme of the week, which often has a moral or social theme. Assemblies in both key stages often lack atmosphere and opportunities to develop reflection and spiritual awareness. Few pupils are actively involved in leading collective worship and there is little use of artefacts that would enhance this provision. In some classes, pupils are given time to reflect and consider why we are here and our place in the world. The pupils gain an insight into the beliefs and values of others in religious education and occasionally in English and history lessons.
38. Provision for moral development is good. The pupils know the difference between right and wrong. Throughout the school the pupils are aware of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and the school fosters values of honesty, fairness and truth. Staff take time to discuss on an individual basis how pupils may cope with emotional problems and they are given a good level of support.
39. Provision for social development is very good. Throughout the school pupils are given opportunities to collaborate and they co-operate well with one another in lessons. All the staff act as good role models and regularly remind pupils of their expectations. Rewards are given for good behaviour and this is celebrated at every opportunity, culminating in an awards assembly each Friday. Tokens are given out to pupils who fulfil expectations. The behaviour policy is effective and the



majority of pupils show good self-control. Self-esteem is sensitively nurtured throughout the school. Opportunities are often missed, however, for pupils to develop individual responsibility and show initiative in the school day.

40. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils study Christianity and comparative religions such as Hinduism, Islam and Judaism. The art curriculum provides the opportunity to study artists such as Degas and Monet and within the school community there is a range of music from other lands which the children listen to and appreciate. Local Cheshire traditions are recognised and celebrated. There are limited opportunities for pupils to gain an insight into multicultural awareness in readiness for life in contemporary Britain.

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

41. The school provides a very caring environment for its pupils so that they feel happy and secure. Procedures for child protection are very good and all the staff are aware of their responsibilities. Teachers know individual pupils very well and make good provision for all their needs, including those with special educational needs. Health and Safety procedures are sound and first aid is always available from well-trained staff, who attend to accidents and medical matters promptly and with great care.
42. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good. Certificates and stickers are awarded for kindness, politeness and being helpful, as well as for progress and effort. These were given out appropriately and to good effect during the inspection. Incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with promptly. The parents who attended the meeting for parents prior to the inspection, or replied to the questionnaire, confirm that the behaviour policy works very well.
43. The school makes very good provision for monitoring attendance. The Educational Welfare Officer scrutinises attendance regularly and monitors any pupil whose record causes concern. She offers appropriate support to the family. The headteacher sends prompt letters to the parents of pupils with unauthorised absence to encourage better attendance and certificates are awarded when improvement occurs.
44. The pupils' personal development is supported well and monitored carefully. For example, support comes from the whole community through regular visits to the school by the community police so that the pupils understand their role. During the inspection two police officers presented a story at assembly about saying "no" to friends who wanted to do wrong, such as breaking windows. This was received well and made an impression on the pupils. There are good transition procedures from the nursery to the main school and very good arrangements for progression to secondary education. There is constant communication with the local high school to which most pupils transfer. The pupils become familiar with the teachers and the environment of their new school by making several visits during Year 6. Monitoring of pupils' personal development is mainly informal but the teachers know the pupils very well and provide opportunities for them to learn for themselves whenever it is appropriate.
45. The school carefully monitors and assesses the progress of pupils with special educational needs and programmes are planned on the basis of information gathered from assessments. Parents are regularly and fully informed of their children's progress and are invited to consult the staff and to review progress. Pupils are moved up or down the Code of Practice Register as required. This is always undertaken in consultation with all adults who are involved with these pupils and with their parents. The strength of these arrangements is the way that the school involves the pupils in these assessments. All staff treat the pupils as independent learners.

46. Arrangements to monitor academic progress and support pupil progress are good in English and mathematics but are not well developed yet in subjects such as science, information and communication technology, religious education, geography and history. The children are assessed on entry to the school and all aspects of their development are monitored carefully. Throughout the school the pupils' progress, particularly in English and mathematics, is monitored carefully. Their personal development is also monitored but more informal methods of recording are in use.
47. The school has drawn up an effective assessment record which monitors an individual's progress through the school and this information is passed on from one teacher to the next and then on to the secondary school. Procedures for assessing English and mathematics are well established and are developing in other subjects but there is inconsistent practice throughout the school. Results of national tests are very thoroughly analysed in English and mathematics by the co-ordinators, which enables the teachers to adjust their teaching plans and set realistic targets for pupils. There are good quality portfolios in subjects compiled to provide standards against which teachers can assess the pupils' work. Evaluations from lessons are used in English and mathematics to guide future planning.
48. The setting of pupils in English and mathematics is effective and this is having the effect of contributing to the raising of standards. The pupils' involvement in assessing their own work is in the very early stages of development. There are clear strategies and procedures for placing pupils on the register of special educational needs. Class teachers identify pupils appropriately through screening tests and these pupils are well cared for. The teachers know their pupils well and spend a great deal of time ensuring that their welfare is of high priority. Good behaviour is monitored and actively promoted by all staff. The pupils are given guidance and any incidents of bullying are dealt with promptly and effectively.

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

49. The parents' views of the school are that it is very good. Those parents who attended the parents' meeting and who were spoken to during the inspection praised the school highly and thought it was much improved since the previous inspection. All parents who replied to the questionnaire agreed that the teaching is good and the school expects all children every child to work well and give of their best. Almost all of the parents replying to the questionnaire agreed that the school is well led and managed and is helping their children to become mature and responsible. The other questions were also answered very positively.
50. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is good. Parents say the school is welcoming and that the teachers are approachable. Eighty-five per cent of parents have signed the home/school contract and some parents help their children at home nearly every day and fill in the dialogue books. The school holds three parents' meetings a year when parents can speak with the teachers about their child's progress. Nearly all parents attend the meeting after they have received their child's annual report. Meetings to inform parents about the literacy and numeracy schemes are not so well attended. The school operates an 'open door' policy where parents can come in and share their concerns with teachers every day. This enables problems to be dealt with quickly and before they become too serious.
51. The impact of parents' involvement in the work of the school is satisfactory. The school provides many good opportunities for the parents' education. Fifteen parents attended the healthy eating course, which was offered in conjunction with the local university college and was much appreciated by those involved. The family literacy group is run by a teacher of reception children, released from her class teaching one day a week for twelve weeks. Up to twelve parents with their children attend this course and develop an understanding of how children learn to read. They design games and art projects for the children and receive a certificate at the end of the course. This is a valuable opportunity for parents to gain more confidence to help their children at home and is well worth the effort put in by both the teachers and the parents. However, only a small proportion of parents participate in these excellent projects. The school is reaching out to as

many parents as they can and is building bridges to encourage parents to play a greater part in their children's education. At present there is reluctance on the part of some parents and a confidence gap for parents to become more closely involved.

52. The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory overall. The prospectus and annual governors' report to the parents contain all the required information and give an accurate picture of the school. Regular newsletters keep parents well informed about school events and staff changes but there is less specific information about the curriculum and what pupils are about to study. The annual reports to parents about pupils' progress do not contain all the information required. Although the reports on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science contain details of individual progress and what pupils can do, there are no targets set and few pointers given for where future effort is needed. Reporting on personal development contains individual information about each pupil, but few detailed achievements are highlighted. In all other subjects a computer generated account of what has been covered is printed. This is not satisfactory, because details of individual pupils' progress and attainments are required. There is no space for the comments of parents or pupils and this would be a useful provision.
53. The contribution of parents to children's learning at school and at home is satisfactory. Every class has one or two parents who regularly come in to help in the classroom. This is very much appreciated and supports pupils in many ways, including hearing them read, using computers and with art projects. Other parents help with supervision on outside visits and with other events. Some of the after school activities are run by parents or friends of the school, such as the choir and the chess club. This is very commendable. A small group of parents contribute to learning resources by making artefacts for story sacks and they are to be complemented on raising money to provide materials. The small PTA committee arranges social and fund raising events and these are well supported by many parents. The school appreciates the support this provides for all pupils to make outside visits to the theatre and other places of educational interest. Most parents help their children at home with reading and homework projects and this contributes to their learning and enhances their education.

