

INSPECTION REPORT

ORRETS MEADOW SCHOOL

Chapelhill Road, Moreton

LEA area: Wirral

Unique reference number: 105140

Headteacher: Mrs. S. Blythe

Reporting inspector: Adrian Simm
21138

Dates of inspection: 10 January 2000 – 14 January 2000

Inspection number: 187844

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Special (SpLD)

School category: Community Special

Age range of pupils: 7 – 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Chapelhill Road
Moreton
Wirral

Postcode: CH46 9QQ

Telephone number: 0151 678 8070

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Ian Lewis

Date of previous inspection: 18th March 1996 - 22nd March 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Adrian Simm	Registered Inspector	Art Geography History	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? Special educational Needs
Sue Hunt	Team Inspector	English Religious Education	How well does the school care for its pupils?
Mary Le Mage	Lay Inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Judith Jones	Team inspector	Mathematics Information technology Design and technology Physical Education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Peter Thomas	Team inspector	Science Music Equal Opportunities	How well is the school led and managed? Integration

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Orrets Meadow School is a maintained special school for pupils aged between 7 and 11 years who have specific learning difficulties (SpLD). The school is funded for 66 pupils, 54 boys and 12 girls, and is full. The Local Education Authority's criteria for admitting pupils to the school have varied in the last 4 years. At times, Year 6 pupils have been admitted full time with only two terms in school before taking their National Curriculum assessments. Some pupils have been admitted with additional and more complex difficulties. Currently, approximately 18 of these pupils are on roll. This includes 13 pupils with behavioural difficulties, some with attention deficit disorders. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school has fallen during the same period. The school has been affected recently by the long-term illness of a member of staff. Pupils attend the school from Wirral, which includes areas of considerable social deprivation. Thirty pupils are eligible for free school meals. This has risen since the last inspection and is high in comparison with most schools. No pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds or have English as an additional language. All pupils have statements of special educational needs. The centre provides part-time places for 14 Year 6 pupils with SpLD who are on the roll of other schools. It also offers support to 38 pupils in mainstream primary schools who are at Stage 5 of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice, and offering advice as requested with other stages. The school is funded additionally for this work which does not form part of the inspection.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Orrets Meadow is an effective school with good provision to meet the needs of its pupils. By the time pupils leave, the majority return to mainstream schools. This reflects on the school's very good knowledge of all pupils' special educational needs, good teaching and a well-planned curriculum. The headteacher and the governing body are very committed to the development of the school and its outreach service. Due to changes in the admissions criteria over the last 4 years, the governing body has encountered some difficulties with strategic planning. However, taking into account the current effectiveness of the school and the low costs per pupil, the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- It achieves its aims very well. It promotes excellent attitudes towards school and learning. Pupils are extremely enthusiastic about their work and very self-confident.
- Provision for pupils' personal and social development is excellent. Relationships within the school between pupils, and between pupils and staff are very good. There are high standards of behaviour.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good and is well supported by learning support staff. The teaching of religious education is very good.
- Literacy and numeracy skills are promoted well.
- The headteacher leads the school well by example; she ensures a clear educational direction for the school and generally efficient day to day management.
- The school offers a good range and quality of learning opportunities.

What could be improved

- The clarity of the admissions and exit criteria for the school;
- Greater rigour in monitoring the quality of teaching and the curriculum;
- Consistency of assessment and the collection and analysis of information to inform planning and to raise standards across the curriculum;
- Clearer identification of strategic targets for the school via the school development plan;
- More precise setting of pupils' targets in Individual Education Plans; and
- Reporting success of the school's strategies to parents.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the appropriate authority.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1996. The governing body is now much more involved in the management of the school. Teaching now ensures that pupils are more independent in their learning. This has had a marked beneficial effect on pupils' research skills. This is particularly evident in English, mathematics, science, physical education and information technology. Recently, the school has

focused on teaching literacy and numeracy in line with the government's new strategies. As a result, strategic planning and monitoring in most other subjects has not been a high priority. Whilst procedures are now in place in all subjects for assessing pupils' attainment and progress, this information is not yet consistently recorded, or used to measure and analyse progress. The governing body has still to develop criteria for reporting the success of its Special Educational Needs policy to parents. Whilst the school development plan now covers planning for more than one year, it is not yet a strategic document as it does not fully prioritise or cost major areas for development. Staffing is still below the levels recommended in Circular 11/90, despite the admission to school of more pupils with more complex learning difficulties. Improvements have continued to be made to the accommodation and site. The school expects its playground to be re-surfaced shortly. Since the last inspection, part-time Year 6 pupils on the rolls of other schools, are taught in the mornings in what was the school library and in the art room which now houses the new library. This has reduced the flexibility of independent access for pupils to the library and has reduced the usable space for art lessons. The school has the capacity to continue improving and the commitment to do so.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets by the time they leave the school.

Progress in:	By age 11	Key	
Speaking and listening	A	Very good	A
Reading	B	Good	B
Writing	C	Satisfactory	C
Mathematics	B	Unsatisfactory	D
Personal, social and health education	A	Poor	E
Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B		

The school sets statutory targets in English and mathematics, and non-statutory targets in reading, spelling, writing, mathematics and science. However, the alterations in admissions criteria over the last few years have affected the effectiveness of this process. Overall, pupils' achievement is good in English, mathematics, science, information technology, music, physical education and religious education, and at least satisfactory in art and history. Insufficient evidence was available to make judgements in design and technology, and geography.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are very positive about school. They are eager to succeed and are actively involved in the learning process
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good and pupils' self-control is generally good. No instances of bullying or sexism were seen. Recorded instances of misbehaviour are low and are dealt with promptly and appropriately
Personal development and relationships	Pupils take responsibility for their own actions. They are generally supportive and caring of each other. Their initiative, independence and confidence are developing very well
Attendance	Good and above the national average for all special schools

Pupils concentrate, work independently and collaboratively and persevere until tasks are complete. The atmosphere in the classrooms is purposeful and contributes significantly to the pupils' achievement. Pupils relate well to one another and to adults and are friendly and helpful to visitors. The expectations listed in the behaviour policy are well known and clearly understood by pupils who accept responsibility for their own behaviour. There are excellent relationships between adults, including non-teaching staff, and pupils and very good relationships between the pupils. This has a beneficial effect on all pupils allowing adults to concentrate on teaching and pupils to concentrate on learning. The recently formed school council gives all pupils the opportunity to contribute to the running of their school and to date they are handling this responsibility with maturity.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged 7-11
Lessons seen overall	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.)

