

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **CHRISTLETON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Christleton, Chester.

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111149

Headteacher: Mr. David Harker

Reporting inspector: Mr. Tony Taylor  
4262

Dates of inspection: 13/03/2000 – 16/03/2000

Inspection number: 66999

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 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Quarry Lane, Christleton. Chester. Cheshire.
Postcode:	CH3 7AY
Telephone number:	01244 332324
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. D. Earl
Date of previous inspection:	24/02/1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Tony Taylor	Registered inspector	Mathematics Music Physical education Special educational needs	What sort of school is it? How well is the school led and managed?
Andy Anderson	Lay inspector		Equal opportunities Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Jeanie Underwood	Team inspector	Provision for the children under five English Religious education Geography	
Paula Askew	Team inspector	Information technology Design and technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to the pupils?
Lynne Wright	Team inspector	Science Art History	The school's results and achievements. How well are the pupils taught?

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Inspection Quality Division  
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Christleton Community Primary is a school of average size, situated close to the town of Chester. It draws its pupils from the villages of Christleton, Littleton and Rowton. It is a mixed school and, at the time of the inspection, there were two hundred and twenty-five girls and boys on roll, aged between 4 and 11 years. Twenty-two pupils are listed on the school's register of special needs, of whom three have statements of special educational need. This is in line with the average for all schools. The ethnic background of the pupils is mainly white and two pupils have English as a second language. Nearly five per cent of the pupils have entitlement to free school meals, which is well below the national average of twenty per cent. Initial assessments on entry to school indicate that the overall attainment of the pupils is above average.

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

Christleton Primary is a good school. It is undergoing a period of transition. Most of the previous staff, including the headteacher and deputy headteacher, have left the school since the last inspection. The present headteacher has been in post for two years and the deputy headteacher for one term. Significant staff changes, both teaching and non-teaching, the adoption of national initiatives for literacy and numeracy, and the fulfilment of the key issues for improvement noted at the last inspection have provided the school with numerous challenges. It has accepted these challenges confidently, and it is a credit to the headteacher, staff, governors and parents that the standards have been maintained overall, and in some aspects improved. The school is led well and the ethos is very positive. It provides well for the children in its care, offers them a good all-round education, and gives good value for money.

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

- The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, while emphasising the basic skills of literacy and numeracy.
- The pastoral care of the pupils is very good indeed.
- Standards in comparison with national expectations are good in English, mathematics and science.
- The quality of the teaching is good throughout and it has many very good aspects.
- The school promotes good relationships with parents.
- The provision for the support of pupils who have special educational needs is good.
- The leadership and management of the school is very good.

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

- The systems for assessing the progress of pupils across the range of the curriculum.
- The level of challenge provided for pupils of higher than average attainment.
- The role of the subject co-ordinators in monitoring and evaluating what the school provides.
- Some information provided for parents about their children's progress.
- Library resources and the pupils' skills in using them.

*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 February 1997. The key issues arising from that inspection have been addressed but some are not yet fully resolved. Standards in music have improved and are now satisfactory. Schemes of work have been, and are continuing to be, adopted and modified to support curriculum planning and the teachers' work. The overall quality of the teaching has improved. Systems and procedures for the assessment of standards and of the pupils' overall progress have been improved, although there is still work to be done on this aspect. The subject coordinators' role in monitoring and evaluating the quality of what the school provides is being developed rapidly, despite the significant changes in staff that have tended to slow the pace of development. Again, there is further work to be done here. The school now complies well with the statutory requirements for recording attendance, and the requirements for ensuring that all pupils take part in a daily act of worship are met. The security of the school accommodation has been significantly improved, and the areas for the pupils' recreation and play have been upgraded to a good standard.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	A	A	B	C
Mathematics	A	A	B	C
Science	B	A	B	D

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

The apparent recent fall in standards in the core subjects of the National Curriculum in 1999 reflected in the data, is due largely to the differences in the cohorts of children taking the tests. The school continues to maintain good standards. The school ensures that as many pupils as possible achieve at a level that matches national expectations. However, it does not ensure that all the pupils with the potential for higher attainment achieve at an appropriate level. Standards in this aspect should be improved.

The results at Christleton match those of similar schools except in science. In this subject, some unevenness in provision for the various elements limits pupils' attainment. Trends over time show that the school has maintained good standards, and the inspection findings indicate that the school is firmly on course to achieve the targets for improvement that have been set.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils' attitudes toward school are very good. They work hard, concentrate well, and show enjoyment in the activities they are given to do.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The pupils' behaviour is very good. No incidents of inappropriate conduct were noted during the inspection.
Personal development and relationships	The personal development of the pupils is good. They readily establish positive relationships with each other and with the staff.
Attendance	Attendance is very good.

The positive attitudes and very good behaviour of the pupils are strengths of the school. The pupils are happy to come to school, and are punctual and hard-working. Good relationships are fostered and the pupils are helpful, thoughtful, and considerate. The pupils' personal development is good but more should be done to encourage their initiative and knowledge of how much progress they are making, especially for those pupils whose attainment is higher than average. The overall strength of these aspects of the school's work adds much to the ethos of the school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Fifty-three lessons or parts of lessons were seen.	Good overall and often very good.	Good.	Good.

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

The quality of the teaching is good throughout the school. It has many very good aspects and it is a strong feature. Ninety-eight per cent of the teaching observed was at least satisfactory, and in more than eighty per cent the quality was good or better. Almost a quarter of the lessons seen were very good and some excellent teaching was noted. The teachers are very committed and hard working. They work as a team and plan well. The methods they use to interest and involve the pupils are varied. Their lessons are sharply focused on appropriate learning objectives and are very often lively and exciting. Usually, the pupils' good progress is ensured because the work generally meets their needs, especially of those with special educational needs. The teachers are aware of the need to challenge further the higher attaining pupils and their planning is increasingly taking account of this. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is well done. The very small percentage of the teaching (2%) had unsatisfactory elements because the expectations of the pupils were not high enough.

#### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality of the curriculum is good, both for the children under five and for those at Key Stages 1 and 2. It is broad and effectively balanced and pays good attention to the development of the pupils' basic learning skills. A wide range of extra-curricular activities enhances the opportunities for learning and enjoyment.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The pupils with special educational needs are well supported. The provision for their learning is good and it ensures that they make progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The provision for these pupils, as for those with special educational needs, is well focused and ensures that they make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for the pupils' personal development is good. For their spiritual development it is satisfactory. The provision for both their moral and their social development is very good. The provision for the pupils' cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for the pupils very well indeed. Pastoral care is a strength of the school.

The school works closely with parents, many of whom help in classrooms voluntarily. Overall, the home/school communication is good, and the level of pastoral care for the pupils is very high. Christleton is a very caring school. The curriculum is appropriately broad and effectively balanced. It meets statutory requirements, and it is supplemented well by a good range of extra-curricular activities. The moral, social and cultural aspects of the pupils' education are effectively fostered, although the opportunities provided for the pupils to develop their spirituality by reflecting on events and their own lives, are relatively less well developed.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership provided by the headteacher is very good indeed. He has a clear vision for the school. Key staff are increasingly taking responsibility for aspects of leadership and management to good effect.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They are informed, active and involved.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is rapidly establishing sound procedures for monitoring and evaluating its performance. The staff and governors are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	The human, financial, and material learning resources are used very efficiently and effectively. The staff work hard to overcome the disadvantages posed by the accommodation, and are successful in their efforts.

The leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school's development that is shared by the committed, hard-working staff and the informed and active governing body. The staff are suitably qualified and experienced, and the level of staffing is slightly higher than average. It is adequate to match the needs of the pupils, and for the fulfilment of the curriculum. The accommodation is open-plan in style and this leads to difficulties where teaching spaces also act as necessary through routes for groups of pupils to move around the school. The staff overcome these difficulties well by good management and organisation. There is also a lack of adequate storage space, and limited facilities to house a central library. The school has worked hard to improve the range and quality of learning resources. They are now generally adequate, in good condition and most are readily accessible. The finances are managed well and the school pays very good attention to ensuring that it gets the best value in its purchases.