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

54. Overall the leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and, with the effective support of key management staff and the governing body, gives a very clear direction for the development and improvement of the school. The very good improvement since the last inspection, which was critical of aspects of management of the school, owes much to his leadership and to the effective support of a hard working and committed team of staff and governors. Together, in a relatively short period of time they have succeeded in creating unity of purpose at Highfield after the recent amalgamation between the two separate infant and junior schools on the same site. A learning environment has been created where hard work and talent are prized and pupils feel secure and valued. The pupils behave well and there are very strong links with parents and with the local community. There is a positive ethos that reflects the school's commitment to improving standards and to equality of opportunity for all pupils.
55. The headteacher has developed a very good balance between his strategic management and the pastoral elements of his role. In each respect he is very well informed. Action taken since the last inspection has been effective in addressing the key issues. The staff with management responsibilities work well together as a team. Subject co-ordinators are effectively managing their subjects in each phase. However, there is no clear management structure to co-ordinate the work of the classes in the foundation stage. Although standards in the core subjects are below average at the age of eleven, there has been a sustained improvement in the pupils' performance. This is reflected in the last two years' National Curriculum test results for pupils at the age of eleven, where there is continuing improvement in English, mathematics and science. The quality of teaching has improved as the teachers now know what they have to teach, when they are to teach it and to what standard. The school has used test data and other assessment information effectively to build detailed profiles of the pupils' performance and to set targets for individuals and

groups of pupils. Furthermore, this information is used to group pupils by ability for their English and mathematics lessons in Key Stage 2. The teachers are clear about the learning objectives for each lesson and the higher-attaining pupils are appropriately challenged.

56. The School Improvement Plan, which covers two years, is now a very useful working document and is based on a thorough audit of the school's current position. The involvement of both staff and governors in formulating the plan ensures that the educational priorities identified provide a shared vision for the school's development. The school has a clear policy that as much money as possible will be spent on the current pupils as far as is prudent and the improvement plan provides the essential structure for financial planning. Targets are set and costed for each year and the school is developing efficient procedures for monitoring and evaluating the extent to which these priorities are achieved. As a result this document provides the school with a secure framework upon which the school can plan effectively and judge value for money.
57. The school is mindful of equal opportunities in its decision making. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed. The special needs co-ordinator works hard to support teachers in their planning and there is good communication between the staff and parents. The Key Stage 1 Assessment Unit is very well managed and provides excellent support for the pupils who attend each day. Those pupils who have English as an additional language are well integrated into the school and their needs are well addressed.
58. The contribution of the governing body to the effective running of the school is good. The governors take their responsibilities seriously and are committed to raising standards in the school. They keep well informed and work hard at their individual and collective roles. They have a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The governors' committees have appropriate terms of reference. There are governors for literacy, numeracy and special educational needs, all of whom are supportive of the work in the school. The governing body regularly reviews curriculum policies and fulfils its statutory obligations.
59. Financial administration is efficient and effective. The school administrator has systems that can readily provide accurate financial information to guide the headteacher and governors in making their spending decisions. The most recent auditor's report for the school contained a series of minor recommendations, which have been acted upon. The school receives specific grants for supporting pupils with special educational needs, for staff training and for improvements to its provision and performance in information and communication technology. These grants have been used effectively for their designated purposes and very careful records of expenditure are kept. The school applies the principles of best value in the use of its resources. It seeks best value for money by comparing prices and evaluating the quality of its purchases and the services that are provided. It considers different strategies of how to fund identified areas efficiently and how to target the money it spends. The governing body take a keen interest in the school's performance and how it is perceived locally.
60. The school is well staffed with teachers who are appropriately qualified and experienced to teach the National Curriculum. They are well deployed, including those with additional responsibilities, to make the best use of their training and experience. The work of the classroom assistants is effective and they make a positive impact on the progress made by the pupils. The school's accommodation is good in size for the number of pupils. Learning resources are satisfactory.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

61. The headteacher, staff and governors should now:
- (a) improve standards in geography by ensuring that the teachers plan more opportunities for the pupils to investigate places and geographical themes through fieldwork and lessons; (paragraphs 11 & 138)
  - (b) Review the length of the school day in Key Stage 2 and reappraise the use of time to ensure an equitable balance for all the subjects of the National Curriculum and to avoid a loss of teaching time; (paragraphs 27 & 29)
  - (c) improve the quality of the reports on the pupils' progress by accurately recording what the pupils can do in all subjects and by setting targets for further improvements; (paragraph 52)
  - (d) take steps to ensure compliance with statutory requirements with regard to the daily act of collective worship. (paragraph 29)

## THE KEY STAGE 1 ASSESSMENT UNIT

62. The Assessment Unit for pupils with special educational needs is outstanding. Parents who completed the questionnaire are justly very pleased with the provision the school makes for their children. These pupils make good, and often very good progress through the careful assessment of their needs. These are undertaken as soon as these pupils are admitted, in collaboration with other agencies, as necessary. The information from these assessments is carefully recorded and used to plan the next steps of pupils' learning. Pupils' attainment is commensurate with their abilities. Information about these pupils is shared with the learning support staff and with specialists, such as the educational psychologist, or the speech therapist.
63. The teaching of these pupils is very good through the use of appropriate and specific tasks to meet their needs. The staff introduce appropriate degrees of challenge for the pupils and this results in good, and often very good, progress in all areas of learning. These pupils are very well integrated through the welcoming environment that the school and staff provide. This factor assists the pupils to feel confident to contribute to the class discussions and to be involved in the curriculum. A very good example was observed during the inspection when the pupils from the unit joined the music lessons of two classes. They participated fully in the singing activities throughout the session. In a physical education lesson, the pupils joined in with all activities and made very good progress in the lesson.
64. Curriculum opportunities for pupils with special educational needs are excellent. Modifications are made, if necessary, but these pupils have full access to the entire range of learning opportunities. An outstanding feature of these arrangements is the way that the teacher in charge of the unit looks for ways to increase pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Towards this end, the school received a grant from the Chester City Council, which was effectively used by the school to develop a combined art and geography project. The pupils were involved in drawing buildings within the area of Chester. The Lord Mayor picked a design, which was subsequently made into banners, to be displayed in Chester Cathedral. Attendance at the ceremony to mark the occasion, in conjunction with the project named *'Two thousand years of buildings'*, gave these pupils a clear message that their work was equally valued, because of the high standard they achieved. There is further photographic evidence of pupils' achievements through the excellent provision that the school makes for them. These include participation in the mid-summer Watch Parade in Chester. The pupils made lanterns with an artist-in-residence, for the Christmas lantern parade. There are outstanding displays around the classroom, showing the very good work undertaken by these pupils. The full range of curricular opportunities is very well represented.
65. Assessments are carefully gathered and maintained by the staff. The performance of pupils with

special educational needs is monitored, including personal development and attendance. A strength of the school is the warm welcome these pupils and their parents receive. This helps to build their confidence and assists them to learn and to make good progress. Assessment information is gathered and shared between all parties. The teacher in charge of the unit is highly regarded by the staff in the school and in the Local Education Authority. He is a great asset to the school.

66. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are regularly and frequently informed about their children's progress. An open-door policy is another positive factor in the care for these pupils. Individual Education Plans are very good. These show targets for pupils' learning. They are broken down into small achievable steps, monitored carefully, and when the pupils have reached them, new ones are set for the next stage of their learning. Through these arrangements and through the imaginative and demanding approaches to teaching, the pupils make the maximum progress of which they are capable.
67. The leadership and management of pupils with special educational needs are excellent. The headteacher and the teacher in charge are pivotal in these arrangements. The headteacher has an overview of these pupils' progress and discusses all concerns with parents, staff and the pupils themselves. Resources are carefully chosen to ensure that they are suited to the needs of these pupils. Specific funds allocated to the unit are appropriately spent in respect of staffing. In all aspects of provision, the unit is an outstanding feature of the school.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	76
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
3	22	43	32	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)	26	305
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	122

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	11	84

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	25
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.6
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.9
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	22	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	15	19
	Girls	20	22	23
	Total	32	37	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	68 (71)	79 (78)	89 (80)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	17	17
	Girls	22	22	23
	Total	33	39	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	70 (75)	83 (76)	85 (91)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	21	22

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	11	15
	Girls	19	17	19
	Total	33	28	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (58)	65 (60)	79 (60)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	12	13
	Girls	18	16	17
	Total	31	28	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	72 (31)	65 (46)	70 (48)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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



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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	303
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	2	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	25

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

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	137.5

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	51

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	25

Number of pupils per FTE adult	26
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	678510
Total expenditure	693184
Expenditure per pupil	1844
Balance brought forward from previous year	41815
Balance carried forward to next year	27141

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	357
Number of questionnaires returned	169

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	27	2	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	69	27	2	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	59	33	5	3	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	49	39	10	0	3
The teaching is good.	70	29	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	51	38	9	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	77	22	1	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	75	25	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	59	35	5	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	71	27	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	67	32	0	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	52	35	5	1	7