Overall the quality of teaching is good for all pupils and is a strength of the school. Teaching is good or better in 72 per cent of lessons, and very good or better in 41 per cent of lessons. At Year 6 in literacy and numeracy, and at Year 5 in literacy, teaching is very good in approximately 74 per cent of lessons and is rarely less than good. On occasions in numeracy at Year 5, there is excellent teaching and also unsatisfactory teaching in 2 per cent of lessons. Where it is unsatisfactory, some pupils who are encouraged to self-check their work before moving on, on occasions sit unoccupied for some time. Due to staffing commitments at break-times, lessons can also remain unfinished. Unsatisfactory teaching in 4 per cent of lessons is also evident in literacy at Year 4. Due to staff illness, classes are combined in the afternoons, without additional teaching staff support. On occasions, the planning and organisation of this larger group leaves pupils unoccupied or distracted. This can also happen at other times. Overall, teaching is very good in religious education, and good in science and all other subjects timetabled during the inspection. Communication skills, and personal, social and health education (PSHE), are taught cross-curricular, and are very good throughout the school. The effort that pupils put into their learning, and their interest in their work is very evident.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum meets statutory requirements and gives pupils a broad experience of all the subjects. Pupils are provided with a good range of quality learning opportunities, reflecting the school's aims and the curricular provision set out in Statements of Special Educational Needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' personal and social development is excellent. Relationships within the school between pupils, and between pupils and staff are very good. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good, moral development is very good and social development is outstanding
How well the school cares for its pupils	High priority is placed on the welfare of the pupils and pupils feel safe, secure and valued. Staff know the pupils well and are responsive to their needs. Procedures are in place for assessing pupils' academic performance, but these are not used consistently across all subjects to inform planning and raise standards. The targets in individual education plans (IEPs) are often not sufficiently specific against which to measure progress nor do they set realistically challenging targets.

The National Literacy and National Numeracy strategies are being fully and effectively implemented. Evaluation of the literacy strategy is well established, but similar measures for the numeracy strategy

are not yet in place. Provision for pupils with additional special educational needs is appropriate. There is good diagnosis of pupils' additional difficulties and subsequent support for speech and language, and medical needs. Pupils' stated needs for occupational therapy are not currently being met due to illness and staffing difficulties within the local Health Trust. The school has been very active in response to this, and implemented its own additional lunchtime support to reduce the effect of the lack of therapy. The school provides many opportunities to enrich the curriculum through visits to places of interest, inter-school sporting activities, visitors to school and lunch time clubs. The partnership between the school and parents is good and parents are very satisfied. Parents feel that the school is very responsive to their suggestions.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher leads the school well by example; she ensures a clear educational direction and generally efficient day to day management. The headteacher and senior staff have created an atmosphere extremely conducive to learning. However, the monitoring of teaching and the curriculum is still at an early stage and does not yet fully inform longer term planning.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body is effective in meeting its statutory responsibilities in all respects except for reporting to parents on the success of the special educational needs policy of the school. Overall, strategies for reporting pupils' progress to parents are satisfactory although not yet fully developed in foundation subjects.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school evaluates pupils' national assessment results in core subjects and other aspects of work such as the school development plan. However, targets and success criteria are often insufficiently precise against which to measure progress or against which to decide how greater progress could be made. The process has not yet been fully extended to foundation subjects in order to raise standards even further.
The strategic use of resources	The school development plan is very detailed but does not yet identify clearly defined and costed priorities. Specific income from grants is effectively spent and monitored appropriately. Recent additional funding has contributed to the installation of new information communication technology facilities.

The school accommodation meets pupils' needs appropriately and learning resources are good. Whilst all staff are well qualified and experienced, and the arrangements for further professional development are good, the number of staff is below the recommendations of Circular 11/90. Teaching staff currently have a full teaching commitment and insufficient time to monitor fully the development of their subjects across the school. The school demonstrates rigour in its application of best value principles. Quotations for work are correctly sought where appropriate. However, the school has not benefited from a thorough audit of its financial approaches by the Local Education Authority in the last five years.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The good progress that children make in school • The school's high expectations of children • The good quality teaching • The school helps children to become mature and responsible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents would like to see more extra-curricular activities

The inspectors' judgements support parents' very positive and perceptive views about what pleases them most. The school carries out a broad range of extra-curricular activities that are judged to be satisfactory for this type of school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Pupils' achievement is better than it was at the time of the last inspection, particularly in speaking and listening, reading and writing, and in mathematics, science, information technology, music and physical education. This is as a result of improvements in all areas of provision, in particular, teaching, and the curriculum in core subjects, which are a very high percentage of the timetable.
2. The last inspection of the school was in March 1996. At that time, the number of pupils gaining level 4 or above in their National Curriculum assessments at the end of Key Stage 2 were reported as comparable to national expectations in English and science, and only 11 per cent lower in mathematics. The school's information of trends over time shows 1995 to be a unique year for the high ability of Year 6 pupils. Both before 1995 and subsequently, the school's national assessment results have fluctuated from year to year but at a level considerably lower than national expectations. Throughout this period, the number of pupils who gained level 4 or above in science has remained higher than in English and mathematics, but this is the national trend. Over this period the number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals has increased by 50 per cent, and between 1996 and 1998, Year 6 pupils were admitted to the school only two terms before sitting their national assessments. During the same period, the attainment of some pupils on entry to the school was lower than had previously been the case. This has made the setting of realistic statutory targets for the school, and the monitoring of progress towards those targets, very difficult to achieve.
3. All of this now makes it inappropriate to judge achievement of pupils for whom the school caters against national expectations or averages. The report does, however, give examples of what pupils know, understand and do. Judgements about achievement and references to attainment and progress, take account of information contained in the pupils' statements, annual reviews and individual education plans. In this report, achievement is reported during or at the end of Key Stage 2.
4. Overall, achievement in English is good. Standards in speaking and listening are very good. Pupils coming into the school often lack confidence in expressing themselves but after a short period, they are able to debate and express their views clearly regardless of the subject. In mathematics at Year 4, pupils describe shapes and their properties and in information technology, they express their views about their keyboard skills. Year 6 pupils discuss paintings very well using poetic descriptors. Achievement in reading is good. The Literacy Strategy has helped enrich the curriculum and develop standards in reading. All pupils show a developing awareness of phonics and are confident in attempting unknown words. Achievement in writing is satisfactory. The majority of pupils write in cursive style within a short time after entering the school. Information technology is used frequently to produce re-drafted and attractive pieces of work. The satisfactory quality of independent written work in literacy is not yet applied across some other subjects such as history and geography, where often

worksheets predominate. Pupils learn very well. The majority are enthusiastic, interested and very co-operative. They often work independently in all year groups and are supportive of their peers. This allows the teachers to concentrate on the pupils' academic development without distractions. Literacy has been developed across the curriculum very well.