## 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 vast majority of parents consider that their children make good progress, and that the school expects their children to work hard and do their best.</li> <li>A similarly large majority consider the behaviour of the children to be good.</li> <li>Almost all have the view that the teaching is good.</li> <li>Parents are comfortable in approaching the school with questions or problems.</li> <li>A large majority of parents feel that the school works closely with them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Almost a quarter of the parents consider that the children do not get the right amount of work to do at home.</li> <li>Some parents express the view that they are not sufficiently informed about how their children are getting on.</li> <li>A significant minority of parents feel that an interesting range of activities is not provided outside lessons.</li> <li>A few parents indicated that they feel that children with the potential for higher achievement are not sufficiently challenged.</li> </ul>

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Most consider that the school is well led and well managed.</li><li>• Almost all feel that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.</li></ul> |  |
|---|--|

The parents' questionnaires and the views sampled at the pre-inspection parent's meeting indicate a great deal of satisfaction with the school. This was supported by many additional written comments, where parents indicated that they are very supportive of the school, and are appreciative of the good developments that have taken place recently. The inspection findings show that the parents' confidence in the school is well placed. Christleton Primary is a good school with many strong features. The findings also indicate that the school's homework policy and its range of extra-curricular activities are also good. Some elements of the school's provision of information, although satisfactory, should be improved. In a period of significant change, the school has focused its efforts on ensuring that as many children as possible reach the levels of attainment appropriate to their age, and on ensuring the progress of the children with special educational needs. The school has recognised the need to 'stretch' the higher attaining pupils further, and is working towards this aim. These form part of the recommendations of the current inspection report.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Christleton Primary is a school in a transitional stage of development. Since the last inspection in February 1997 the headteacher, deputy headteacher and a majority of the staff have changed. The process of transition is still going on. Although the National Curriculum assessment data indicates a slight downward trend in standards since 1996, it is a credit to the Headteacher, staff and governors that the standards in all subjects have nevertheless been maintained at a high level, and that in some there has been significant improvement.
2. Overall, the attainment of the children entering the reception class is above average. Analysis of the initial (Baseline) assessments, administered during the children's first half-term in school, shows that their language and literacy skills are particularly well advanced and that their attainment is also generally high in mathematics and creative development. The children's physical and social skills, while still above average, are relatively less well developed when they start school. By the time they are five, most achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes in all the required areas of the foundation curriculum, and are well prepared to start on the programmes of the National Curriculum. Many pupils attain particularly well in speaking and listening and in mathematics. There is a strong emphasis on the development of the children's social and personal skills, reflecting the importance the school places upon this, and in this aspect progress is particularly good. The teacher's good knowledge of the learning needs of young children, and her very clear idea of what is necessary for them to make progress, and her lively and often exciting teaching across the curriculum ensure that most make good progress across all the areas of learning. High standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
3. The 1999 National Curriculum tests and assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 indicate that standards in English, mathematics and science are good overall.
4. By the age of seven, the pupils' attainment is above the national average in reading and in line with the average in writing, speaking and listening. In mathematics, standards are above average generally, and they are particularly high in the aspects of shape, space and measures. The teacher assessments show that the pupils' overall performance is well above the national average in science, and that standards are very high in the experimental and investigative aspects of this subject. However, standards physical processes due to the lack of emphasis this aspect received in the school's planned learning programme in use at the time. This is being improved. The proportion of pupils attaining at the higher levels in reading and mathematics indicates that standards are above average, that in science standards are broadly in line with the average, and that in writing, where the school has provided fewer opportunities for higher attaining pupils to develop their skills in an extended way, attainment is well below average.
5. The results of National Curriculum tests taken by the pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999 indicate that standards are above the national average in English, mathematics and science. The proportion of pupils attaining at higher levels is above average in English and mathematics, and close to the average in science. The school has set targets for the year 2000 showing increased, but realistic expectations of achievement. With the rapid development of more precise assessment systems for individuals and groups of pupils, and more clearly focussed teaching, they are likely to be achieved. Previous assessment systems were inadequate and their further development was a key issue of the last report. At both key stages the teacher assessments in 1999 still showed inaccuracies due to the previous lack of sound school assessment systems.
6. When compared to similar schools, the data indicates that standards overall are below average at Key Stage 1 and average at Key Stage 2. An apparent downward trend in standards over the last four years, indicated in test data, is not in accord with inspection findings, where a more consistently sound and improving picture is found. The inspection findings show that the

majority of the pupils achieve at least national expectations in English at seven and eleven years of age. They read fluently and expressively, and their extended writing is now a strong feature throughout the curriculum. Improved story planning and more rigorous teaching of how the settings of stories can be developed are helping to raise standards. The quality of the pupils' handwriting is good and is maintained in work in all subjects. Standards are above average in speaking and listening. This is an improvement since the last inspection, and pupils develop into confident and articulate speakers in a range of contexts across the curriculum. Standards in spelling are slightly better at Key Stage 2 than at Key Stage 1, as the pupils apply spelling rules successfully in attempting more adventurous words. In mathematics, standards are above expectations at both key stages due to improved provision, including the successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. Overall attainment in science matches expectations at both key stages. At Key Stage 1, the teachers' depth of science knowledge and their structured teaching of investigative skills are strong features of the work. At Key Stage 2, progress in investigative science slows as more emphasis is placed on the pupils accumulating knowledge rather than skills. Learning related to physical processes is also slowed as insufficient time is devoted to this aspect.

7. Standards in information technology, geography and history match national expectations at both key stages. They are above expectations in art, design and technology and physical education. Standards have improved in music and now match expectations, which they did not at the time of the last inspection. The required standards for religious education are reached.
8. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and generally achieve standards in line with their potential. It is strength in the school's provision that a significant number of pupils achieve sufficiently well to move off the register of special needs as their learning develops. Similarly, pupils with English as an additional language make good progress because they receive well-targeted support aimed at improving their intellectual concepts, technical vocabulary and practical skills.

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

9. The pupils' attitudes to their work, their behaviour, and the relationships within the school are consistently very good. The pupils' personal development is good. The teaching and non-teaching staff, parents, and the pupils themselves have high expectations in regard to the standards of behaviour that are acceptable in the school. The vast majority of parents believe the school maintains high standards of behaviour.
10. The pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. The vast majority are confident, motivated, enthusiastic, and eager to learn. They listen carefully to their teachers, ask and answer questions, and willingly offer their own ideas and suggestions. Pupils of all ages diligently settle down to work, and are capable of sustained periods of concentration. They are interested and they stay 'on task'. A large number take part in the wide and varied range of extra-curricular activities that the school offers.
11. Overall behaviour is very good. The pupils act in a mature and responsible manner and there is no disruption in learning. The combination of high standards of personal discipline and consistently good class management prevents the noise distraction from adjoining class teaching spaces in the 'open-plan' environs from becoming a serious problem. The pupils move around the school in a very quiet and orderly manner. Their behaviour at break-times and at lunchtimes is very good. The school suffers from being open-plan in its design. It is not ideally suited to its purpose. There is the constant potential for disruption to learning caused by even low-level work noise from adjacent classes and the movement of individuals and groups of pupils through the learning areas. It is to the credit of the staff that distraction and disruption to pupils' work is kept to an absolute minimum.
12. There are no signs of either bullying or isolation of individual children. There were no exclusions in the school year prior to the inspection. Relationships are very good. The pupils relate very well to their teachers, to other adults, and to one another. They are polite, courteous and welcoming to visitors. They work well together, sharing resources, taking turns, and listen to

each other. All show respect for their teachers, each other, and the environment. During assemblies, the pupils show appropriate respect for the occasion. There is no deliberate damage to resources or school property, and a remarkable absence of litter around the school site.

13. The pupils' personal development is good. They learn a range of social skills which help them to develop into well-rounded individuals. They support local and national charities, and make visits into the community to take part in local activities. They respond well to the opportunities provided for taking some responsibility for their own work in classrooms and around the school. In many lessons, when not subject to direct teaching, pupils work independently, undertaking their own research. However, there is only limited evidence of pupils acting on their own initiative. When opportunities are provided for them to take on formal responsibilities around the school they do so in a responsible manner, but these are limited.
14. Levels of attendance are very good, and well above the national average. There is a low level of unauthorised absence. The pupils enjoy coming to school, and parents are very supportive in maintaining good attendance levels. The pupils come to school on time, and lessons, assemblies, break-times and other activities, start and finish promptly.
15. The high standards of behaviour, attendance and punctuality are a strength of the school and have a very positive impact on the standards achieved.