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

68. The good provision for children in the foundation stage reported at the time of the last inspection has been maintained and in some cases improved. There is now good liaison between the staff in the nursery and the reception classes, which combines both informality, incorporating good relationships, and also an appropriate professional element in terms of assessment and continuity. All classes incorporate the Early Learning Goals into the curriculum for the foundation stage. The 'Stepping Stones' from the curriculum guidance for the foundation stage produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) are now being used effectively to meet the children's learning needs. Assessment and record-keeping systems have been improved and there are now well-established procedures designed to check the progression and continuity of work for children throughout the foundation stage. The staff in the reception classes effectively build on the firm foundations established in the nursery. A detailed system of assessment on entry is used to guide planning in the nursery. In the reception classes, information derived from baseline assessment, which is completed over the first half term, and teachers' observations are used to plan work for pupils of a wide range of abilities.
69. Nearly all the children enter the nursery class with immature skills in the Early Learning Goals. The range of activities planned by the staff throughout the foundation stage is effective and most children make good progress, although by the time they leave the reception classes they are some way short of reaching the Early Learning Goals in communications, language and literacy, and mathematics. In knowledge and understanding of the world, the exceedingly rich and relevant variety of activities results in children attaining satisfactory levels during the activities but the lower than average standards in speaking and writing have a detrimental affect on standards. In all other areas of learning children achieve the goals expected.
70. The leadership and management of the school has effectively included the provision for the foundation stage on the School Development Plan. Although the existing scheme of work is good in the enriching range of activities, it has not yet been completed as a formal written document. Issues concerning the rationalisation of the space available for children in the foundation stage have not been fully explored in terms of shared use of the secure external area. The headteacher and staff are aware of the fact that at this stage all children do not have enough opportunities for outdoor play, and the curriculum is not as easily accessible to those who choose outdoor activities as to those who choose to stay indoors. Although there is a wide range of wheeled equipment in the Foundation Stage, this is only accessible to children in the nursery. The organisation of the daily routines and the fact that the reception classes are not adjacent to the nursery classes means that this area is not effectively used.
71. Although there is good teamwork between all staff in the Foundation Stage, there is no overall co-ordination for the foundation stage. The school acknowledges the need for the three classes to work in closer physical proximity, which would result in more effective use of the available resources and accommodation.
72. The children in the nursery attend part-time for either a morning or afternoon session before transferring to one of the reception classes to start full-time attendance at the beginning of the academic year in which they become five. Most children in the reception classes have attended the school's nursery. The teaching provision throughout the foundation stage is good and the educational needs of children in the reception and pupils in Year 1 are fully met.
73. Children with special educational needs make good progress throughout the key stage due to the early identification of special educational needs, especially after the baseline assessment tests, and conversations with parents. The provision for children with English as an additional language and higher-attaining children is also good and is reflected in good progress throughout the foundation stage.

74. The quality of teaching is good. During the inspection week it was good overall, very good in some lessons and never less than satisfactory. Teachers and nursery nurses work effectively as a team to provide a rich and relevant range of activities, which results in children making good progress and developing good attitudes to their learning. Lessons are planned well and use is made of a wide range of resources. Relationships are good and all adults provide good role models to the children in their care. They have high expectations of children's work and behaviour and this leads to good progress and very pleasant working atmospheres in all classrooms.
75. Space in the classrooms is well used and children are confident as they move from one area to another. A great deal of time and care is invested in making each classroom a welcoming, caring and stimulating learning area. All children use the hall for gymnastics and in the large majority of the lessons effective use is made of the accommodation and resources. Insufficient use is made of the secure area in terms of extending the learning opportunities. During the inspection week, opportunities were missed for extending some of the learning activities to this area. The headteacher and staff of the foundation stage have acknowledged the need to create a more unified department and ensure that the recently developed foundation stage curriculum is completed.
76. The induction processes to both the nursery and reception are well managed and supported by a progressive range of visits during the term before children begin their nursery education and good opportunities are made for children in the nursery to work with the reception classes. These arrangements help children to settle into school well. The teacher and the nursery nurse in the reception establish very good relationships with parents and the beginning of the school day is used effectively for the smooth development from home to school, with time for parents to share any information and concerns with the staff. Although parents are involved in their children's learning, there is insufficient detailed information given about the topics to be studied the following half-term as this relies on the school newsletters which are not regularly sent out. The recently purchased assessment system has contributed to a more cohesive assessment procedure throughout the foundation stage and this is supplemented by baseline assessment and ongoing assessments of children's attainment.

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

77. The children attain the expected goals by the time they leave the reception class and this reflects very good progress compared with the standards when they enter the nursery. This reflects skilful and caring teaching in both the nursery and reception classes. Children enjoy coming to school; they follow routines and join in activities with enthusiasm. The good relationships which are established by all staff inspire children to develop confidence and good relationships. In the nursery, children relate well to adults, answer questions, share their discoveries and take part in group investigations. Throughout the foundation stage children know the daily routines and their teachers' expectations, readily help to tidy their areas after activities and listen attentively. Good adult support enables children to become independent in personal hygiene and dressing skills as they prepare for outside play or for painting activities. In the reception classes, children collaborate well, handle equipment carefully and share resources. A very good example of the children's development in this area was observed during a physical education lesson where children were responsible for moving mats and small pieces of apparatus. The teacher taught them the correct way for lifting and they understood the routines extremely well.
78. All children are well motivated and keen to explore and answer questions, although children in the nursery have fewer opportunities for initiating discussions. Behaviour is very good and on the very few occasions when behaviour does not reach the expected standard adults take time to explain how children's actions may affect others. As children progress through the reception classes they adapt confidently to the brisker pace of lessons and become increasingly independent.

79. Overall, the teaching in this area is good and as a result children make good progress, especially in obeying the rules, sharing equipment and working in groups. Nevertheless, in the nursery there were a few occasions when children were not given sufficient opportunities or time to frame their own questions or respond in an individual and informal way to learning. This was a result of questions that did not encourage detailed personal responses or opinions. In many activities children listen carefully, are learning to work at given tasks, have opportunities in most areas to learn independently and make choices and share their findings informally with partners. There is a good balance between adult-led activities and opportunities for choice. Singing and lessons focused on knowledge and understanding of the world, especially discussion about the differences between old and new teddy bears and the role-play corners in both the nursery and reception classes, encourage sharing and opportunities for children to talk together.
80. In the nursery some opportunities to allow children to think positively about their behaviour in the secure area were missed. For example, when children were reminded of the rule 'no crashing wheeled toys' they were not given the opportunity to consider how they might avoid congestion outside. Additionally, the arrangements for the use of the secure area in terms of alleviating the congestion had not been appropriately considered.
81. One very good contributory factor to children's personal and social development and health education is the very well managed snack break when children choose from a selection of fruit and drink either orange juice or milk. This is an excellent social occasion where children sit at an attractively and hygienically set out table and there are good opportunities to develop language skills.
82. After registration the children have good opportunities to share their weekend and other home activities. The teachers give pleasant greetings to each child and in the nursery there are times for discussion with parents. These systems get the day off to a good start for all children.

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

83. The children make good progress in this area of their learning throughout the foundation stage. Despite this, the majority of children do not reach the expected learning goals before they leave the reception class. In the nursery and reception classes emphasis is placed on good communication through discussion, answering questions, stories, rhymes and songs. In the nursery children dress up in the "Three Bears' House" and use the language which has been taught and words from the story. However, in the nursery children have insufficient opportunities to share books and discuss the pictures. Their listening skills are good and they respond well to questions. However, there are insufficient opportunities for children to extend their speaking skills by talking about matters of interest and relevance. The good opportunities already in place to help children to explore and extend their language skills need to be more frequent.
84. In the nursery most children handle books appropriately, turn pages carefully and recognise the title page and these skills reflect good teaching. As a result of good teaching, many children in the reception classes recognise letter shapes, can hear and say initial sounds and have progressed from tracing over shapes and letter shapes to forming letters which are legible. The higher-attaining children blend sounds into words and recognise an increasing number of words and their writing is both legible and well shaped.
85. In the nursery the development of children's mathematical skills contributes very effectively to their use of structured language. They understand comparative words such as 'larger', 'smaller' and 'medium-sized' and use sentences such as "The large bear has the large chair". Most children in the reception classes have made a start with reading. They are able to recognise key words on sight and many can hear and say initial and final sounds in words. Nearly all children are able to write their names accurately. Very good provision in the role-play areas includes costumes, masks and many visual effects including drapes, spiders and cauldrons; during the inspection children enjoyed this area and incidental conversations reflected good progress throughout the year.