5. Pupils' achievement in mathematics is good throughout the school. The majority of pupils enter the school with very limited mathematical skills, lacking confidence, and with gaps in their mathematical language. Pupils become progressively more confident with number work and in their use of mathematical language. Pupils in Year 4 count in 2s, 3s, 5s and 10s and give alternative ways of recording number stories. Less able pupils name basic shapes and their properties, whilst more able pupils name more complex shapes such as octagon and rhombus, classifying them by their properties onto a Venn diagram. Pupils at Year 5 use a ready-reckoner for the first time and explain different ways they can add and subtract 9 and 11. By the end of Key Stage 2, the more able pupils add and subtract 3 digit numbers without a calculator; they read, write and order numbers to one million and understand place value. They are confident in undertaking increasingly more difficult tasks such as doubling numbers crossing the 10, 100 and finally the 1,000 boundary for the first time. Pupils of lower ability in Year 6 order numbers to 1,000, understand hundreds, tens and units, place value, and distinguish between odd and even numbers. In a lesson about temperature, pupils demonstrated an understanding of negative and positive degrees and measured temperature accurately using a thermometer. Activities are provided which require pupils to use mathematics across the whole curriculum. Mathematical concepts and language are well reinforced in other lessons, particularly in physical education, science, English, design technology and information technology. When designing and making a Christmas Cracker pupils had to measure and cut paper and cards for the cracker and for the box they were to be stored in. In physical education pupils are encouraged to estimate time and distance.
6. The standards achieved by pupils in science are good. When pupils enter the school, their scientific concepts are often at an early stage. However, they display imagination in the way they tackle simple experiments of movement although their ability to discuss results is hampered at times by inadequate subject vocabulary. At Year 5, some pupils demonstrate a good concept of the way forces act and some are aware of ways of measuring this. By Year 6, the majority of pupils have a sound concept of the principles of fair testing and carry out experiments safely and independently. They record their results adequately but are given too few opportunities to use varied forms of written presentation such as graphs, bar charts or in using information communications technology. Most Year 6 pupils give clear reasons for their answers and retain knowledge. Pupils of all abilities talk clearly, informatively and accurately such as when discussing the 'workings' of the solar system.
7. Pupils' achievements in information technology are good. Pupils enter the school with varying levels of achievements and experience. Through a well-constructed scheme of work, pupils make good progress through planned accreditation units. This begins with a keyboard skills and competencies programme. Pupils 'log on', select the programme and begin skills-practice. They become increasingly competent in letter and line spacing, and at the same time, increase their hand – eye co-ordination and fine motor

skills. They learn about the parts of the computer. By the end of Key Stage 2, more able pupils are confident in using a word processor to enter and edit text. With minimal adult support, they set up frames and drop and import text and 'Clip Art' photographs. A display of work of Year 6 pupils completed last December is of high quality, elements of which are at an age appropriate attainment level. Pupils use their skills very well in other subjects such as integrating a photograph from the digital camera and searching programmes to illustrate their work in science. Year 6 pupils of lower ability search CD ROMs for information in a range of subjects. With prompting, they load a disc and save work confidently.

8. Pupils' achievement in religious education is good. Many pupils demonstrate very good recall of factual information and are able to apply this knowledge appropriately to a broad range of concepts. Year 4 pupils discuss Holy Communion being the 'Body and Blood of Christ', and describe Jesus as the 'Light of the World.' Year 5 pupils have views and express them clearly in relating parables to the current times. More able pupils relate very well the names of organisations such as Oxfam, Age Concern and The Samaritans to the good work they carry out, whilst less able pupils understand the word 'neighbour' in its broadest meaning. By Year 6, pupils have a developing understanding of diverse religious traditions such as in discussing Judaism, and handling religious artefacts and recording their findings. Pupils are interested in the subject and respond very positively in their lessons. They write productively on their own or with others in a group.

9. Achievement is also good in music and in physical education. In music, all pupils demonstrate an understanding of pitch and rhythm, and of the links between music and other aspects of creative activity such as language or art. Whilst at Year 4, some pupils still have difficulty in replicating a clapped sequence, Year 5 pupils recognise musical symbols and read simple notation and by Year 6 pupils compose simple pieces to reflect atmosphere. Pupils are fully involved and at ease in discussing their thoughts with staff. In physical education, many pupils start school experiencing difficulties in fine and gross motor skills, memory and spatial/body awareness. By the end of Key Stage 2, less able pupils plan a simple response well to a task set by the teacher and follow instructions recognising the need for safety procedures whilst more able pupils plan, perform and evaluate their activities as individuals and in a range of groupings.

10. Achievement is at least satisfactory in art and in history. In art, owing to timetabling and the length of the inspection, no art lessons were observed. However, by the time pupils reach Year 6, from the minimal evidence available in their sketchbooks and in portfolios of work, they have undertaken a broad range of work. This includes portrait drawing and painting, at times in the style of a famous artist such as Picasso; self-portraits subsequently refined and re-worked in historical style and linked well with the history topic on Tudors; object drawing with 'shadow', developing from cuboids to spheres; and anatomical drawings of their own hands. There is evidence of some good achievement by individual pupils. History was the focus of the humanities topic only in Year 4 and Year 5 during the week of the inspection, and two lessons were timetabled. However, from this limited evidence, since the start of the topic at Year 4, pupils now locate Egypt on a map of the African continent without much adult support before watching enthralled, a video about modern and ancient Egypt. At Year 5, pupils who

originally had little knowledge of the facts surrounding Tudor Royalty now name the first Tudor king and discuss a range of interesting facts about the Battle of Bosworth, the 'houses' of Lancaster and York, and their emblems. Pupils develop their research skills to good effect. They are very keen to use their 'Key Questions for Artefacts' information sheet. This helps them compare several objects, make judgements such as to their age and usage and record their ideas and decisions. Those pupils who require significantly more adult support with their work also achieve well. However, in all year groups, worksheets predominate with little evidence of extended writing other than in cross-curricular work in literacy such as 'the evacuees writing home'.

11. Design and technology, and geography were not timetabled during the inspection and insufficient evidence was available to make a judgement on achievement in these subjects.
12. Achievement in pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) is very good. Pupils work well in groups and as a class. As they become older, they are more confident in undertaking self-supporting independent work. Pupils integrate and support each other very well such as in the inter-class group work in science, history and religious education. Pupils deal with these arrangements with great maturity and work well together regardless of his or her gender or learning difficulty.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. The attitudes, values and personal development of pupils are very good. Throughout the school, pupils have excellent attitudes to their learning. They listen attentively, respond quickly and sensibly to questioning and are eager to contribute. They concentrate well, work independently and collaboratively and persevere until tasks are complete. Pupils settle to work quickly and quietly, thus maximising teaching time. The atmosphere in the classrooms is purposeful and contributes significantly to the pupils' achievement. Across all areas of the curriculum pupils with expertise, help and support others. Pupils are happy in school and enjoy their work. The pride they take in their work is fostered by the very good displays throughout the school. Pupils engage in a range of extra-curricular activities including various sports, art and gardening, the latter two enabling pupils to contribute directly to the quality of their school environment.
14. Behaviour throughout the school is very good. Pupils relate well to one another and to adults and are friendly and helpful to visitors. They respect the school building and external environment, which are free of litter and graffiti, and they take care of the resources available to them. The expectations listed in the behaviour policy are well known and clearly understood by pupils who accept responsibility for their own behaviour.
15. The pupils show respect for others' feelings and beliefs and they are able to take turns and share equipment well. There are excellent relationships between adults, including ancillary staff, and pupils and very good relationships between the pupils. This contributes to the positive and supportive ethos within the school and the purposeful atmosphere in the classrooms. This has a beneficial effect on all pupils allowing adults to concentrate on teaching and pupils to concentrate on learning.