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

16. The overall quality of the teaching is good across the school. It has many very good aspects and it is a strength. Teaching was at least satisfactory in ninety-eight per cent of the lessons observed, and in over eighty per cent it was good or better. Overall standards have been maintained since the previous inspection, but the percentage of good and very good lessons has increased. The small amount of unsatisfactory teaching seen related to some low expectation for the development of pupils'enquiry skills at Key Stage 2. Nevertheless, teaching throughout the school is effective across all subjects and it is continuing to improve.
17. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good, and this is having a beneficial impact on other curriculum subjects. Extended writing is used well across the curriculum, for example in history, to describe the life of poor children in Victorian times. Numeracy and information technology skills are taught very competently, enabling, for example, the pupils to use data effectively.
18. The teaching of the under fives is particularly effective due to the teacher's very good knowledge and understanding of how young children learn, and her very good teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills. At both Key Stages 1 and 2, the teachers have good knowledge of the concepts and skills that are to be developed in each subject, and they use this knowledge to good effect. These features, combined with a consistent whole-school system of planning, enable lessons at all stages to be sharply focused and effectively delivered. The purpose of most lessons is clearly communicated to the pupils so that they understand what is expected of them. The pupils respond well. The quality of their learning is good and they usually acquire knowledge and skills at a rapid rate. As they get older, they are encouraged to make links in their learning in subjects that deepen their understanding.
19. The teachers employ a variety of questioning techniques effectively and they often use plenary sessions well to reinforce and extend the pupils' learning. Teachers' verbal comments frequently give pupils a good idea of what is good about their work, and what needs improving. For example, when giving out ongoing artwork, the teacher made comments and asked questions designed to sharpen the pupils' observations of the picture 'The Enchanted Gardens', provided for stimulus. The questions and comments involved consideration of the pupils' use of colour and tone to suggest textures and mood in their own work. In the reception class, very careful records of individual pupils' progress are kept, and the children know what they do well and what they need to do better. However, at Key Stages 1 and 2, there are inconsistencies in the marking systems, and a general lack of regular pupil involvement in assessing their own work.

Consequently, the pupils have only a limited idea of how well they are doing and the progress they make over time. The exception to this is the pupils' reading reviews, which provide a firm example of effective self-evaluation.

20. The teachers use a good range of appropriate teaching methods and have high expectations for the pupils in developing independence in tackling work. For example, Year 6 pupils identified the overall structure of text and the appropriate type of language type needed to write an introductory statement on why they should not come to school by car, listing the arguments and points they wished to make and develop. Across the school, pupils of all ages work at a good pace and are very productive. They concentrate well over long periods and apply intellectual and creative effort in their activities. The teaching is often imaginative, interesting and enthusiastic, and this rubs off on the children. They become involved and interested in their learning. The teachers' very good classroom management and their very good relationships encourage the pupils to share their thoughts and to try new things, knowing that their contributions will be valued.
21. All staff work very effectively together to ensure that the pupils receive high quality teaching and care. The support staff are well briefed and they contribute much to the pupils' experiences, helping to ensure continuity in their learning as they move through the school. Particularly well-focused teaching of pupils with English as an additional language enables them to make good progress in their acquisition of language skills. The pupils with special educational needs are also effectively supported and they make similarly good progress. The co-ordinator for special educational needs has taken up the post recently in the absence of the original co-ordinator and the support has been maintained well. The early identification of needs, the good systems for ensuring that teachers and parents are aware of what has to be done, the efficient consultation procedures with outside support agencies, and the appropriately focused individual education plans, ensure that the pupils move forward in their learning.
22. Homework is used well to reinforce what the pupils are learning in English and mathematics, and in other subjects at the top end of Key Stage 2. The school has a very strong philosophy of care, and although the time allocated to homework exceeds that recommended, the headteacher ensures that there is still time 'for children to be children'. Homework books provide parents with good guidance about how they can support their children and share their learning.
23. A 'missing link' in the procedures for teaching and learning is that there are insufficient formalised systems in place to enable the teachers to make thorough assessments of the pupils' attainment and progress across the range of the curriculum. Lack of procedures for evaluating and comparing pupils' work, and some teachers' insecure knowledge of assessment techniques, restrict the school's effectiveness in promoting even better progress, especially for the higher attaining pupils. The school is very aware of this and has made it a main priority for development. A good start has been made. However, this has been hindered by major staff changes since the last inspection that have made continuity in development difficult. Most staff have begun to evaluate the impact of their teaching and plan accordingly, but there is still work to do before maximum efficiency and effectiveness is achieved.

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

24. The curriculum meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and the school provides religious education according to the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Its breadth and balance has been maintained since the last inspection, despite the increased emphasis on key learning skills. The quality and range of the curriculum for the children under five, and for Key Stages 1 and 2, is good overall. It is interesting and lively, and effectively promotes the positive development of all the pupils. Equality of opportunity is ensured. The national literacy and numeracy strategies have been adopted and are having a beneficial impact on pupils' learning. These projects have helpfully focused teachers' attention upon more efficient planning systems and upon clarifying learning objectives. The development of the National Numeracy Strategy has

also helped the school in the ongoing development of better assessment procedures. The curriculum provision and support for the pupils with special educational needs is good. It matches their needs. The school has not yet, however, ensured that the challenges provided for the pupils who are capable of attaining at higher levels match their needs fully. This has a negative impact on standards.

25. The school provides satisfactorily for the pupils' health education, which includes sex education and information about drugs misuse. The school nurse supports the teachers in this work with pupils in Year 6, as well as working on the topic of 'Healthy Habits' with younger pupils, as part of the science curriculum.
26. The overall curriculum provides a broad range of worthwhile opportunities for the pupils. However, there is weakness in the science curriculum, which is insufficiently balanced across all the elements. Since the last inspection, French has been discontinued as part of the curriculum for Year 6, but it is offered as a school club to all pupils at lunch times and after school. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities, including many sports, music and artistic opportunities. Individual instrumental tuition is available. All activities are well attended, and make a very positive contribution not only to the breadth of the curriculum but also to the pupils' overall development. In addition, the school ensures that each year group makes at least one visit per year to a museum or other place of interest to support specific curriculum work. The school's links with the nearby high school are developing, and activities include joint concerts and collaboration on the curriculum. A number of visitors come to the school, including storytellers, poets and theatre companies. In addition, the pupils in Years 5 and 6 have the opportunity to make residential visits, which also enhance their learning and personal development.
27. The school provides satisfactorily for the pupils' spiritual development. The curriculum for religious education allows the pupils to gain knowledge and insights into the values and beliefs of others. The whole school assemblies comply with statutory requirements and further this work, but they do not offer sufficient opportunities for the pupils to reflect upon their lives and wider events, or encourage spirituality. The provision for moral development is very good. All the adults provide good role models, and the pupils know the difference between right and wrong. The provision for social development is also very good. The pupils learn to live and work together amicably, despite the pressures of the inadequate accommodation, and the sense of community is very strong. They have participated in drawing up the code of conduct for behaviour, and have played an important part in the re-designing of the playgrounds. The regular provision of a 'circle time' at Key Stage 1 effectively supports the pupils' personal development. This is added to by the teaching of playground games in the reception class. At Key Stage 2, the provision for learning to live in a community are adequate, the opportunities for the pupils to take responsibility and use their initiative are inadequate, and should be extended. The arrangements for the pupils' cultural development are good. The school provides numerous opportunities that promote local traditions such as Maypole dancing and studies of the local canal, on which the village is situated. This is extended to other cultures with, for example, the visits of a storyteller from the Caribbean. Displays around the school and work in different curriculum areas, particularly art, design and technology, geography and history, promote the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development effectively and help to extend their awareness of the cultural diversity in modern society.