86. There are writing areas in each room and children are encouraged to think of themselves as writers from a very early age. During the week of the inspection when parents and carers brought the children to school, each child had access to a wide range of paper and pens and pencils to write their name before they came into the class. At Christmas some children signed their name on their letters to Father Christmas and others made marks. In the reception classes appropriate emphasis is given to the teaching of literacy skills. Lessons are planned following the Literacy Strategy guidelines; there is good emphasis on key words, phonics and word recognition. The quality of teaching for this area is good and reflects consistent commitment to nurturing children's communication, language and literacy across this key stage.

### **Mathematical Development**

87. Although children make good progress in mathematics, they do not reach the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year. However, this reflects their standards of attainment on entry to the nursery, which are well below age-related expectations. In the nursery, children enthusiastically join in number rhymes and songs which reinforce their knowledge of the order of numbers to five, and sometimes to 10. Through a wide range of practical activities they use vocabulary such as 'small', 'medium', 'large', 'full' and 'empty'. They recognise most colours and lower attaining children use this when comparing the size of dishes for the Three Bears and also matching the size of the bear to the size of the bowl. The analysis of children's work shows that they have many opportunities to learn and reinforce mathematical knowledge by regular opportunities for counting, writing numbers and matching the number to the quantity, and also comparing length, shape and weight.
88. Children's concept of shape is reinforced in the nursery by good teaching which involves them in recognising similarities and differences between shapes and distinguishing the properties of two-dimensional shapes. Work on shape in the reception classes progressed to a wider range of shapes and children knowing the differences between a hexagon and a circle.
89. The quality of discussions of teachers was a strength and children were given time to count, compare and justify their answers. Many children in the reception classes count and use numbers to five and higher-attaining children work in numbers to 10 and above. This shows good progress from the nursery where children know the order of numbers because of singing a range of rhymes, re-telling stories involving numbers and saying the days of the week.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

90. Children enter the nursery with a basic knowledge of the world around them. Good provision and skilled teaching throughout the foundation stage ensure that this is developed and extended through purposeful play activities which are well structured and allow children to experience an enriching range of activities. Children enjoy their activities in this area of learning and make good progress in their early scientific, technological and historical areas of learning. The level of investigation is well developed throughout the foundation stage and children respond well. A very good example was observed in the nursery when a group of children used the computer with good mouse control when they used an art program and this was extended to the reception classes when they dressed a teddy bear.
91. In the nursery, four children, supported by a parent, re-told the story of Goldilocks as they used the mouse to guide the bears entering the kitchen, opening the cupboard and selecting their bowls. Children knew that at the end of each activity they put each object in the 'bin' using the correct click. There were frequent opportunities for children to talk both in answering questions, for example, "What does Goldilocks say when she sits on the large chair?" to more open questions, for example, "Which part of the story have you enjoyed most?" The selection of children's computer art reflected good mouse control, not only in the choice of colour but in the range of pictures and good proportions.
92. In the nursery and reception classes the children use construction kits creatively when building. They have a good sense of how things join together and identify different parts of the buildings.

93. In the nursery class the children compare an old and a new bear using good skills of observation and the questions resulted in some well-considered sentences from the children, such as “The stuffing is coming out of the old bear”. They observed the two bears closely and each child was given the opportunity of comparing one with the other. Daily weather observations result in children understanding the seasons of the year and the associated types of weather. Some children formulate sentences such as “Today it is sunny” or “Today it was frosty early”. However, a significant number used the descriptive word only. The teacher gives these children opportunities to copy phrases and model their answers on hers. Some children, however, found difficulty when formulating not only phrases but also words such as ‘monster’, ‘pushchair’ or ‘scooter’, and even after reminders used sentences such as “I not play” or “O bear” for “Old bear”.

### **Physical development**

94. Children make good progress in their physical development. They make good progress in their manipulative skills as they complete jigsaws and use small tabletop construction toys as well as large construction toys. Children make good progress in physical education, and especially gymnastics, in the reception classes. The majority of children in the nursery move with confidence and control the wheeled toys, negotiate the pillars and show a high level of awareness of space, speed and corners. They move promptly to stand in a line and with rhythm as they sing “The Train Song”. In this lesson, the range of outdoor accommodation is well used in terms of the range of activities. Although the teaching is good, insufficient consideration has been given to alternative and more effective systems of using this space, especially in terms of frequency and purpose. Children progress well throughout the reception stage to gymnastics where they contrast fast and slow movements and balance on ‘points and patches’. They use the gymnastic equipment in the hall very effectively and transfer their well-planned movements from the floor to the apparatus. Particularly good examples include children’s ability to balance on their backs, stretch and show agility and confidence as they move along the apparatus and also move from one set of equipment to another. In this lesson children move apparatus in a very well organised manner and this reflects the very high quality teaching. In another lesson, children show good control and co-ordination as they move in different ways, especially travelling at speed, controlling directions and concentrating hard as they bounce sideways with both feet together. All lessons in the foundation stage include good opportunities for warming-up and cooling-down activities. In the reception classes children show a high level of agility in all movements, stretching and curling, running and moving within a limited area. They understand the importance of warming-up and cooling-down activities at levels well above the expectations of children of this age. In the reception classes, children’s co-ordination in using pencils, paint and modelling materials is developing the high quality started in the nursery class.

### **Creative development**

95. Children make good progress in this area of their development and are well placed to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they leave the reception class. Teaching and learning are good and children enjoy and respond well to the creative activities. One particular strength is the development of children’s drawing and painting and their use of computer art. During the inspection children in the reception class drew realistic pictures of one of the bears. In most cases, the drawing filled the page and the shapes of the head, body and limbs were drawn with accurate proportion and good detail. Children used the structured equipment imaginatively to construct chairs and tables for the bears and designed ‘flying chairs’ and model roundabouts. Discussions with the children showed their detailed knowledge about the story ‘The Old Bear’ and other children in the class used language imaginatively in role-play in ‘The Three Bears’ Cottage’. Children sing a wide range of nursery rhymes and number and rhyming songs enthusiastically and with a good feel for rhythm and accurate pitch. They are given a good range of opportunities to learn a variety of techniques which includes moulding, painting and printing. They use paint, pencils, crayons, fabric and glue to make collages linked to their work in other subjects.

## ENGLISH

96. The national test results for 2000 show that in reading and writing, the pupils' standards at the age of seven were well below average. When compared with similar schools, standards were below average. However, by the age of eleven, although standards in English are below average in the national tests, when compared with similar schools, their results are above average. In addition, standards in English have risen steeply throughout the school and these improvements are being sustained through the good teaching and management of the subject and the effective implementation of the Literacy Hour. Another factor in rising standards is the very effective support that the pupils with special educational needs receive to help them learn basic skills in reading and writing. Furthermore, the pupils have positive attitudes to their learning and behave well in lessons.
97. Evidence from the inspection shows a very good improvement on test results and from the previous inspection. Starting from a very low level of language and literacy on entry, the pupils achieve well by the time they are seven and when they leave the school at eleven. Furthermore, there are now more pupils working at appropriate and higher levels in Years 4 and 5. The school is, therefore, well placed to continue to raise standards in English.
98. The pupils' speaking and listening skills are below average at the age of seven. However, the majority of pupils are able to participate in discussions about stories in their literacy sessions and in lessons in other subjects. They feel confident to express their opinions in the full knowledge that these will be valued by the adults and other pupils in the class. A very good example was observed in one mixed Years 1 and 2 class, when the pupils discussed messages for their Valentine cards and how these should be punctuated. The conclusion of lessons allows the pupils to read their work to the rest of the class and this leads to pupils' growing confidence to express their ideas when speaking to the whole class.
99. By the end of Year 6, standards are still below average, although a significant number of pupils achieve the appropriate levels. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress in developing social speaking skills. For pupils who started school with limited language skills, this is a significant achievement and shows a very good improvement since the previous inspection. The teachers give pupils good opportunities to express opinions and views about books or authors' intentions in the literacy lessons. For example, in a very good lesson in a mixed Years 5 and 6 class, pupils discussed a variety of poems they particularly enjoyed. When their teacher asked them to comment on John Cotton's poem, one pupil suggested that *'The poet does not like the future, so he goes to the past'*. They were effectively helped by their teacher, who asked probing questions, such as *'Do you think that is what the poet was thinking?'* The clarity of the pupils' speech improves as the teachers encourage them to be precise in their answers. This was particularly evident in mathematics lessons, because the development of correct terminology is a planned feature of the subject.
100. Many pupils enter school with a very limited knowledge of books. They take a long time to acquire word building skills and fluency in reading. Although pupils make good, and often very good, progress in reading, their standards are below average at the end of Year 2. While there is now a stronger focus on the teaching of letter sounds, this is not always given sufficient attention. This leads to some lessons not including an activity to introduce or consolidate pupils' knowledge of letter sounds and blends. Consequently, pupils' progress is slower in this element of the subject. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language make good progress because of specific and targeted activities planned for them. The school has a good home-school reading scheme, which is recorded in the 'reading dialogue' book. Parents hear their children read regularly and this increases pupils' reading skills.
101. As they go through the school, the pupils make good, and often very good, progress in reading. Consequently, while standards are just below the national average, nevertheless, there is a significant percentage of pupils who achieve the appropriate and higher levels by the time they are eleven. In response to good teaching, much is achieved by the pupils. A particular strength in