16. As pupils progress through the school, they develop their ability to work independently. For example, they plan their own investigations in science and set their own questions in mathematics. The recently formed school council gives all pupils the opportunity to contribute to the running of their school and to date they are handling this responsibility with maturity. They have requested recently a computer club and board games for indoor play. They also intend to conduct a school meal survey in response to a number of requests from pupils for more, or different, food to be available. Pupils are also involved in deciding who will be the recipient of their weekly class merit award, which is presented at the weekly merit assembly attended by parents. The personal development of pupils is very good and is a strength of the school.
17. Attendance at the school is good although it is just in line with national targets. Long periods of genuine illness from a very small number of pupils have had a significant effect on the attendance level. Parents report their children to be enthusiastic to attend school and this is evident in the pupils' attitudes in school. Punctuality at the beginning of sessions is good and the pupils come to lessons promptly after break-time. Good levels of attendance and punctuality contribute positively to the standards attained. The high standards of pupils' attitudes, values and school attendance have been maintained since the time of the previous inspection. Pupils' personal development has improved considerably. Pupils are now more confident in undertaking self-supporting independent work.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

18. Overall the quality of teaching is good and is a strength of the school. Teaching is satisfactory or better in 94 per cent of lessons seen. It is good or better in 72 per cent of lessons, and very good or better in 41 per cent. At Year 6 in English and mathematics, and at Year 5 in English, teaching is very good in approximately 74 per cent of lessons and is rarely less than good. On occasions in numeracy at Year 5, there is excellent teaching and also unsatisfactory teaching in 2 per cent of lessons. Whilst some pupils are encouraged to self-check their work before moving on, on occasions they sit unoccupied for some time. Due to staffing commitments at break-times, lessons can also remain unfinished. Unsatisfactory teaching in 4 per cent of lessons is also evident in literacy at Year 4. Due to staff illness, classes are combined in the afternoons without additional teaching staff support. On occasions, the planning and organisation of this larger group leaves pupils unoccupied or distracted. However, this can also happen at other times when the classes are separate. Overall, teaching is very good in religious education and good in all other subjects timetabled during the inspection. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is taught cross-curricular, and is very good throughout the school. Pupils are given every opportunity to learn independently.
19. Strengths in teaching are teachers' subject knowledge, knowledge of the pupil's individual needs, and the relationships built up with pupils. Lessons are mostly planned accordingly, enabling all pupils to make progress and become more confident. In those lessons that are good or better, all pupils are consistently encouraged to take a full and active part in their learning. Teachers expect this of the pupils. The very best lessons

are characterised by teachers clearly explaining the learning objectives at the beginning of the lesson, making learning exciting and fun, and maintaining a brisk pace throughout the lesson. This was very evident in a Year 5 religious education lesson about parables. The teacher's tone of voice and non-verbal cues quickly built up an atmosphere in the introductory story in which pupils participated willingly in role-play. They responded with enthusiasm and were eager to answer questions about responsibility and 'who is really my neighbour'. Questions were individually directed at pupils to maintain their active participation in the lesson and were used well to develop thinking and improve understanding regardless of each pupil's ability. In mathematics, frequent opportunities are provided for pupils to talk in order clarify their thinking. This also gives teachers opportunities to assess pupils' learning and understanding. Praise and feedback is used well throughout the school, successfully motivating pupils and helping to keep them on task.

20. In the only unsatisfactory lesson observed in mathematics, whilst some pupils are encouraged to self-check their work before moving on, on occasions they sit unoccupied for some time. Due to the teachers' commitment to supervise the school break-time, the lesson also remained unfinished. Unsatisfactory teaching is also evident in literacy at Year 4. Due to staff illness, classes are combined in the afternoons, without additional teaching staff support. On occasions, the planning and organisation of this larger group leaves pupils unoccupied or distracted. However, this can also happen at other times with a single class.
21. Teaching has improved since the last inspection in all subjects that were timetabled for inspection and where comparisons can be drawn. Particular improvement is evident in English, mathematics, science, music, and physical education. Teaching in religious education remains very good. The management of lessons has improved and now many follow a style similar to that of the 'literacy hour'. This incorporates initial recaps, development of lesson objectives, investigation in individual and group work as appropriate, discussion, opportunities for pupils to record their work in different ways appropriate to their special educational needs, and evaluation. Teachers take the opportunities that this approach offers to carry out day to day assessment well. In constant interaction with the pupils, using careful questioning and discussion, teachers check that pupils are grasping the main points of the lessons, that they are remembering particular facts, discover any misunderstandings and whether everyone is ready to move on. This was very evident in a Year 5 history topic where initial questioning showed just how much pupils had learnt about facts surrounding Tudor Royalty and clarified some misunderstandings about the Battle of Bosworth. In information technology lessons, ongoing assessment information is shared with pupils so that they have immediate knowledge of their success. However, the use of this type of information to assess and record progress over a period of time, and to subsequently report that progress to parents, is not yet fully included in teaching approaches. Whilst staff are consistently assessing pupils' knowledge and understanding in core subjects, particularly in reading and spelling, the lack of precision in the targets of many IEPs currently hinders their use in identifying progress and highlighting pupils' weaknesses which can be quickly supported.
22. Improvements since the last inspection have had a direct effect upon the progress made by pupils, in their achievements and particularly in the development of research skills, personal and social development, independence, confidence and self-esteem. The effort pupils put into their learning, and their interest in work is very evident.

23. Homework is used well both formally and informally to help pupils to progress quicker and to become more independent learners. Reading and spelling provide a major focus but the pupils often extend this themselves carrying out writing and research independently. History 'detective' homework is one example that grabs some pupils' imagination and is well supported by family members.

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

24. The curriculum provided meets statutory requirements and gives pupils a broad experience of all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. Pupils are provided with a good range of quality learning opportunities, reflecting the school's aims and the curricular provision set out in statements.
25. Since the last inspection the school has made good progress in addressing the issues related to broadening the school's aims to reflect fully the wide range of curricular experiences which it provides, and ensuring that statutory requirements are now fully met for information technology.
26. The curriculum balance as reported in the last inspection has changed. Whilst the emphasis placed upon the development of literacy and numeracy remains, with the appropriate intention of giving pupils better access to other curriculum areas, time given to other subjects such as design technology and physical education has been reduced. This has been influenced by the need to accommodate the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies. Consequently, the school has not yet fully developed strategies to evaluate the impact that their chosen curricular balance has on standards and its appropriateness in meeting pupils' needs.
27. Policies and schemes of work support planning in all curriculum areas. The good knowledge, skills and qualifications of staff are reflected in planning and in lessons, providing curriculum opportunities in which pupils can succeed and progress. In a mathematics lesson in Year 5, the teacher in introducing a new topic, instilled confidence in pupils by referring to work earlier in the week and stating her assurance that pupils would have no problem in undertaking the subsequent activity with enthusiasm and confidence.
28. The National Literacy and the National Numeracy Strategies are being fully and effectively implemented. Evaluation of the National Literacy Strategy is well established, but has yet to commence as far as the National Numeracy Strategy is concerned.
29. Many opportunities are provided within lessons and the life of the school to ensure and encourage social inclusion. Teachers work hard to ensure that all pupils benefit from teaching that meets their specific needs. All pupils benefit from the provision made by the school. Much of this is achieved through carefully planned groupings of pupils. Many pupils enter the school with very limited literacy and numeracy skills. Initially a lot of work is either individual or small group, gradually increasing to whole class teaching by Year 6 in preparation for reintegration into secondary education. In Year

6, pupils are grouped by ability for basic skills. Pupils' achievements, confidence and positive self-image reflect the strength of this approach.