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

28. The school supports the pupils effectively and strives hard to promote their welfare. This aspect is a further strength of the school. The headteacher places a high priority on pastoral care and provides excellent leadership in this area. The teaching staff are very approachable and supportive. The non-teaching staff are dedicated and committed, and they provide very good support for both teachers and pupils. All staff have a very good understanding of the school's pastoral and welfare procedures, and they implement them conscientiously and consistently. Appropriate provision is made for medical and first aid requirements, and the arrangements for dealing with routine matters, such as minor accidents are good. The pupils are supervised well

at break-times by conscientious teachers who are alert and vigilant. Lunchtime supervision is undertaken by experienced and efficient supervisors, and the standards of care are high.

29. The school makes good use of appropriate external support agencies. The classroom assistants and parent helpers are deployed effectively. The support for pupils with special educational needs is good and has a positive effect on their attainment and progress. Child protection procedures are securely in place, and there is very good awareness of them throughout the school. There are also very good arrangements for ensuring the pupils health and safety. These are well known and understood by all staff, who consistently demonstrate safe working practice in lessons. Risk assessment is included in lesson plans in appropriate subjects, for example, science. The governing body and the headteacher take their health and safety responsibilities seriously, and all the required safety inspections and checks are carried out regularly, and properly recorded. Risk assessments of the premises have been instigated and are currently being developed.
30. The school has very effective procedures in place to promote and monitor discipline and good behaviour. There is a comprehensive behaviour policy, codes of conduct, and class and playground rules. These rules have been agreed with the pupils. Staff have high expectations of behaviour and discipline is administered consistently and well. This has a positive impact. Attendance and lateness are monitored very well. Good attendance is encouraged, and the general ethos of the school and the positive attitudes of the staff ensure that the pupils are happy to come to school.
31. The headteacher, class teachers and support staff know the pupils extremely well and have a very good understanding of their individual personal needs. The current formal assessment procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress are satisfactory rather than good. The procedures are at an early stage of development, and they are improving rapidly with effective contributions being made by all staff. However, the present information from assessment is insufficient to effectively help teachers with their planning, especially for the pupils whose attainment is at a higher level. The monitoring the progress of pupils with special educational needs are better, and the results are used consistently in the preparation of appropriate individual education plans.

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

32. Relationships between the school and parents are very good. The school enjoys the active support of the vast majority of parents, who, in the questionnaire returns, and at the parents' meeting expressed a high level of satisfaction with most aspects of the school. The school is sensitive to individual parents' special requirements and beliefs. A high number of committed parents and governors regularly help in classrooms and accompany the pupils on out of school trips. There is strong support for home reading and homework, and parental involvement is very good. An active parent-teacher association organises events and raises funds for the school.
33. Most parents feel that the school works closely with them, and a large majority is comfortable about approaching the school with either questions or problems concerning their children. The headteacher and staff are very approachable, and parents were regularly observed talking to class teachers at the start and close of the school day. A significant number of parents disagreed that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. The inspection evidence does not support this. The school provides a wide and interesting range including trips, sporting, leisure and musical activities. Some parents do not agree that their children get the right amount of work to do at home. Again, this is not in accord with the inspection evidence, which indicates that the provision for homework is good.
34. Day-to day communication between the school and home is very good. The school provides regular, informative newsletters, and there are frequent communications to parents about specific events and activities. Home reading records and the termly curriculum information sheets provide parents with an excellent means of communication and these are used well. The entrance foyer is very welcoming, with a large range of information about school and wider

educational matters. There are information meetings for parents, for example, those held recently on literacy and numeracy that were well attended.

35. However, some essential elements of information are currently missing, and therefore overall communication is judged to be satisfactory rather than good. For example, the school prospectus is rather brief and fails to include all the statutorily required information on pupil absence rates. The governors hold an annual meeting with parents and publish an annual report. The current report omits some of the required information, particularly about pupils with disabilities. Furthermore, although parents are given annual progress reports and have opportunities each term to discuss their children's work and progress with the teachers, a significant minority commented that they are not kept well informed about how well the children are getting on. The inspection evidence supports these views, as annual progress reports are variable in quality. Most reports indicate what pupils can and cannot do, progress being made and where pupils are finding difficulties. However, there is a lack of firm information about what pupils should do to improve and targets for improvement are not consistently set.
36. Overall, the school's work is considerably enriched by its links with parents, and these links have a positive effect on the pupils' academic achievement and personal development.

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

37. The overall leadership of the school is very good. A very clear educational direction is provided for the school through the effectively combined work of the headteacher, deputy headteacher, governors and staff. The senior management group works well as a team, and is supported well by the majority of parents. The levels of commitment are very high and a very strong and shared sense of purpose pervades all the school's work.
38. The school is in a stage of transition, but is moving forward resolutely and enthusiastically. Improvements have been made since the last inspection, notably the raising of standards in music to satisfactory levels, the development of the planning procedures and schemes of work, and the fulfilment of the statutory requirements for recording attendance. The last inspection took place at a period when staff changes were imminent. Since then a new headteacher and deputy headteacher have taken up their posts and more than half of the teaching staff has changed. The induction of new staff has been an ongoing process, and the necessity continues. Induction procedures are well followed and effective. These factors, combined with the introduction of national strategies into the curriculum and the resolution of the key issues of the last inspection report, have made the further development of the school a complex process. It is to the credit of all who work in it that standards have been maintained and, in some aspects, improved.
39. The values of the school are excellent and are well promoted by the strong leadership of the headteacher. The aims for the children's education are well defined, and well known by the governors, staff and parents alike. Appropriate and carefully considered priorities and targets have been defined and the school is well placed to achieve them. The governing body makes a very positive contribution and fulfils its statutory responsibilities well. Its support, and the involvement of individual governors in the day-to-day and overall work of the school are very beneficial. The strengths and weaknesses of the school are well known, and efforts are continuously made to bring about improvements. Only in some minor ways has the governing body to ensure that requirements are fully met. These relate to items for inclusion in the school's prospectus and in the annual report to parents.
40. Relationships are very positive throughout. The problems brought about by changes in staff, through retirement, long-term sick leave and promotion have been severe, but the situation has been very efficiently managed. Delegation ensures the effective and increasingly efficient contribution of all staff, especially those with management responsibilities. However, there is still work to be done to ensure that the roles of the subject co-ordinators are fully effective in evaluating the effectiveness of the teaching, the progress of pupils in their learning, and standards across the range of the curriculum. The assessment procedures also need to be further developed to ensure that all concerned have a clear knowledge of the strengths and

weaknesses of provision and the impact on the pupils' progress. The school has recognised these as priorities for development and is working steadfastly towards achieving them. A very positive start has been made.

41. The school's finances are carefully managed and used to support its educational and pastoral work well. Good use is made of grants and contributions from parents and the local community. The school is alert to obtaining value for money, and applies the principle of 'best value' effectively in its purchases. For example, it has made significant savings, initiated by the administrative assistant, in the amount paid out for refuse collection. The excellent work of the administrative assistant ensures that the day-to-day routines are efficient and that the senior management team, staff and governors are supported well. The learning resources are adequate across the range of the curriculum and are constantly being improved. The equipment for information and communications technology are used effectively.
42. The number, qualifications and experience of teachers and support staff match the demands of the curriculum and the needs of the pupils. The school is currently slightly overstaffed with teachers. The governing body is fully aware of this, and action is being taken to resolve the situation as part of the longer-term plans.
43. The accommodation is adequate but poses problems for the staff and pupils. Most classroom spaces are too small for the numbers of pupils and this has a limiting effect on practical activities, such as art, science and design and technology. However, the school works hard to overcome the difficulties and the available accommodation is used very efficiently. There are no spare rooms available for the provision of either a central library or for music lessons. There is also a shortage of storage spaces for resources. Access into and throughout the building for pupils with physical disabilities is limited. Good attempts have been made to adapt areas of the building to provide more appropriate teaching spaces. The building is kept clean and is well maintained. The school has the advantage of two large hard surfaced playgrounds, a separate safe and secure play area for the children under five, and a large grassed sports field. Recent development of the grounds has succeeded in providing good play and leisure amenities and better security.