the teaching is the infectious enthusiasm that teachers have for literature. As a result, pupils are inspired not only to read but also to enjoy all that is best in the English language. In guided reading, teachers give due attention to research skills and pupils learn to extract information required. Pupils read with understanding and talk knowledgeably about the characters, the story-line or events in the books they have read. They are beginning to read a wider range of books and most pupils read for pleasure. Their reading is improved through visits to the local libraries in Blacon and in Chester, on a regular basis.

102. The pupils, including those who have special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress in acquiring writing skills in Years 1 and 2. It takes some time before the pupils know enough words to express their ideas in writing and, by the time they are seven, many have not yet reached the national average. The pupils learn to write simple sentences and begin to use capital letters and full stops correctly. The stronger focus on writing in the Literacy Hour is beginning to pay dividends. In Years 1 and 2, for example, the pupils use their developing skills to write about Florence Nightingale. Teachers effectively extend their pupils' writing skills by providing the pupils with challenging tasks, such as *'What does "famous" mean?'* The more able pupils extend these skills by adding definitions such as *'being very good at something'*, or *'people who make discoveries'*. These pupils show their improving writing skills by posing questions on the subject of Florence Nightingale. The pupils' spelling is improving well, through good teaching of these skills and through regular homework. Through regular practice to revise and extend the pupils' knowledge of spelling patterns, their fluency in writing is improved. Handwriting is also developing effectively. Presentation of work is good, with the pupils taking pride in their writing. Throughout the school, the pupils make good use of information and communication technology to support their writing.
103. Although the pupils make good progress, by the time they are eleven, the standards of many pupils are still below the national average. However, writing is the weaker element, because the pupils have limited skills when they start school and therefore have a large deficit to make up. The teachers have detailed writing plans and skills are taught progressively and teachers ensure that the pupils do not learn these skills in isolation. While the development and use of literacy skills are not specifically planned for in other subjects, nevertheless, teachers provide their pupils with numerous opportunities to practise these skills across the full range of the curriculum. However, there are occasions when pupils are given tasks which involve copying from a source. When this happens, the pupils' progress is slower.
104. The higher-attaining pupils write extended pieces of work, which are appropriately arranged into paragraphs with a good range of punctuation marks used correctly. Through the setting arrangements, these pupils are provided with appropriately challenging tasks to meet their specific needs. Since the previous inspection, when this was a key issue for action, the school has fully and successfully addressed it. Those pupils for whom English is an additional language and those with special educational needs make good progress through carefully modified tasks which meet their specific needs. In addition, the teachers make high demands on these pupils. As a result, pupils behave well in their lessons and are eager to learn.
105. The proportion of pupils reaching the appropriate levels is rising steeply through the good opportunities that teachers provide for drafting activities. As a result, pupils learn to plan, revise and to make improvements in the content, style and in structure. Analysis of pupils' work indicates that many pupils are using increasingly imaginative and expressive vocabulary. They write for numerous purposes with a specific audience in mind. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils write letters to their parents, describing vividly the conditions in the mills in the Victorian era. In design and technology, pupils in Years 3 and 4 pupils write clear instructions for making photo-frames. This work shows pupils' understanding of the need to make their language appropriate for the purpose.
106. Pupils' spelling is improving well through the careful attention that their teachers give to the acquisition of writing skills. In addition, pupils in Year 3 are introduced to writing in ink and, as they move through the school, their handwriting is becoming fluent, clear and in joined script. Furthermore, pupils take pride in presenting their work with care. These factors are contributory

to pupils' good progress and form a very good preparation for writing in secondary school.

107. The overall quality of teaching is good. The teachers have responded well to the demands of the National Literacy Strategy. For example, they make good use of shared reading and writing sessions to teach the important skills. The teachers use their knowledge of the subject to explore good literature and their pupils are introduced to a wide range of authors and poets. A particular strength of teaching English is the enthusiasm that the teachers have for the subject. Consequently, the pupils are eager to listen, to learn and to appreciate their own rich heritage.
108. Throughout the school, the teachers organise their lessons well, particularly the management of group activities. They have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve. All teachers use the final part of the lessons well to cement learning in place, to assess pupils' understanding and to praise good achievement. There are very good relationships in all classes. Pupils' efforts and contributions are valued by their teachers and support staff. As a result, there is a very good climate for learning. Pupils understand that they are in school to learn and that their teachers are there to teach them.
109. The teachers mark their pupils' work regularly and help them to make good progress, particularly when they include helpful comments as to how the pupils can improve their writing. They make good use of homework to consolidate and extend learning. Pupils behave well in lessons and they approach their work enthusiastically through the good teaching.
110. The management of English is good and has contributed greatly to the overall improvements in standards. The co-ordinator has monitored most of the literacy lessons. Through careful analyses of results, she has evaluated weaknesses and has taken steps to address matters effectively. Pupils' progress is tracked and assessed so that action can be taken to close the gaps in their learning. While the literacy strategy has been well implemented throughout the school, planning for the use of skills across the curriculum has been incidental rather than specific. Speaking and listening skills are not yet built carefully into the planning, apart from mathematics.
111. Resources for English are satisfactory. Books in the libraries are organised in the Dewey system of classification. The pupils are encouraged to undertake independent research. These opportunities are limited by the fact that there are insufficient number of books for the size of the school. The co-ordinator is looking for ways to alleviate the situation.
112. The learning environment is very good in all areas of the school. Books are invitingly displayed in each classroom, with teachers' notices, such as *'Look, new books from the book fayre!'* to encourage a love of reading. Pupils' work is well displayed and writing abounds around the school. These displays give a clear message to the pupils at Highfield, of the importance of literacy and help them to appreciate that their teachers value their work. These factors contribute well to the pupils' overall progress in English.

## **MATHEMATICS**

113. Although the pupils in Years 2 and 6 attain standards in the National Curriculum tests that are below those expected for pupils of their ages, there has been a significant improvement. The pupils now attain standards that are comparable with similar schools. There has been a steady increase in the proportion of 11-year-olds reaching the standards expected in the national tests and, during the inspection, standards were even higher in the proportion both of pupils achieving Level 4 and of those securely in the higher Level 5. These results show a high level of improvement in comparison to these pupils' results when they were seven years old. By Year 6, the average- and higher-attaining pupils have good number skills. They add, subtract, multiply and divide large numbers; they know their multiplication tables and enjoy the challenge of mental mathematics. The majority of pupils understand place value to numbers over 10,000 and use their knowledge of number patterns and facts when calculating. Pupils calculate fractional parts of quantities and an increasing number understand the equivalence between fractions, decimals and

percentages. Their numeracy skills are extended to calculating the perimeters of regular and, in some cases, irregular shapes and also calculating areas. One excellent example of the achievement of higher-attaining pupils in both Years 5 and 6 is their understanding of co-ordinates in the four quadrants, which necessitates the understanding and use of negative numbers. They also applied this knowledge to translational symmetry. Their knowledge of all other forms of symmetry is very good. Although there are an increasing number of pupils achieving the expected level and the higher level, there are also a substantial number who will not achieve the standards expected of children of this age and this reduces the overall percentage figures during the national tests. However, in comparison with their levels when they began school and also the end of Year 2, progress is good with some very good features.