30. The school provides many opportunities to enrich the curriculum. An Art Club takes place at lunchtimes and a Computer Club is shortly to be offered as a result of discussion at the School Council. A good range of school visits is provided to enhance pupils learning including trips to art galleries, concerts, museums and places of local interest. As part of work on river studies, pupils visited Parkgate and Arrowe Park. They visited the local Multi-Cultural Centre to participate in Diwali Celebrations; and on another occasion witnessed celebrations of the Chinese New Year. Year 6 pupils regularly use Oaklands Outdoor Pursuits Centre at Llanwrst. Work in drama has been extended by involvement in a drama workshop at St Mary's College, Wallasey, and also through the work of a visiting theatre company. The school has participated in several competitive sporting activities such as 'Table-Top' football, cross country running, the Wirral Run and the Local Education Authority's football tournament.
31. The school has good links with the community, which contribute to pupils' learning. They are helped to recognise their place in the community through work in geography, for example, where displays identify where pupils live and where the school is located on a local map. Pupils have visited Birkenhead Priory, the local Parish Church and Mersey Ferries to extend their local knowledge. Pupils enjoy a range of visitors from the local community, including members of local league football clubs, representatives of local services such as police and fire services and contributions by members of their own families to initiatives such as 'Millennium Memories'. Activities such as these all provide opportunities for pupils to understand and relate their schooling realistically to the wider community.
32. The school has a well-organised system of links with mainstream schools through its outreach work. There is a planned programme of links with pupils' own former primary schools immediately prior to their secondary transition, which prepares pupils for a confident start to their secondary education.
33. Good provision is made for personal, social and health education(PSHE), both formally and informally. Pupils are given instant and regular feedback on their achievements, such as their level of success on the precision teaching programmes and in reaching their personal targets. Pupils are encouraged to support and help each other when in difficulty. In a Year 5 information technology lesson where pupils were retrieving information from a CD ROM, there were excellent examples of pupils taking turns, helping each other and sharing ideas in response to questions; the more able pupils reading any difficult text for others. Pupils are welcomed each morning as they come into school and staff make frequent reference to important events in pupils' lives. Teachers encourage pupils to share their feelings and to talk about tasks they find difficult or easy. A science unit 'Ourselves' offers many opportunities to develop personal, social and health education. In their final term, the PSHE programme in Year 6 prepares pupils well for transition to secondary education. The school nurse comes in to talk to pupils and parents are invited one afternoon to watch a video with their children.

34. Since the last inspection the school has maintained the same good standards in the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school provides good opportunities for its pupils to gain knowledge and insight into values and religious beliefs, and to appreciate the wonder of some everyday activities. This enables them to reflect on their experiences in a way that develops their self-knowledge and spiritual awareness. This is promoted in a range of curriculum areas such as English, science, art, music, religious education and the daily act of collective worship. During a religious education lesson, the teacher's clear exposition helped pupils to understand the difference between a cross and a crucifix. In response to the teachers question "Why are candles lit?" a pupil demonstrated his spiritual awareness by replying. "Because Jesus is the light of the World". In a Year 5 mathematics lesson, several pupils realised the potential of using a ready-reckoner and expressed delight when discovering certain mathematical facts.
35. During the act of collective worship pupils have opportunities for reflection, singing and prayer. Role-play is often used to highlight religious or moral themes, such as when three pupils played the role of 'litter louts', which led into discussion about damage to the environment, and how pupils could take care of school grounds. One school assembly ended by sharing pictures of the beauty of nature such as sunrise on a beach, frost, and a fox in snow.
36. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. All staff provide good role models for pupils', showing examples of fairness, courtesy and concern for others. Concern was shown for a pupil who felt unwell in a lesson and fellow pupils responded in a very caring way suggesting things he could do to feel better. The established code of behaviour and values regulates personal behaviour and teaches pupils the difference between right and wrong. Teachers have high expectations of the manner in which pupils conduct themselves and this is often stated at the beginning of lessons and reinforced by praise for good behaviour during the lesson. Teachers take opportunities when incidents arise to develop an understanding of fairness and honesty. A good example was observed in a Year 5 mathematics lesson when a pupil questioned about a homework task initially did not reply honestly. The teacher on recognising this, gave the pupil an opportunity for an honest reply which he did, and was praised for his honesty and made to feel secure about the incident.
37. The social development of pupils is excellent and is underpinned by a very positive school ethos. Pupils are courteous, considerate and polite to visitors and are keen to share their work. They are given opportunities in all lessons to take responsibility such as having the role of reporting back to the class following group work in Year 5 science and history lessons. Each class has nominated a representative for the weekly School Council. Pupil representatives bring issues they wish to discuss with the headteacher, who in turn will seek their advice in making decisions such as how to use money to provide activities for wet playtimes. Pupils respond most positively, they are able to work effectively together in team games in physical education or in problem solving in information technology lessons. Pupils relate well to each other and show genuine pleasure at the success of others. They share equipment and show considerable care for their school.

38. The cultural development of pupils is good. A wide range of cultural experiences enriches teaching and learning in the school. There are opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own cultural traditions and the diversity and richness of other cultures. Displays of pupil's work, books and artefacts represented studies of other religions including Islam, Judaism, Buddhism. Pupils have recently made attractive Muslim and Christian celebration cards. Pupils visit Christian and non-Christian places of worship, museums to further their history studies, and art galleries. Currently Local Education Authority advisory teachers are helping pupils to look at 'Old Masters and Young Poets'.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

39. The school places high priority on the welfare of its pupils and has created an environment where the pupils feel safe, secure and valued. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good. Staff know the pupils well and are responsive to their needs. Pupils are happy and secure. Pupils' good attendance is a high priority for the school and is monitored carefully. First day absences without explanation are immediately investigated by the headteacher. Child protection and medication policies and procedures are in place, and these are correctly adhered to.
40. The provision for pupils' with additional special educational needs is good. There is accurate diagnosis of pupils' additional difficulties and generally full support for them. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. They are expected to work alongside other pupils in groups, or independently. Those pupils with additional behavioural difficulties generally respond well to the very good ethos of the school. On occasions when this does not happen, the school deals with incidents appropriately and parents are informed. Incidents are recorded but this is not yet done in a bound book with numbered pages. Through regular staff meetings, everyone is clear about which pupils are in need of additional care. Some pupils have a member of the support staff designated to them to ensure that they join in fully in class activities. The school has satisfactory access to a range of support services including the educational psychologist, speech therapist and school doctor. The school sister visits weekly and offers advice on medication and is involved in curriculum issues as requested. However, whilst some pupils' statements indicate the support of an occupational therapist, this is not currently being met due to illness and staffing difficulties within the local Health Trust. In response, the school has been very active and implemented its own additional lunchtime support to reduce the effect of the lack of therapy upon dyspraxic pupils. Provision for pupils' additional needs and personal development is monitored very well.
41. A good health and safety policy is in place. It is generally implemented well by all staff on a day to day basis such as the induction of pupils in safety procedures in lessons, particularly design and technology and physical education. Fire drills are normally held termly, at different times of the day, which is good, and are recorded. However, the playground surfaces are still uneven and 'standing water' on one pathway and in a grassy area is a hazard. The school has rectified all health and safety deficiencies identified in the last report. Electrical safety appliance testing is carried out in

accordance with the Local Education Authority's schedule, which only requires equipment to be checked every three years.