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

44. The school is re-developing well and standards are rising steadily. However, further attention needs to be given to establishing thorough and comprehensive systems, the rationalisation and strengthening of the roles of the subject co-ordinators, and the provision for pupils whose attainment levels are generally higher than average. A number of additional minor issues should be attended to.

The governing body, headteacher and staff should now ensure that:

- (1) there is further development of appropriate systems for assessing the progress of pupils across the range of the curriculum; **(Paragraphs 23, 31,)**
- (2) the educational challenges to pupils of higher than average attainment help them to fulfil their learning potential; **(Paragraphs 31, 57, 67)**
- (3) the roles of the subject co-ordinators are rationalised, clarified and strengthened to ensure the efficient monitoring and evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of curriculum provision in order to aid future development. **(Paragraphs 58, 63, 98)**

#### **Further minor issues**

In order to improve the information supplied to parents, the governors and headteacher should ensure that:

- the school prospectus and the annual report to parents contain all the statutorily required information;

- annual reports to parents on the individual progress of their children are consistent in their quality;

and should work towards improving:

- the library resources, and the opportunities for the pupils to learn skills in the use of library resources at all stages.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	53
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	21

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1.9%	22.6%	56.6%	17.0%	1.9%	0%	0%

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	225
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/A	11

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	22

#### 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	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.1

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

**Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	18	16	34

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	14	16
	Girls	14	16	15
	Total	29	30	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (81)	88 (85)	91 (100)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	16	18
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	30	31	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (n/a)	91 (100)	97 (100)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

*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
	1999	16	12	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	13	15
	Girls	11	10	11
	Total	24	23	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (83)	82 (81)	93 (86)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	13	15
	Girls	10	11	12
	Total	24	23	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (91)	86 (91)	96 (88)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

*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	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	218
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

**Exclusions in the last school year**

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

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27.8
Average class size	27.9

**Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	72

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Financial information**

Financial year	1998/9
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	£
Total income	350226
Total expenditure	349258
Expenditure per pupil	1560
Balance brought forward from previous year	9802
Balance carried forward to next year	10770

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	225
Number of questionnaires returned	144

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63.2	33.3	3.5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	49.3	42.4	4.9	0	3.5
Behaviour in the school is good.	50.7	45.1	2.1	0.7	1.4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36.8	38.9	16.0	7.6	0.7
The teaching is good.	54.2	39.6	0.7	0	5.6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44.4	41.0	10.4	2.1	2.1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69.4	28.5	2.1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56.3	41.0	2.8	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	58.3	34.7	5.6	0	1.4
The school is well led and managed.	54.9	36.8	3.5	1.4	3.5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	54.1	40.3	2.8	0	2.8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27.1	36.1	25.0	5.6	6.3

### Issues raised by parents

A significant number of parents attached an accompanying letter to the questionnaire returns. The limitations of the range and availability of extra-curricular activities was a major feature of their comments, echoing the information provided in the table above. The inspection evidence does not confirm this. It indicates that the range and variety of extra-curricular activities is very good.

Homework is a further issue that causes some concern. A significant number of parents do not feel that their children are prepared sufficiently for the routines of homework demands when the children move on to secondary education. Inspection findings indicate that the provision for homework is good.

Some parents indicated that they feel that the children who have the potential to reach even higher standards need to be challenged more. The inspectors find that there is some justification for the concern of parents. The need to further challenge potentially higher attaining children is included as a key issue for the school's further development.

Many of the additional comments made by parents were very supportive of the school and its work, and were appreciative of the good developments that have taken place recently.

## **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**

45. The children under five enter the reception class at the beginning of the year in which they are five. At the time of the inspection there were seven children under five. They receive a very positive introduction to school, and by the time they are five, most achieve the levels of attainment in the nationally prescribed desirable outcomes for learning appropriate to this age group. The ethos and environment provided for these children is very warm, caring, and positive. The teaching observed during the inspection was always good, and often very good. The children make a positive start to their education. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection.

#### **Personal and social development**

46. The good teaching ensures that the children's attainment in personal and social development improves during their time in the reception class. Initial assessment indicates that this is a weaker element, and the school focuses attention upon it to ensure improvement, for example by teaching the children how to play games and to be fair in their dealings with others. They learn to take turns and to listen to each other. The children are well behaved and enthusiastic, and are able to concentrate hard. Opportunities are provided for role-play, in the home-corner, which might become a circus tent for a period. The teacher, who is very well supported by the classroom assistant, creates a supportive environment and atmosphere where each child is made to feel special. Expectations for behaviour and work are high and the children are cheerful and want to please.

#### **Language and literacy.**

47. The children's attainment in this aspect of their work is above average. They are confident, articulate and respond well to their teacher's questions. In all sessions the children are encouraged to develop their vocabulary and to listen carefully. They show respect for each other's views. They recognise many simple words and phonic sounds, and many read simple text fluently and accurately. The children enjoy books and talking about them, and know what an author and a title page are. All can write their names and copy the teacher's writing with few mistakes. The potentially higher attaining children begin to write on their own and make good attempts at spelling 'new' words. The quality of the teaching is very good. The teacher and her assistant are enthusiastic and this has a very positive effect on the children's desire to learn. A lively and appropriate range of activities is provided to encourage listening, reading and writing. The teacher's planning is clearly focused, and takes into account what the children already know, and extends it.

#### **Mathematical development**

48. The children's attainment is above average. They learn to count confidently to twenty, and many can extend this to fifty. They are beginning to count in twos, and to recognise simple number patterns and patterns of shapes. For instance, in one lesson observed, the children showed enjoyment and skill in meeting the challenge of making regular patterns from paper shapes and beads. Some can use arbitrary measures, estimate, and find missing numbers. When some numbers fell out of a hundred square, the children had little difficulty in putting them back in the right places. Mathematical vocabulary is appropriately taught. The teaching is good, and the tasks provided for the children to do match their needs, and enhance their interest in learning.

#### **Knowledge and understanding**

49. The children's attainment in this aspect is above average. The range of their knowledge and understanding increases rapidly. They can name parts of the body and a range of foods and are

beginning to discover the relationship in terms of health. They enjoy investigating objects and materials by using their senses, and can make comparisons and express their likes and dislikes. They can identify summer and winter clothes, and the materials of everyday objects. The children listen carefully, for example, when the local rector explains his work, and are fascinated by the teacher's wedding dress and details of a christening. The children ask pertinent questions. The teacher has high expectations, and the children are involved and extended. The good use of summarising discussions encourages the children to explore their experiences, and gives them a further opportunity to speak and reflect.

### **Physical development**

50. The children's attainment in this aspect is satisfactory. Their manipulative skills are developed well. They use scissors carefully and hold pencils and brushes appropriately. In physical education lessons they move confidently, utilising space well, and show a good awareness of others. The children respond well to instructions and can refine their movements at different levels, for example in moving on their knees and stomachs, and in hopping and jumping. They are able to play 'follow-my-leader' paying good attention to the movements of others. All can undress and dress with little or no adult help. The quality of the teaching is good, and lessons move at a lively pace, sustaining the children's interest. The previous inspection was critical of the lack of large play equipment. This has been addressed effectively and the school now possesses a wide range of suitable equipment.

### **Creative development**

51. Attainment in this aspect is average. Some children are able to sustain a beat and move in time with music. When they know the words of a song, they sing tunefully and with enthusiasm. They enjoy musical activities and participate well in lessons. The children make good attempts at observational drawings, and paint carefully considered pictures. They know the names of a variety of puppets, including marionette, glove and finger puppets, and can draw and make simple versions. In the lessons seen, the quality of the teaching was always satisfactory and often good. Lessons emphasising creativity are well planned and interesting. The classroom assistant enhances the learning opportunities considerably.