114. Although pupils' progress is good throughout Key Stage 1, the levels of attainment of seven-year-olds are still below those expected nationally for pupils of this age. The majority of pupils know place value to 100, although few understand numbers over 100. The lower-attaining pupils are working with numbers to 20. Pupils apply their knowledge of number well to measurement and this is reflected in their understanding of centimetres and litres. They accurately tell the time to the hour and half-past, with some pupils understanding quarter-to and quarter-past. Many pupils know the multiplication tables of two, four, five and ten and understand simple fractions. Nearly all pupils classify many two-dimensional and some three-dimensional shapes and accurately identify the corners, edges and faces of three-dimensional shapes.
115. The school has made good improvements since the previous inspection, especially at Key Stage 2, where the upward trend over the past three years is high. In all classes the pupils' ability to use information and communication technology to develop their mathematical skills and understanding is improving. Where appropriate to the activity, computers were used well in the lessons observed. Good examples were in the development of numerical skills and challenging work on reflective symmetry.
116. Throughout the school pupils make good progress in all aspects of the subject. There is a significant improvement in the challenge given to the higher-attaining pupils compared with the findings of the previous report. This results in their making very good progress. The pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language also make good progress because of the support from classroom assistants, the positive inclusion in all classroom activities, the effectiveness of the booster classes and the setting arrangements based on accurate assessments of previous learning.
117. There are many contributory factors to improving standards and good progress in mathematics. One is the improved overall quality of teaching, which, during the inspection, was good. There are strengths in all areas of teaching. Teachers have secure knowledge and understanding, which is reflected in their clear explanations and pupils' improved levels of understanding. The very good teaching has good pace, which maintains pupils' interest, and well planned group work, which is challenging to all. Time is given for revision; the pupils' learning is consolidated and they have opportunities to explain their new learning and ask for clarification if necessary. However, some of the lessons in Key Stage 2 are too long and the pupils' interest wanes.
118. Relationships in lessons are very good. The pupils are very well behaved and have the confidence to answer questions knowing that the teachers are understanding, even if their answers are incorrect. In this way they learn positively from their mistakes as teachers have very good subject knowledge and use this effectively in questioning and reinforcing pupils' learning. Teachers' daily plans are extremely detailed and, where necessary, relate specifically to the different ability groups of pupils, even though they are already grouped by ability. This results in activities which are well matched to pupils' abilities in each group and the setting arrangement for pupils in Key Stage 2 enables teachers to concentrate on a narrower range of ability, therefore giving appropriately challenging work for all pupils. The effective use of numeracy across the curriculum enhances pupils' understanding of the importance of number in everyday life and gives them opportunities to apply and extend their knowledge. Particularly good examples were observed in the displays of history timelines, notation in music, science investigations and the understanding of symmetrical shapes in physical education. Within the mathematics curriculum, pupils' number

skills are effectively used in calculations involving measurements, for example perimeter and area, and classifying angles according to their measurements.

119. Other contributory factors to the quality of the teaching, and therefore the quality of learning, are the very good leadership and management by the co-ordinator and the monitoring of teaching, the very well planned assessment procedures and target setting, which impact upon pupils' learning. The quality of the monitoring is excellent and well-organised and teachers benefit from the guidance they receive. The headteacher, co-ordinator and teachers have an excellent level of commitment to achievement for all, including the progress of higher-attaining pupils, which permeates the mathematical atmosphere of the school. The careful monitoring of pupils' progress through assessments and target setting are leading to the continual raising of standards. The pupils' progress is tracked very carefully, both by the teachers and the co-ordinator, and the resulting information is used well in the teachers' daily planning. The school has successfully introduced and developed the National Numeracy Strategy and sets end-of-key-stage targets that are accurately based on assessments. The teachers are very secure in the process. The language of numeracy has been very well developed and this enriches pupils' understanding and development. The school has developed additional initiatives to improve pupils' skills in numeracy. These include a regular pattern of homework and the involvement of parents and because of this pupils benefit from the whole-school commitment to success in this subject.
120. The school has made a high level of improvement since the last inspection, and during the last three years especially, when considering the low levels of attainment in mathematics on entry to the nursery and Year 1. Standards are rising and this improvement accurately reflects the parents' support for the attainment of their children in this school.

## **SCIENCE**

121. Attainment in science is below national expectations at both key stages. This is reflected in Teacher Assessment at the end of Key Stage 1 and in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2. At the age of eleven, standards are below those attained by pupils in similar schools. However, there has been a significant improvement in pupils' performance, at the end of the key stages, over the last three years. The positive trend in attainment is encouraging, due mainly to a more structured approach to teaching and learning. The pupils' progress, including those with special educational needs, is good overall.
122. At the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils are able to sort a range of objects into man-made and natural materials. They can describe their properties and why they are used for specific purposes, such as in house building. Younger pupils name light sources and list them in order of brightness. Their understanding of electricity is developing well through creating simple circuits and they show awareness of simple forces when describing pushing and pulling. In their experiments to find which materials are waterproof, pupils show that they are beginning to understand when a test or comparison is unfair. They do, however, have difficulty explaining their thoughts and have a weak understanding of principles studied. Younger pupils in Key Stage 2 investigate the sun's effect on shadows and are beginning to understand how this is used to show movement of time on a sundial. Their understanding of the relationship between the sun, earth and moon, and their situation in the universe, is sound. In work on creatures and their habitat, older pupils make simple connections between the types of animal and their environmental conditions but there is no depth of research for further understanding.
123. They have a satisfactory understanding of the function of different parts of the human body and are beginning to appreciate the value of healthy eating and exercise. The pupils are increasing their knowledge of plants and understand the functions of roots, leaves and flowers. They know the conditions needed for healthy growth. Key Stage 2 pupils do not regularly devise and conduct their own experiments and rarely consider the implications or applications of science they study. Opportunities for using the scientific skills of predicting, planning, refining and evaluating are often missed and, as such, are underdeveloped.

124. The pupils show good levels of concentration and their attitudes are good. They listen well to teachers and show interest and enjoyment in the subject, especially when given the opportunity for practical investigations.
125. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. There is a good focus on developing key vocabulary and clear scientific language. For example, this was seen in a lesson on classifying materials in Key Stage 1 when the teacher encouraged the use of appropriate words to describe the properties of each material. The teachers' questions and answer sessions are generally good and this consolidates learning. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and this is used well to promote a purposeful, learning atmosphere. The worksheets used are sometimes too prescriptive and lack challenge for the more able pupils. Teachers' over-direction leads to few opportunities for pupils to show any initiative in their learning. However, the quality of leadership to support the subject is good. The schemes of work and the policy are sound and the level of resources for science is satisfactory.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

126. The pupils achieve well in art and design as a result of the good quality teaching. Their work reaches a standard that is above average at the ages of 7 and 11. The pupils' artwork is used to good effect to enhance the quality of the learning environment. The displays of the pupils' work reflect the value that is placed on their achievements. However, the high standards reported in the last inspection have not been fully maintained as the school has spent an increasing amount of curriculum time on raising standards in literacy and numeracy, especially in upper Key Stage 2.
127. The teachers' planning is clear about what will be learned in each lesson. In a lesson with pupils in Years 5 and 6, for example, the teacher's introduction and useful recap on previous work in a local church focused the pupils' attention effectively on how they needed to use what they had learned in approaching the new work. This enabled the pupils to settle quickly to their still life drawings. A strong feature of this lesson was the way in which the pupils were encouraged to work together, share their ideas and equipment and look at how each other's work could be improved. The pupils use pencils well to produce work of great sensitivity. Their ability to observe closely, express their ideas and evaluate their work steadily improves in each year.
128. The teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and are supported by appropriate advice and guidance from the subject co-ordinator. The pupils' drawing books that have entries from the time they started school provide a very good record of their progress and experiences in art. They show that the pupils learn a broad range of techniques and work confidently in a variety of media. The pupils are confident in their use of colour and learn to use perspective to add depth to their work. In lower Key Stage 2, the pupils use pastels to great effect when working in the style of Degas. Their images of dancers capture their movement with a lightness of touch. Older pupils use card, string and straws to create intricate abstract patterns on the theme of leaves.