42. New pupils are well supported on entry into school and supported by outreach teachers on their return to mainstream. Pupils hold a weekly school council meeting to discuss ideas for improving the school such as when they thought bullying was an issue. There is now a very comprehensive bullying policy in place written by staff, pupils and parents. Good attendance and positive attitudes to behaviour are rewarded by 'well done' certificates presented to pupils at assembly each Friday, and class shields for good attendance and achieving targets.
43. The school's outreach programme is organised by a senior member of staff and supports pupils in mainstream primary schools. Some of these pupils may eventually move to Orret's Meadow either on a part-time basis in Year 6, or as full-time pupils. All pupils supported in mainstream are at Stage 5 of the Code of Practice. The outreach programme has the advantage of providing a good link between mainstream and placement at the school. A programme of visits organised by teachers of pupils in Year 6, strengthens this link even further in the summer term. It links pupils at Orrets Meadow with their original primary schools as a precursor to transfer to secondary school. This is reported as effective by some parents in enabling pupils to reacquaint themselves with their local peer group prior to resuming full-time mainstream attendance in Year 7.
44. A good assessment, recording and reporting policy is in place. The school carries out all statutory assessment requirements and reports the results to parents. Annual reviews of pupils' statements of special educational needs are held and pupils' individual education plans (IEPs) are linked to this process which is very good. However, the targets in IEPs are often not sufficiently specific against which to measure progress nor do they set realistically challenging targets. As such, the process does not yet provide a breadth of information, which can fully inform teachers' planning. Assessment procedures are in place and there is some evidence that data from pupils' national assessments is analysed and informs future school planning. However, this approach has yet to be extended consistently to all subjects. Pupils have Records of Achievement, and portfolios of work in art but this work is insufficiently dated and annotated to support judgements of achievement.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. The partnership between the school and the parents of its pupils is good and parents are extremely satisfied with the school's provision and achievements. Parents consider Orrets Meadow to be an excellent school. The parents' questionnaires completed for the inspection revealed that they are particularly pleased with the school's high expectations that pupils will behave and work very hard. They consider the quality of teaching is good and that their children make good progress in their work. Parents feel that the school helps pupils to become mature and responsible. Those parents attending

the meeting with inspectors were particularly happy with how at ease they feel when needing to approach the school to discuss any concerns. There is a strong feeling that the school listens to parents. A small minority of parents would like to see more extra-curricular activities for pupils. The inspection endorses parents' positive viewpoints and judges extra-curricular activities to be satisfactory.

46. The parent support group ensures that parents are consulted on appropriate matters such as homework or bullying and parents feel that the school is very responsive to their suggestions. Workshops held in school for parents are greatly valued. The school has consistent procedures to ensure a good exchange of information with the many parents whose contact with school is affected by the distance they live away from school. This ensures parents have a comfortable and mutually supportive relationship with the school, and the opportunity to give the school additional, relevant information about their child. By the use of reading diaries and daily homework books, the school has effective links with parents to consolidate and extend pupils' learning.
47. Information to parents through written reports and annual reviews is satisfactory. Parents receive clear information on progress as part of the review of pupils' individual education plans. However, this is often reported from teachers' records rather than against the success of appropriately challenging and clear IEP targets. Pupils' work in all subjects is reported annually to parents but at times this reports work covered in foundation subjects, rather than progress. However, parents report that they are very satisfied that their children are achieving well and the judgements of the inspection agree with this.
48. As at the time of the previous inspection, the parents express a high level of satisfaction with the school and with what it offers and achieves for their children.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. The headteacher provides effective educational leadership. The school is well managed on a day to day basis although there were minor timetable anomalies during the inspection. Routines and roles are clear and the school is an orderly community where teaching and learning have many positive characteristics. The school has developed explicit aims and values directly related to the special educational needs of its pupils. Their education takes place within a supportive ethos where relationships at all levels are very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and generally make good progress. The headteacher and senior staff have created an atmosphere conducive to learning.
50. Whilst the headteacher and some subject co-ordinators have started a programme of monitoring and evaluation, this is not currently a formal process, or strategically planned. There is no clear, consistent approach to monitoring the quality of teaching, curriculum planning and evaluation. The role of subject co-ordinators is currently underdeveloped in this respect.

51. The school has taken steps to monitor the content of textual materials and ensure that gender and racial stereotyping is avoided. Despite this there are few examples of explicit planning, or display work which actively promote concepts of equal opportunities. However, the content of assemblies, and the ethos of the school generally, is positive and non-discriminatory.
52. An effective individual appraisal process is in operation and linked well with staff development. Staff development questionnaires have also been successful in targeting training for staff. The school development plan is a very detailed and comprehensive document but it does not identify a clearly defined set of fully costed priorities for action. Whilst staff are keen to develop practice, more rigour is necessary in order to achieve improvement, particularly in terms of the management of the curriculum and assessment procedures.
53. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities in all respects except for reporting to parents on the success of the school's special educational needs (SEN) policy. Since the last inspection, it has become more involved in, and knowledgeable about, the daily life of the school. The committee system, including that established to overview the curriculum, works effectively. The governing body is very committed to the development of the school and is supportive of the significant amount of work and resources devoted to outreach and the education of Year 6 pupils attending on a part-time basis. Governors are keen to continue working purposefully and collaboratively with the Local Education Authority in formulating a clear set of admission and exit criteria related to the needs of pupils with specific learning difficulties.
54. Routine financial management is both prudent and efficient. Careful oversight of expenditure is maintained. There is good liaison between the school and the Local Education Authority in this regard, and a subcommittee of governors is actively involved in decision-making about spending. Grant income is effectively monitored and spent appropriately. Recent additional funding has contributed to the installation of new Information and Communication Technology facilities (ICT) and these are having a beneficial effect on standards of achievement. The school demonstrates rigour in its application of best value principles. Budget plans are accurate, submitted on time and record keeping is meticulous. However, the school has not benefited from a thorough audit of its financial approaches by the Local Education Authority in the last five years.
55. Longer term financial planning is less effective. A surplus of nearly 10 per cent of the budget has been accumulated and whilst there is an intention to spend some of the money on building improvements, there is insufficient in the way of an explicit long-term development strategy to inform this or other expenditure. For example, whilst maintaining a surplus, the school teaching staff is depleted by long-term staff illness, and the school is slightly under-staffed in relation to Circular 11/90. It is unclear in the school's strategic planning that these issues and outreach commitments to other schools are consistent with on-site shortfalls in terms of the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and the curriculum by the senior management team and subject co-ordinators.
56. Internally, the fabric of the building is in generally good condition. High quality and relevant educational displays in all classrooms considerably enhance the learning