### **ENGLISH**

52. Overall standards in English are above average at both key stages. The results achieved by pupils of seven years of age in 1999 in reading were above the national average. Their attainment in writing was average, although fewer achieved at a higher level than was recorded nationally. The 1999 results for eleven-year-olds show that attainment was above the national average, and average in comparison with schools of similar type and size. The trend for the period between 1996 and 1999 shows well above average attainment in English, but with writing being the weaker element at Key Stage 1.
53. Evidence gained from inspection confirms that standards are generally good. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. The school's introduction of the National Literacy strategy has been successful, and has helped the teachers clarify their ideas about the most effective ways to teach the various elements of language. Good quality teaching is helping to ensure an appropriate balance in the pupils' learning and the further development of their reading and writing skills. The pupils' skills in speaking and listening are above average. By the end of Key Stage 1 they become confident and articulate. They use their skills effectively across the range of the curriculum, responding readily to questions, and volunteering information about reading texts or features of geographical landscape, for example. This facility is further improved at Key Stage 2, when pupils participate well in small group discussions, willingly and keenly expressing their opinions and views.
54. Reading skills are effectively promoted. They are good overall. The pupils at both Key Stages read a variety of texts, including poetry, stories and non-fiction, and do so with steadily

increasing fluency and expression. Their strategies for reading unfamiliar words and using textual clues increase, and they become steadily more independent. They are able to talk about favourite books and authors, and offer reasons for their choice of a particular book. They are less familiar with the strategy of predicting what might happen next in a story. The pupils' research skills are effectively developed and most can explain how to use a reference book, a dictionary or thesaurus when needed. Opportunities for independent research are provided, particularly in Year 6, and often in relation to geography and history topics. However, these opportunities are limited in other year groups, and the absence of a central library area means that library skills are difficult to develop. The pupils have restricted reference skills.

55. The pupils' writing skills are satisfactorily promoted. Pupils at Key Stage 1 write interesting stories. Most write in sentences and use a range of interesting vocabulary, although the accuracy of their punctuation and spellings is not always secure. They write for a range of different purposes, for example, instructions for making a fruit salad, descriptions of events, or retelling stories. Most develop a firm cursive handwriting style of good quality. The teaching ensures that tasks to develop grammar, punctuation, spelling and comprehension skills are provided, but the development of descriptive and more adventurous language is less firmly pursued. This is an aspect that the school has noted as something to be developed further. At Key Stage 2, the sound practice continues. The pupils are introduced effectively to autobiographical and biographical styles, to the writing of play scripts and newspaper articles. They also make studies of the work of Shakespeare and Dickens, for example. The pupils are encouraged to write persuasive text about features of their own life, such as whether or not they should come to school by car or not, illustrating it with arguments for and against. Their literacy skills are encouraged well across the range of the curriculum, for example, in science, technology, geography and history. Presentation skills are generally good across the school, and in many instances, the pupils' work is a pleasure to handle and read.
56. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their learning. They gain a good knowledge of reading, writing, and spelling patterns through additional support in classrooms and via carefully planned extension tasks. The pupils at both key stages enjoy their lessons in English and are keen to participate. They listen well, often with visible interest and excitement. They respond positively in group-reading sessions, helping one another freely. These sessions often enlist the voluntary support of governors and parents. Where this occurs, the benefits are very real in terms of the pupils' involvement and progress. When asked to cooperate with each other in group discussions, the pupils do so well. The majority are able to work sensibly with little adult supervision. They take a pride in their work.
57. The quality of teaching is generally good at both key stages and much of it is very good. The teachers plan well and almost all use the structure of literacy sessions to good effect. Their leadership and management of lessons is enthusiastic and assured. Learning objectives are clearly stated and tasks are generally well matched to the pupils' varying abilities. However, more should be done to ensure that all the higher attaining pupils are given increasingly challenging tasks, so that their potential is fully realised. Whole class sessions are used effectively to review what has been learned. Nevertheless, these sessions should include more opportunities for the pupils to evaluate their own efforts, and to set targets for further development. Relationships are good. The pupils are valued as individuals and this helps them to gain in confidence. The classroom assistants and voluntary helpers are well briefed about what they have to do, and their work has a very positive effect upon standards and the rate of progress the pupils make. The occasional visits of a poet, events such as World Book Day, and opportunities for the pupils to take part in dramatic productions, enhance the learning opportunities.
58. Two co-ordinators share the role of overseeing the school's work in English, one at each Key Stage. Currently their role is underdeveloped. They do not have sufficient opportunities to monitor and evaluate the school's work, the teaching, or the rates of progress of the pupils at different stages. The adoption of the National Literacy Strategy has helped to produce sound planning strategies, but there is a need for the further development of ongoing assessment and evaluation procedures in which the coordinators' role is a vital element.

## MATHEMATICS

59. Standards in mathematics are good at both key stages. Scrutiny of samples of the pupils' work indicates that the pupils make good progress in their learning throughout the school. It confirms the generally good standards noted in the results of National Curriculum assessments in 1999 at both key stages, and that good standards have been maintained since the last inspection, despite many changes within the school, and fluctuations in the potential of different cohorts of pupils. Standards are above the national average and, in 1999, were firmly in line with those of similar schools.
60. In the lessons seen, the teaching was always good, and often very good. It encouraged the pupils' learning well. Lessons are efficiently planned, and tasks are effectively matched to the differing abilities of the pupils. The development of the pupils' numeracy skills is appropriately emphasised. The National Numeracy Strategy, recently adopted by the school, is effectively helping teachers to balance the various elements of the mathematics curriculum beneficially. A further area of benefit has been the development of individual and group assessment procedures to provide teachers with more precise information about how their pupils are doing. While the development of these procedures is still at a relatively early stage, they provide a good example for assessment across other areas of the curriculum. Moreover, more should be done to involve the pupils in the assessment of their own standards and progress, so that the potential of all pupils is fully realised.
61. The pupils in the reception class develop an increasingly firm knowledge and understanding of number and of number patterns. Many of them can, for example, count and use numbers to fifty before they move on to the National Curriculum programmes of study. This knowledge and understanding is built upon efficiently, and by the time the pupils reach the age of seven, many can provide correct answers to a relatively 'sophisticated' series of calculations involving numbers to five hundred. By the time they reach the age of eleven, the pupils of average and above average ability have well developed skills. The pupils whose potential is somewhat lower than average, tend to struggle unless they are provided with support. Nevertheless, they also achieve a sound knowledge and understanding of number operations. This good progress is maintained in all the other aspects of mathematics, such as shape, space and measures, and handling data. The use and application of mathematics are being given increasing prominence in the work the pupils are asked to do. The development of the pupils' mental skills, is also being given due attention. As a result, each of these aspects is proving beneficial in boosting the pupils' all round mathematical skills, which are often also used effectively in other areas of the curriculum, for example in science and technology.
62. The behaviour of the pupils during mathematics lessons is generally very good. They show keen interest and settle quickly to their tasks. They are responsible and work independently without fuss. They contribute well to class discussions and mental work, and readily help each other if an occasion arises for mutual support. The pupils' involvement is typified by the remark of a girl in Year 6, who when asked why she enjoyed mathematics work, replied: "Well, the teacher makes it fun."
63. There are two co-ordinators for mathematics, one for Key Stage 1 and one for Key Stage 2. While this is advantageous with regard to shared responsibility, the arrangement is rather more historical than practical. The current close involvement of the senior management team, due to the inception of the National Numeracy Strategy, means that the central responsibility for overseeing the provision for mathematics is very widely spread. This is not efficient. The role of monitoring and evaluating the school's work in this core subject should be rationalised. The school is dispensing with a previously used published scheme of work and discontinuing the pupils' use of workbooks. The national scheme and the teachers own skills in planning work are superseding it.