129. In Key Stage 1, the pupils learn the techniques of weaving and work with a variety of materials. With careful guidance from their teachers they develop an understanding of pattern. The pupils' artwork strongly supports their understanding of symmetry and the teachers ensure that information and communication technology is used to support the pupils' understanding of design and pattern. This is translated into three-dimensional work when they consider the style of Clarice Cliffe and create simple designs and fashion clay to make thumb pots. The pupils in the Assessment Unit explore contrast when using Tudor buildings as their theme for abstract designs in black and white. This work is a further example of how well art is linked to the pupils' learning in other subjects. The quality of learning is good throughout the school.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

130. As all of the classes were being taught art this half term, it was not possible to see any design and technology lessons. However, by looking at finished products and displays and talking to pupils and teachers as well as the co-ordinator, it is clear that standards are average for both seven- and 11-year-old pupils and that they make good progress throughout the school.
131. This reflects a significant improvement since the previous inspection in terms of pupils' attainment and progress, the quality of teaching, the implementation of a well-planned curriculum and good leadership and management.
132. During Year 2, the pupils design and make structures using winding mechanisms. This is a good development from Year 1 where they designed and made sliding mechanisms to produce moving pictures using attractive marble-effect backgrounds and well-designed creatures which slide. The food technology focus on designing posters which feature healthy eating and designing and making playgrounds show good design features: either drawings or annotated drawings, well made products and good opportunities to compare their final products with their original designs.
133. Progress throughout the school is good, especially in the development of food technology, detailed evaluations and also disassembly. A good example of this was pupils' thorough investigations when they considered a wide range of different types of bread and the detailed written evaluations show high levels of pupils' awareness of the role of the consumer. Information and control technology is well integrated into the curriculum, and pupils in Key Stage 2 use sensors when operating traffic lights and also use remote controlled cars.
134. By the time they are 11 pupils have used a wide range of materials including textiles, wood and food, and information and control technology.
135. Good progress in Key Stage 2 is reflected in a Year 3 display of personalised picture frames which involved careful measurement and cutting and neat finishing. They showed a high level of creativity and ingenuity. Older pupils learn how to construct Tudor houses with a detailed awareness of strength, structures and design. The finished products on display were of a high quality and the work is well matched to pupils' ages and abilities as they move through the school.
136. The quality and range of work reflects standards of teaching that are at least good in terms of matching the work to the pupils' abilities, high demands on standards of work and good progression, especially in the design, making, evaluation and refining processes. It also reflects the teachers' good knowledge and understanding.
137. Contributory factors to the improvement include the school's commitment to developing a good curriculum and the appointment of an enthusiastic and committed co-ordinator. The policy and scheme of work have been recently developed to meet the requirements of Curriculum 2000 and are based on recently developed national guidelines. The school successfully links design and technology with other subjects, especially numeracy, science, literacy and art, and this adds to pupils' interest and enjoyment. The satisfactory range of resources are well looked after and

readily accessible. The curriculum is enhanced by an extra-curricular activity taken by a grandparent and the focus this half-term has been on strengthening structures, predicting and testing, and the importance of the triangular shape in building strong structures. The co-ordinator gives useful advice to colleagues and is readily available for guidance.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

138. There was no opportunity to observe geography being taught during the inspection. However, discussions with pupils and scrutiny of their work show that the standards are below national expectations at the end of both key stages.
139. In Key Stage 1, the pupils show an awareness of localities beyond their own when talking about holidays, families and food from other countries. Through their work on the journey to school and research into an island home, they see differences and similarities in habitats, develop simple mapping skills and learn directional terms. In Key Stage 2, the pupils learn about their locality by enquiring about the way people spend their leisure time and by producing a simple promotional leaflet on the city of Chester. They learn about the wider community by discussing national and world news.
140. However, the pupils' knowledge of their own area and environment is very patchy and their geographical vocabulary is not well developed. The pupils are inexperienced in the use of maps and have difficulty identifying and naming major features on a map of the United Kingdom or the world. Their ability to organise geographical information is not being developed systematically and their grasp of geographic concepts is hindered through lack of enquiry and practical fieldwork.
141. The work seen lacks progression and continuity in the development of geographical skills and knowledge. Opportunities for pupils to compare and contrast other areas or countries are inconsistent and underdeveloped.

## **HISTORY**

142. The pupils throughout the school make good progress and reach the standards expected at the end of both key stages. The pupils with special educational needs also make good progress. These findings are similar to those of the last inspection.
143. In Key Stage 1, pupils are developing a sense of chronology and are beginning to develop an understanding of the past by discussing and comparing items used long ago with those of today. Through their study of famous people, pupils perceive why people in the past acted as they did and show an understanding of the different events and personalities of the period. They recognise the changes, for example, in nursing, from the days of Florence Nightingale to that of today.
144. In Key Stage 2, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of aspects of life in the periods studied. They know about the lives of children in Victorian times and show empathy with them, recognising the great differences with their own lives. They have a basic knowledge of Henry V111 and his wives and their work on Sir Francis Drake's explorations shows a good understanding of the difficulties and hardships suffered by the sailors of that time. The good use of timelines in classrooms supports the development of pupils' awareness and understanding of chronology. Teachers plan tasks that make useful and valuable links with history in their art and design and technology lessons. However, the pupils' enquiry and research skills are not fully developed and they communicate their findings in a limited form.

145. Pupils in both key stages have a positive attitude towards their work and enjoy the subject. This is more apparent when firsthand opportunities are provided and the tasks are appropriate to the pupils' abilities. Pupils collaborate well and listen to each other's comments or questions in discussions.
146. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory at both key stages, with examples of very good teaching at Key Stage 1 and good teaching in the juniors. In these lessons teachers develop pupils' knowledge, skills and interest by providing research opportunities and by presenting relevant artefacts. Teachers' knowledge is good and they have an ability to question and explain things well. Some of the work, however, does not challenge the more able pupils and opportunities to encourage pupils to become independent learners are missed.
147. The planned curriculum, which fully meets statutory requirements, ensures coverage of the Programmes of Study. The use of visits to places of interest and of visitors to enrich the curriculum is inconsistent and the lack of suitable artefacts is a shortcoming in the development of pupils' knowledge, enquiry skills and interest.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

148. At the end of both key stages, standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are in line with national expectations and the pupils make satisfactory progress. At the time of the last inspection resources were highlighted as inadequate; this has since been rectified by the installation of a network in each building and now each class has access to its own computer. Standards have improved in Key Stage 2 and there has been good improvement since the last inspection.
149. At the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils use a mouse to access simple programs and can click on an item and drag it to where they want it to go. They use programs that support other areas of the curriculum, such as mathematics; for example, the pupils could use a program to practise recognition of digital time and analogue time. Key Stage 1 pupils have used computers to handle data and they can record information and use pictograms to graph their findings with help. Reception children use graphics programs to draw items inside a house using a mouse with increasing control. Year 1 use word processing programs to write class rules and print them using large fonts. The majority of pupils are able to complete short pieces of writing on a computer. Pupils in the Assessment Unit know how to use the space bar, capitals lock and return key.
150. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils can send e-mails, explore web sites on the Internet and use CD-ROM's for research into topics such as the Romans and Victorians, maintaining cross-curricular links. They regularly use a wide range of programs to practise mathematical skills and can access information using an ICT dictionary. Year 3 pupils have used Roamer, a floor turtle, and can program simple instructions. There is also evidence that pupils have used sensor programs to monitor temperature in science experiments. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils are able to write stories and reports using word processing packages and they can use a control program in mathematics, typing in commands to draw a geometric shape. They can use icons and menus to change style, text and fonts. Pupils learn how computers provide a means of communicating, accessing and presenting information and the range of software available suitably challenges them.
151. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Subject knowledge is generally sound and explanations and instructions are clear, enabling pupils to make satisfactory progress. Staff have taken on new skills and further training is planned for the near future. Very good use is made of the support staff and there is a large range of learning resources that support the curriculum. Literacy and numeracy skills are being well developed in question and answer sessions and in the development of computer language.
152. Pupils enjoy using computers and do so with care. However, due to only having one computer per



class, pupils have to wait their turn to access information and practise their skills. By having computers in the classroom pupils use them as a tool to support their learning and they are used well in a range of subjects such as science and mathematics. However little time is given to the learning of skills. In Year 1, time is used effectively to teach pupils how to use particular programs. This is good practice and needs to be built upon. Pupils generally work well together in pairs or small groups, taking turns. In some classes more able pupils are effectively used to help others as peer tutors.

153. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and those with special educational needs and more able pupils have equal opportunities to succeed. The co-ordinator leads the subject well and has managed innovations such as the installation of the network and purchase of new computers. Monitoring of teaching of the subject is planned in the near future and work from all areas of the school has been collated into a useful portfolio. Under this informed leadership the subject is well placed to develop well in the future.
154. Assessment in information and communication technology is in the early stages of development. Records are kept of those pupils who have used particular programs and this needs developing further to show achievement of skills. The school uses the national scheme of work as a basis for planning; however, the subject is not consistently timetabled in both key stages. Sufficient time needs allocating to this core subject in order to ensure that skills are systematically taught and built upon.