environment. These have a significant impact in helping to raise standards. The exterior of the building is in need of repainting and the playground is in poor condition. These areas, along with the roof, are due for attention shortly. The resources provided for the teaching of the curriculum are in good supply, with no significant shortfalls.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 57.
1. Ensure the admissions and exit criteria for pupils are clear so that the school can plan appropriately and consistently to meet pupils' special educational needs (*Paragraphs 2 and 53*)
 2. Put in place formal procedures to,
 - i) monitor and develop the quality of teaching (*Paragraphs 50, 55, 65, 81 and 88*)
 - ii) monitor and improve the quality of planning and implementation of the curriculum in all subjects (*Paragraphs 28, 50, 55, 73, 78, 94 and 101*)
 - iii) analyse and evaluate the impact of the school's chosen curriculum balance on standards (*Paragraphs 26 and 101*)
 3. Implement the school's assessment procedures in all subjects and
 - i) analyse the results to further inform planning (*Paragraphs 44, 65, 73, 81, 84, 85 and 88*)
 - ii) use the information to measure progress which can be reported to parents (*Paragraphs 47, 81 and 88*)
 4. Use the school development plan strategically to prioritise and cost longer term areas for development (*Paragraphs 52, 55, 88 and 97*)
 5. Set more precise targets in pupils' individual education plans, to enable progress to be measured and analysed to further inform planning (*Paragraphs 44, 47, 65 and 73*)
 6. Establish success criteria for the school's Special Educational Needs policy, which can subsequently be measured and reported to parents annually in the governors' report. (*Paragraph 53*)

58. PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

52

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

35

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4%	37%	31%	22%	6%		

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	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	66
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	30

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

Attendance

Authorised absence	%	Unauthorised absence	%
School data	5	School data	0

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 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	29	7	36

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 3 and above	Boys	14	22	29
	Girls	3	3	7
	Total	17	25	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 3 and above	School	47(89)	69(78)	100(83)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	66
Any other minority ethnic group	

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	9.43
Average class size	11

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	93

FTE means full-time equivalent.

(*) These figures omit any income and expenditure linked to the school's work with pupils on the rolls of other schools.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	1998 – 99
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	£
Total income (*)	353695
Total expenditure (*)	350912
Expenditure per pupil (*)	5317
Balance brought forward from previous year	29504
Balance carried forward to next year	32287

59. Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	66
Number of questionnaires returned	40

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	31	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	95	5	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	72	23	0	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	78	22	0	0	0
The teaching is good.	85	12	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	80	18	0	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	82	18	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	90	10	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	80	18	2	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	82	15	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	85	15	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	58	26	8	0	8

Other issues raised by parents

Several parents were concerned about the length of time it took their children to travel to and from school on Local Education Authority arranged transport. Other parents with children with similar travelling times felt that the time spent with other pupils on the transport was a good social learning experience. In respect of this, the inspectors found no evidence that any pupil was tired during lessons or was in any other way affected by their journey despite it being far longer than would normally be desirable.

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

ENGLISH

60. Overall, pupils' achievement in English is good. In speaking and listening it is very good and helps pupils progressively to develop their research skills and evaluation of work across a broad range of subjects. When pupils start at the school, they often lack confidence but after a short time, they become enthusiastic and confident about answering questions and in group-discussions. They listen very attentively, seldom interrupt, relate what they know, at times from investigative homework, and frequently predict what will happen next. In mathematics at Year 4, pupils describe shapes and their properties very well and in information technology, they express views clearly about their keyboard skills. At Year 5, they learn and use accurately technical terms such as 'Newtons' in their science work on forces. In poetry pupils have 'volumes' of good ideas. At Year 6, for instance, they describe paintings with phrases like the moon is a grey banana'. The majority express their ideas in complete sentences without much reminding, recall and recount events accurately and fluently, and ask very relevant questions as a way of formulating their ideas.
61. Achievement in reading is good. Many pupils enter the school at Years 3, 4 and 5 with very poor reading skills and at levels that cannot be measured easily by standard reading tests. By Year 6, the most able pupils improve by considerably more than the increase in their chronological age and the average development is often in line with their increase in chronological age. More able Year 5 pupils read fluently and accurately. They concentrate on the meaning of stories, and identify and discuss the main points. Some are beginning to read silently or aloud with expression. All pupils show a developing awareness of phonics and most are confident in attempting unknown words. The more able have developed a range of strategies including context, picture clues, self-correction, word shapes and letter strings. Others still find it difficult to use context strategies. By Year 6, many pupils are at ease with both fiction and non-fiction material, and some are beginning to read with insight about the characters, main events and the plot of stories. The Literacy Strategy has helped enrich the curriculum and maintain progress in standards of reading.
62. Achievement in writing is satisfactory. The majority of pupils use cursive writing within a short time of starting in the school and this becomes standard practice by Year 6. Pupils experience a wide range of writing for different purposes such as lists, poems, letters, and diary accounts in addition to story writing. In Year 4, whilst the least able are still learning how to construct sentences, the majority are mostly accurate in using capital letters, full stops, nouns and adjectives. By Year 6, most pupils use an extensive vocabulary of more complex high frequency words. On average, at the beginning of Year 4, pupils can spell approximately 34 of the first 300 key words whilst by Year 6, they can spell accurately 160 of these. The most able have nearly completed them by this stage. The school is targeting spelling and this is making an impact on quality and standards throughout the school. Information and communications technology (ICT) is employed frequently to produce re-worked, attractive and accurate pieces of work, and within I.C.T, pupils use keyboard skills to reinforce letter blends and sounds. The satisfactory quality of the independent written

work in literacy is not yet used to broader effect in subjects such as geography and history where worksheets often predominate. The school is targeting writing next year as a priority.