## SCIENCE

64. Scrutiny of work and observation of science lessons show that the great majority of pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 make sound progress, and match national expectations in their attainment in science. The teachers' good science knowledge, their high expectations for the development of the pupils' thinking skills, and their good use of technical vocabulary, is reflected in their work and the pupils' progress. However, they do not teach the pupils how to ask their own scientific questions and this restrains their overall achievement. It is an area for development.
65. At Key Stage 1, standards are sound across all elements of the learning programme for science. The teachers' planning is well structured and follows a clear sequence, which enables the pupils to develop early science concepts soundly. The newly adopted scheme of work pays due attention to Physical Processes, which is the area in which pupils attained unsatisfactorily in the 1999 national assessments. The pupils use a variety of techniques well to record their observations. For instance, they can describe accurately the condition of ice balloons and chocolate before, during, and after heating. They analyse in detail movements they and their friends make, such as when hopping, and notice differences and similarities in human characteristics. They predict confidently the distance toy cars will travel, measure to test their predictions, and relate their findings to the predictions in simple terms based on their own experience. The teachers support their pupils well, giving help and encouragement where needed, but constantly encouraging them to take an independent approach in organising their work.
66. The pupils continue to make sound progress across the science curriculum in the early part of Key Stage 2. At Year 4, pupils can explain floating and sinking accurately in terms of equal and opposing forces. They relate this knowledge to a variety of situations, such as a balloon filled with air and one filled with water, to make accurate predictions and explain their observations. They begin to use line graphs to notice patterns in the expansion and compression of springs. In Years 5 and 6, progress in Experimental and Investigative Science slows as the work becomes more theoretical to prepare pupils for national science tests. Additionally, the key stage plan for Physical Processes is unbalanced. Insufficient time is allowed to enable pupils to make satisfactory progress in all parts of this element, notably light and sound. The pupils have very detailed knowledge of life processes, and the structure and function of the major organs of the human body. They extend their scientific vocabulary significantly through work on the properties of materials and work on evaporation and condensation. They use the symbols for electrical components correctly in circuit diagrams, and increasingly represent data graphically.
67. At both key stages the pupils work hard and have positive attitudes toward science. This contributes to their attainment of sound standards. The pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, make good progress due to the well-focused support they receive. Teachers take care to vary the ways in which pupils record their work. The use of individual worksheets enables pupils of all abilities to show what they know and have found out. However, it is only recently that teachers have started planning to extend the science thinking of all groups of pupils, and the practice is not firmly established throughout the school. Consequently, higher attaining pupils do not always achieve as well as they might.
68. Formal methods of assessing the pupils' attainment and progress in science are still in an embryonic stage of development. The teachers do try to evaluate the result of each lesson, and they adjust their planning accordingly. The marking of work is supportive, but gives the pupils little idea of the strengths and weaknesses in their work, or how they might improve. Moreover, the pupils are not sufficiently involved in assessing their own attainment and progress. Nevertheless, there are some instances of evaluative marking to provide an example of how teachers might develop their practice.
69. The findings of this inspection for science reflect very closely those of the previous inspection, which noted many strengths and some areas for improvement. Although the newly-appointed co-ordinator has had little opportunity to formally monitor and evaluate the science curriculum, he has an accurate picture of the school's standards and provision for the subject, gathered by largely informal means. He has an action plan for improvement that realistically takes account of national and school priorities. His good knowledge of science and the curriculum places him in an advantageous position to aid the development of the subject in every aspect.

## ART

70. All groups of pupils make good progress in art throughout the school, and achieve standards that are higher than those expected. The pupils' ability to record their artistic observations, to experiment with different media, and to apply their increasing knowledge of techniques is good. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection because all the teachers take great care to plan interesting and challenging lessons. The ideas suggested in the teaching programmes are extended with flair. The good use of sketchbooks further encourages the pupils to experiment with ideas and styles. The pupils concentrate hard on their work and regard art as an intellectual activity. This, and the good teaching, makes a significant contribution to the achievement of high standards.
71. At Key Stage 1, the pupils successfully explore texture and tone, using an interesting variety of materials to make, for example, dramatic prints of landscapes in the early evening. Their good understanding of the complex design and symbolism of Aboriginal Dreamtime art enables them to apply the techniques successfully to their own amazingly intricate and beautiful animal designs. At Key Stage 2, the pupils' development of their drawing skills is good, as is their progress. They use marks and materials, such as straw and metal, carefully and effectively to indicate texture. The pupils study the work of many artists, including the Pre-Raphaelites and abstract art. The enthusiasm and very good knowledge of the teachers enables the pupils to experiment in developing their own styles. The teachers have high expectations for the concentration and effort that the pupils will apply to their work. They are not disappointed. Following a visit to the Lady Lever Art Gallery, the Year 6 class wrote some emotive and reflective poems, inspired by the paintings they had seen. They interpreted the style, techniques, and mood of the Pre-Raphaelite movement to make their own class picture of very high quality. Careful teaching of specific vocabulary enables the pupils to talk about art, artists and styles, and to evaluate their own work in artistic terms. The art curriculum makes a good contribution to the development of the pupils' cultural awareness.
72. No formal assessment is made of the pupils' work in art. However, the informal assessments made during the course of lessons satisfactorily enable the teachers to pitch the work at the appropriate level, to ask questions that challenge the pupils and develop their thinking, and to plan further activities. No formal assessment is made of the pupils' work in art. The pupils' displayed art-work, sketchbooks and collections of work from different year groups are not used sufficiently to inform the pupils, the staff, or visitors, about the high standards, or to help describe progress throughout the school. This is an omission rather than a weakness, but it is a significant feature in the need for the school to assess how good it is.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

73. Evidence gained from observations of lessons, work on display around the school and other samples of the pupils' work, shows that the quality of the work in design and technology is above the expected level at the end of both key stages. The school has done well to maintain standards since the last inspection in the light of the changes in curricular time for non-core subjects.
74. At both key stages the teaching of design and technology is often very good. The teachers use whole-class teaching techniques effectively to develop the pupils' understanding and knowledge. This is balanced with individual and group work on design and in making. The teachers planning is detailed, based on a national scheme, and adapted suitably to allow the use of a wide range of resources, including textiles, foodstuffs, stiff and flexible materials, wood, construction kits and information technology. There are also good links with other aspects of the general curriculum. For instance, clay pots made to Aboriginal designs and North American dream catcher mobiles illustrate well the opportunities provided for the development of the pupils' cultural awareness. A recent project on sandwich snacks involved much work linked with science.

75. The pupils make good progress in developing skills in planning and making, but evaluating is an aspect that is not consistently developed through the key stages. Some pupils describe either what they are doing, or have done, rather than evaluating their product in relation to its function. At Year 6 there are good examples of reflective consideration of bridges with a range of different lifting mechanisms, which illustrate better work on evaluative techniques.
76. The pupils at both key stages work hard and enthusiastically, and collaborate well. There is a subject coordinator for each key stage and they work together to implement a design and technology school action plan. This plan is clear and concise and identifies appropriate termly tasks for the subject's development. An after-school club for batik-work helpfully supplements the normal provision with further imaginative work.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

77. The standard of work in geography is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 1, the pupils study homes and buildings in their local area, carry out traffic surveys, use and draw maps, and construct graphs of geographical information using computers. Older pupils at this stage effectively link their studies with literacy, for example, when they compare an imaginary island with their local area. They understand and describe a number of the physical features of landscape and make comparisons between locations. Their inquiry skills are effectively advanced. At Key Stage 2, the pupils extend their learning well. They are able to discuss holiday destinations, taking account of climate and available activities. They offer advice about the suitability of places, based often on their own experience. They study and are knowledgeable about places such as India, comparing lifestyles, industry, farming and communications. Their knowledge and understanding of geography extends as they move up through the key stage, and they gain good skills in using atlases, maps, aerial photographs, and in obtaining information from encyclopaedias, reference books and computer programs.
78. The pupils are well motivated and enjoy their work in the subject. They show interest and enthusiasm. They are keen to answer questions and to express their own views. They co-operate well in lessons, and share resources and ideas readily. Year 6 pupils particularly respond very positively when asked to carry out individual research for their topic. The quality of the teaching is generally good. Well-planned lessons provide appropriate and often challenging activities, and teachers' enthusiastic questioning extends and reinforces the pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills effectively.

## **HISTORY**

79. Only two lessons were seen during the inspection. These, and other evidence, indicate that history is given due emphasis. Lessons are based on a well-structured whole school teaching programme and are thoroughly planned. The pupils' work indicates that they have a positive approach to history and that high standards of presentation are maintained. Very sound progress is made as the pupils proceed through the school, and standards match expectations at each key stage. Their factual knowledge and understanding of events within many periods of history, and of how societies evolve and change, develop satisfactorily. The pupils with special needs are well supported and they make good progress.
80. Most pupils can identify some of the changes which have occurred over time, and their knowledge of chronology is satisfactorily developed. At Key Stage 1, the study of toys and household objects, such as the telephone, enable the pupils to identify accurately, the similarities and differences between their own lives and those of people of earlier times. The pupils can describe in some detail the important features and reasons for major events such as The Great Fire of London. They understand and use time lines and their ability to investigate, interpret, and explain the past is satisfactory. The teaching is appropriately structured to

emphasise and develop these skills. The pupils have a sound awareness of a range of historical sources, such as books, pictures, biographies, and diaries. They also use the recollections of older people very effectively to build up a picture of human experience, including their own, which makes history meaningful and interesting.