## **MUSIC**

155. At the ages of seven and eleven, the pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations. Since the previous inspection, the school has maintained its standards. This is due to the well considered scheme of work, which enables the pupils to gain skills of composing, performing and appreciating music.
156. Due to the organisation of the curriculum, no music lessons were observed in Key Stage 2. In assembly, however, pupils sing tunefully, with clear diction and manage to sustain the pitch successfully. Records indicate that pupils explore patterns in rhythms and in pulse in Years 5 and 6. They compose their own rhythmic music and record their compositions using their own notations.
157. In Years 1 and 2, the pupils respond well to the good quality teaching and learn to compose and perform music. There are taped recordings of the pupils composing marches for different animals following their listening and appreciation of Sain-Saëns' Carnival. In the reception class, the children make little shakers and use these to accompany their sea shanties. The school is very conscious of the needs of all their pupils and they ensure that they are fully included in all aspects of the music curriculum. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, participate fully in all musical activities. They enjoy these and they make good progress. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 sing tunefully from memory and perform actions in time to the music.
158. The music provision is effectively enriched through a very well-organised school choir. Time is generously given by the husband of the music teacher. He is particularly talented and his enthusiasm for singing is well appreciated by the pupils. At the time of the inspection, the pupils were involved in singing a range of songs from different traditions, including hymns. The quality of singing was very good. The choir performs regularly in various venues including the senior citizens' homes. In addition, pupils are offered opportunities to learn to play the recorder as an after-school activity. One pupil has since been inspired to take up playing the clarinet. There are opportunities for pupils to learn to play stringed and woodwind instruments and to play in a brass band. In Years 3 and 4, pupils have an opportunity to have piano lessons. Despite restrictions on the timetable following the introductions of literacy and numeracy sessions, the school endeavours to enrich the pupils' curriculum and not to lose sight of the wider aspects of their learning.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

159. The levels of attainment of pupils at the end of both key stages are in line with national expectations, with above average standards and particular strengths in gymnastics and dance at Key Stage 1 and games, dance and swimming at the end of Key Stage 2. This reflects a significant improvement compared with the standards found during the last inspection. The full range of physical education activities, including athletics and gymnastics, is undertaken throughout each year. Pupils in Year 6 have very good opportunities to take part in outdoor adventurous activities, including orienteering during the residential visit. The school makes very good provision for pupils' swimming throughout Key Stage 2 and this contributes to their high levels of attainment. Almost all pupils in Year 6 achieve above average standards in swimming. They can swim over 25 metres, use a range of strokes and have good knowledge of water safety.
160. By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils' high standards are reflected in their abilities to sequence a range of movements when creating a dance; the pupils think carefully about sequence and they learn to move and control their actions using space and direction very effectively. The pupils in Year 2 perform a Scottish dance, skip in time to the music and know when to change partners. These high quality movements from the large majority of pupils reflect the high expectations of the teachers and the effective use of demonstrations by the pupils. They increase their physical education skills by running, balancing, stretching and using well-controlled movements in the available space. They develop confidence and good co-operative skills as they work well with partners and plan imaginative ways to move. By watching the performance of others, and with the teacher's guidance, the pupils learn to evaluate each other's work, compare this with their own and improve the quality of their movement.
161. By the time they are 11, the pupils have refined the ways in which they move and perform gymnastics and dance to a high level. For example, they understand how to combine a set of movements and develop them into more challenging sequences. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 achieve levels of attainment in games that are above those expected for their age group, especially in their ability to throw accurately, control the ball on the racquet head well and learn the fundamental skills of short tennis. In hockey, the pupils have well developed skills in dribbling and controlling the ball while running, negotiating obstacles, changing direction and guiding the ball towards their partners. During the extra-curricular football activities led by players and a coach from Chester City Football Club, the pupils achieve well in a wide range of football skills, especially guiding the ball round an obstacle course and passing to a partner. They develop their skills further in a game with emphasis on positioning, possession, marking and passing. The pupils concentrate very well and use the time available to the full.
162. Pupils in Year 2 understand the reasons for warming-up and cooling-down exercises in terms of the effect on muscles and breathing. This progresses to Year 6 where pupils explain the advantages of physical activity as an essential part of a healthy lifestyle and understand the advantages in terms of muscular development, general agility and weight loss.
163. Pupils enjoy their lessons, behave very well and try hard to achieve and perform to the best of their abilities. They are eager to learn from one another and the teachers and are confident in giving demonstrations of their skills. All pupils are conscious of safety when moving around a confined space and realise the importance of following the teachers' instructions promptly and obediently. In lessons, the pupils show high standards of physical and creative skills and these contribute to high standards of achievement and pace of learning which is good overall.
164. One of the school's many successes in physical education is the very good inclusion of pupils from the special educational needs unit. Not only are the teacher's excellent challenges and demands met in class lessons but equally well these pupils are involved and make good progress in lessons with their own year groups. Throughout the school pupils from all ability groups, including higher-attaining pupils, those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress because of the quality of teaching and

learning, which is good.

165. The teaching is very good in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. The strengths in teachers' knowledge and understanding reflect the excellent leadership and management of physical education and the professional level of guidance given in all aspects by the co-ordinator. Lessons begin and end in a very orderly manner and contain very well-planned warm-up and cool-down activities. The teachers' very good subject knowledge and very high quality lesson plans result in good organisation and lesson structures that enable pupils to develop advanced skills in a safe working environment. The teachers set challenges that motivate the pupils. They also provide very clear instructions and explanations and encourage pupils to refine and improve their personal skills and group activities. Lessons move at a rapid pace and the teachers maintain good discipline. Their ongoing assessment of ability results in additional teaching and practice to improve skills and moving on to more challenges when expectations have been met.
166. The good range of resources are very well organised and effectively used. Lessons provide very good opportunities for pupils to extend their health and fitness. They benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities and successful participation in competitions and tournaments. The pupils also benefit from high quality parental support ranging from those who support pupils during the extra-curricular activities to those who accompany them to football matches. Physical education has a very high profile in the school and reflects the commitment of the headteacher, co-ordinator, teachers, parents and the local community.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

167. At the end of both key stages, pupils' attainments are in line with the standards outlined in the Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. The curriculum provision for religious education is good for both key stages and this shows good improvement from the previous inspection.
168. There was little written evidence available for scrutiny in Key Stage 1 during the inspection; however, observations of lessons show that all pupils have satisfactory opportunities to gain an insight into the values and beliefs from other religions. Good speaking and listening skills are developed in the teaching input and pupils readily show an interest and fascination when listening to stories from other religions. Good links are made with literacy and numeracy.
169. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are beginning to understand that people from different cultures and religions celebrate in different ways. In Year 1 pupils could recount the story of Moses and the escape from Egypt. They have a basic understanding that symbols represent beliefs and ideas. They learn about the Passover and Hanukkah and have the opportunity to experience trying foods and customs during a Jewish celebration.
170. Key Stage 2 pupils made a presentation to parents representing their knowledge of festivals and celebrations from their work on Christianity, Hinduism and Judaism. Pupils learn about Hinduism and can identify similarities and differences between its festivals and beliefs and those in the Christian faith. In Years 3 and 4 the pupils make Rangoli patterns on Diwali cards and retell stories about Hindu gods.
171. Overall, teaching is satisfactory. Teachers are well supported by the scheme of work and plan their lessons carefully. They identify key vocabulary to introduce and reinforce during the lesson and this makes a good contribution to pupils' developing literacy skills. Teachers establish an appropriate atmosphere for the consideration of beliefs and values. Pupils respond well and listen to and consider each other's point of view.

172. Assessment does not inform future planning sufficiently and the needs of pupils with special educational needs and able pupils are not always fully met because the work they are expected to do is not challenging and is based on written recording, copying text or retelling stories. A wider range of recording discussions and the provision of more challenging tasks needs developing. Assessment is not formalised and, although information is passed on verbally from one teacher to the next, there are no formal records of individuals' progress.
173. The co-ordinator has prepared a scheme of work based on national guidelines and the Locally Agreed Syllabus which ensures that all pupils consider comparative religions. She has sampled pupils' work and created a portfolio but has not as yet monitored the range of pupils' work or the quality of teaching. This monitoring role needs to develop so that she gains an overview of the school. The allocation of time for this subject is variable from one class to another and insufficient time is allowed in the timetable, which has the effect that pupils have an inadequate amount of time to reflect and respond to the curriculum offered.
174. Resources are satisfactory and the co-ordinator, who is new to the post, has planned to audit them and budget for future purchases to support the subject. The school has good links with the community, for example Holy Trinity Church, and invites church leaders to come to school as well as representatives from the Salvation Army.