81. At Key Stage 2, interesting tasks, directly related to their own community, motivate the pupils to carry out research. In one very good lesson, older pupils collected witness statements from older people on how their lives had changed in the past fifty years. They used these statements to compare life then and now, going into great detail in linking many aspects such as technological advances to patterns of employments and leisure. The teacher's own good knowledge and very good questioning technique enabled the pupils to consolidate their knowledge and develop their thinking. The pupils' enjoyment in the lesson was obvious, and most made great advances in their learning.
82. There are no formal means of monitoring and evaluating the pupils' attainment and progress. This is unsatisfactory. The subject coordinator's role has yet to be developed. However, marking and teachers' comments on the work indicate that they are aware of general trends in the pupils' progress.

### **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

83. The standard of work in information technology is in line with the expected levels at both key stages. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 and at the start of Key Stage 2 are working above the expected levels in the aspect of data handling. This is a result of the recently improved resources. Old equipment has been replaced and appropriate software has been purchased to support National Curriculum requirements. As a result of a successful bid with the National Grid for Learning, all the school's computers have been linked to the Internet through a schools network.
84. Observations of information technology lessons show the teaching to be good at both key stages. Effective planning, and good classroom management enable the efficient and effective use of the computers available in each class. Good use of classroom assistants and parent helpers at Key Stage 1, allows teachers to support groups of pupils well. At Key Stage 2, the pupils share resources effectively and they work well in groups supporting one another by explaining how particular tasks should be completed. They work patiently and with enthusiasm.
85. At Key Stage 1, the pupils develop efficient keyboard skills. They can enter simple text, use a paint program for designing in design and technology tasks, and use simple data handling programs to interpret findings. At Key Stage 2, the pupils make sound progress in communicating and handling information, confidently combining text and graphics and designing and interrogating databases that are based on their own, independent survey work. Limited work was seen in modelling, but this strand is planned for a following term.
86. The scheme of work for information technology is based on a recommended national scheme, with detailed units of work. Throughout the school, information technology is used to support learning in other areas of the curriculum. This is evident, for example, when Year 6 pupils successfully use the Internet to support their research in a geography topic on rivers, and Year 3 using a tiling program to investigate symmetry, and Logo to support numeracy learning.
87. There is an information and communications co-ordinator for each key stage. They work successfully together, supporting teachers in their planning and training them in the use of new hardware and software. The result of this is good progression for the pupils in the development of their skills, knowledge and understanding. A formal system of assessment needs now to be put in place to ensure teachers' awareness of the ongoing progress of individuals and groups of pupils, and to focus on how standards can be improved further. A shared action plan for the subject includes both national initiatives and appropriate targets for school development. These plans provide a good base for further improvement.

## MUSIC

88. Due to timetabling restrictions there were limited opportunities to observe music lessons during the inspection. Additional evidence was taken from musical activities in assemblies and a small sample of peripatetic music provision.
89. Standards in music have improved evidently since the last inspection, when they were noted as a weakness. They are now satisfactory. The pupils at both key stages sing tunefully in assemblies, although the enthusiasm for singing is greater at Key Stage 1 than at Key Stage 2. The younger pupils listen well, can maintain a steady beat, and improvise patterns of sound, for example, of animals. They know the words and accompanying actions of a number of simple songs. They are enthusiastic, and well motivated by stimulating and lively teaching. The oldest pupils sing with control and clarity. Their listening skills are advanced effectively. They can, for example, recognise missing notes in pieces played on the piano. They can maintain a beat and are learning to use scales, recognising the difference between major and minor.
90. The teaching seen was satisfactory. Lessons are thoughtfully planned, although sometimes they have too many activities so that not all that is planned can be covered in the available time. The activities are usually interesting and follow a variety of sequences of learning efficiently. The headteacher has good subject knowledge and works in classes with the older pupils. There is a range of good peripatetic instrumental tuition for Years 4, 5 and 6. This, and an extra-curricular choral activity, extends the musical opportunities for the pupils well. The music played in the assemblies observed was soothing, and sometimes evocative. However, it provided only limited stimulus, and did little to draw the pupils' attention to the range and vigour of music as a medium of expression.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

91. Standards in physical education are at least satisfactory, and often good. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. The pupils at both key stages learn to relate exercise to a healthy lifestyle. They experience a wide range of activities that include sport, dance, gymnastics and swimming. They generally develop their skills well across the range. The youngest can demonstrate a range of ways of moving at different levels, and they show good awareness of space and of others. At Key Stage 1 the pupils show good ball control skills and sound development in their dance skills. They stop and start, adjust their speed, and move in a controlled manner, listening and reacting to instructions well. At Key Stage 2, pupils practising ball games pass accurately, using chest and bounce passes well. Their catching skills are good. In swimming, almost all the pupils attain the expected standard and many rise substantially above it.
92. The teaching of physical education is good generally. The overall planning covers a wide range of activities, emphasising particular elements at particular times of the year. The lessons are well planned and paced in order to obtain the maximum amount of benefit from the time available. Good care is taken for the pupils' safety in exercise, and good attention is given to warm-up and cool-down activities to balance the pupils' more strenuous efforts. The teachers have good organisational skills and manage the lessons well. For example, the use of hoops by the youngest pupils to contain loose clothing during a lesson was observed. This is good training for the reception group. The teachers coach the pupils well, and good use is made of demonstration to provide the pupils with targets for their own improved performance. The teachers' instructions are clear and much encouragement is given, which enhances the pupils' performance.
93. The pupils respond to the effective teaching by being active, eager, well-behaved, and enthusiastic in physical education activities. They try hard to extend their physical skills and to improve their accomplishments. They work well individually and in groups, sharing equipment and responsibilities. The pupils help each other, work together well in team activities, and have a strong sense of fair play.

94. The curriculum for physical education is broad and well balanced. It is supplemented by a good range of extra-curricular sporting activities. The overall physical development of the pupils is promoted well.

### **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

95. At the end of both key stages the pupils' attainment in religious education matches the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Satisfactory learning takes place throughout. A combination of lessons and assemblies encourages the pupils to appreciate the need for caring and sharing, community values, and respect for the beliefs of others.
96. By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils are becoming increasingly aware of what it means to be a Christian, a Hindu or a Jew, and can make simple comparisons of life styles and beliefs. They make visits to special places such as the local church to look at symbols of religious belief, and learn about festivals, including the Christian festivals of Christmas and Easter. At Key Stage 2, the pupils knowledge is widened to encompass learning about the Old Testament, Sikhism, Islam, Buddhism and Judaism, and they begin to understand how belief affects peoples lives and actions. There are opportunities for discussion, writing and other activities at each stage. For example, the pupils in Reception might discuss christenings, while older pupils in Year 1 make sweets for the festival of Holi. Pupils in Year 3 talk and write about the first Sikh, and Year 4 pupils describe an interview with the angel who told Mary she was to have the Son of God.
97. The pupils make steady progress in acquiring knowledge and understanding about religion across a broad spectrum. They develop awareness of religious traditions, customs, and festivals. They listen carefully to the ideas of their teachers and of others, and show respect for different faiths. They happily volunteer answers to questions to demonstrate what they know.
98. The limited amount of teaching seen during the inspection was of a satisfactory standard. The teachers' planning is appropriately based in the local syllabus, and various teaching approaches are used to stimulate the pupils' interest. Good use is made of the voluntary support of local clergy to help with teaching. The scheme of work is a recent implementation and has yet to be evaluated for its overall effectiveness. The subject co-ordinator has only limited opportunities to monitor planning and evaluate the school's work, but there is a useful action plan for religious education for staff to follow. In order to increase the range of available artefacts, the school has joined an educational resource centre in Chester.