63. The quality of learning is very good. Pupils are enthusiastic, interested and very co-operative in lessons. Pupils work independently in all year groups and are supportive of their peers. They enjoy the structure and pace of lessons which help them to concentrate and mostly remain on task
64. Overall the quality of teaching is good. In Years 5 and 6 it is very good whilst in Year 4 teaching is mainly satisfactory. On occasions unsatisfactory teaching is evident when the planning and organisation of lessons leave some pupils unoccupied and distracted for periods of time. This happens with pupils who are unable to get on with their work independently when teacher's attention is focussed on other pupils. This was evident during the inspection both in a normal morning lesson and in an afternoon lesson where, due to prolonged staff illness, the two Year 4 classes currently combine without additional teaching staff support. Teachers have very good knowledge of their subject and lesson content, and activities are generally well matched to the interests and abilities of pupils. Relationships are very good between pupils and teachers and teachers' expectations are high. The non-teaching assistants make a very valuable contribution to pupils' progress in literacy skills. Homework is given daily, particularly in reading and spelling, and this is supported well by many parents. It is monitored well by staff and extends pupils' opportunities to learn. It enhances parents' knowledge of the progress their children are making.
65. The English policy and curriculum meet statutory requirements and provide pupils with breadth and balance. The strategies of the Literacy Hour have been introduced well and have had a marked effect on teaching throughout the curriculum. Good resources support this work. An early evaluation of the work is that school has noted an adverse impact upon writing and in response, has allocated more time to English and writing skills throughout the school. Whilst a range of assessment is carried out, it is not always fully analysed. Some Individual Education Plan (IEP) targets are too general for progress to be evaluated such as, 'introduce a range of styles of writing through the literacy hour'. Other targets linked to key word reading or spelling can at times be either too low or too high for them to be effective measures of success. This lack of specificity currently makes it difficult to analyse all targets and therefore make judgements on whether teaching could be improved.
66. The quality of displays is very good and makes an impact on pupils' learning. A wide range of work is attractively displayed including a display on Macbeth and work undertaken with a local Wirral newspaper to produce a school 'news sheet'.
67. Since the last inspection, teaching approaches have been developed successfully to ensure that pupils' are more independent in their learning. This has had a marked effect on pupils' research skills and their own ability to acquire knowledge and understanding. They are now more involved in generating ideas and in finding their own solutions to questions. Since the last inspection, part-time Year 6 pupils on the rolls of other schools are taught in the mornings in what was previously the school library and in the art room. The art room now houses the new library and whilst it is

stocked satisfactorily, this multi-purpose use has reduced the flexibility of independent access for pupils to the library.

MATHEMATICS

- 68.** Pupils' achievement in mathematics is good throughout the school including their attitudes, values and personal development. The majority of pupils enter the school with very limited mathematical skills, lacking confidence, and with gaps in their mathematical language. Pupils become progressively more confident with number work and in their use of mathematical language. Teachers constantly ask 'how?', 'why?', 'Is there another way?', with the result that pupils realise that there are often many different strategies for arriving at the correct answer. Pupils in Year 5 using a ready reckoner for the first time for difficult calculations were able to explain the different ways they could add and subtract 9 and 11.
- 69.** Pupils in Year 4, count in 2s, 3s, 5s and 10s and can give alternative ways of recording number stories. Less able pupils name basic shapes and their properties, whilst more able pupils name more complex shapes such as an octagon and rhombus, classifying them by their properties onto a Venn diagram. By the end of Key Stage 2, the more able pupils in Year 6 are developing their use of the four operations of number. They can add and subtract 3 digit numbers without a calculator; read, write and order numbers to one million and understand place value. They are confident in undertaking increasingly more difficult tasks, such as doubling numbers crossing the 10, 100 and finally the 1,000 boundary for the first time. Pupils of lower ability in Year 6 order numbers to 1,000 understand hundreds, tens and units, place value and distinguish between odd and even numbers. In a lesson about temperature, they demonstrated an understanding of negative and positive degrees and could measure temperature accurately using a thermometer.
- 70.** The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection when the quality of teaching was sound or better in almost all lessons and good in over a half. It is now satisfactory or better in all but one lesson, which was in Year 5, and is good or very good in over half, and excellent in two lessons in Year 5. A strength of teaching is teachers' relationships with pupils. They are aware of individual needs and plan lessons accordingly, enabling pupils to make progress and become more confident. The best lessons are characterised by teachers clearly explaining the learning objectives at the beginning of the lesson; they make learning exciting and fun, maintaining a brisk pace through the lesson. Pupils' learning is good. They respond with enthusiasm, they are eager to answer questions and take pride in completing their work. Questioning is used well to develop thinking and improve understanding. Frequent opportunities are provided for pupils to talk about mathematics, and to clarify their thought processes. This also gives teachers opportunities to assess learning and understanding. Praise and feedback are used well, successfully motivating pupils and helping to keep them on task. In the only unsatisfactory lesson observed in mathematics, whilst some pupils were encouraged to self-check their work before moving on, on occasions they sat unoccupied for some time. Due to the teachers' commitment to supervise the school break-time, the lesson also remained unfinished. Homework is well used to consolidate and revise pupils' knowledge and understanding.

71. As a result of the high quality of teaching, most pupils enjoy mathematics, they are very enthusiastic, particularly in whole class mental starters. Pupils in Year 5 maintain a brisk pace in counting on and back in 100s up to 3,000. Pupils enjoy working together on problem solving activities and discuss strategies confidently. They think hard about questions and try to give sensible answers. This was evident in a Year 6 lesson when pupils were asked to describe what could be measured in degrees. They successfully acquire knowledge and skills in lessons and teachers use a range of strategies to increase and assess their understanding. More able pupils in one lesson were asked to make a worksheet for other members of their group and 'to make it hard'. They loved the competitive element of this and worked conscientiously. Pupils are well behaved in lessons, teachers make clear their expectations at the beginning of lessons and pupils respond positively.
72. Activities are provided which require pupils to use mathematics across the whole curriculum. Mathematical concepts and language are well reinforced in other lessons, particularly in physical education, science, English, design technology and information technology. When designing and making a Christmas Cracker pupils had to measure and cut paper and cards for the cracker and for the box they were to be stored in. In physical education pupils are encouraged to estimate time and distance.
73. Satisfactory improvement has been made in this subject since the last inspection. The school has fully implemented the National Numeracy Strategy and teachers make good use of it in their planning. The policy has not yet been updated to reflect the Strategy, neither have evaluation procedures been put in place. Whilst national assessment results are analysed, with subsequent adjustments to planning, this is not carried out with other assessment information. Targets in individual education plans are frequently unspecific. These are weaknesses in the subject as school is not able to consistently demonstrate the impact of its work on standards in mathematics.

SCIENCE

74. Pupils' achievement in science is good. National assessment results at the end of Key Stage 2 have been reasonably consistent over the past three years with approximately 40 to 50 per cent of pupils regularly achieving national expectations of Level 4, and only a minority failing to achieve Level 3. All pupils achieved Level 3 in 1999. Standards have improved since the last inspection, particularly in pupils' research skills and independent work. Current Year 6 pupils' achievement reflects this pattern. The majority have a sound concept of the principles of fair testing and carry out experiments safely and independently.
75. At Year 4, the development of scientific concepts is at an early stage. Pupils display imagination in the way they tackle simple experiments of movement although their ability to discuss results is hampered by inadequate subject vocabulary. By Year 5, this has developed with some pupils able to demonstrate a good concept of the way forces act and able to measure this in 'Newtons'. At Year 6, most pupils give clear reasons for their answers and they retain knowledge. Pupils of all abilities talk clearly, informatively and accurately about the workings of the solar system.

76. Overall, teaching and learning in science is good, with some very good teaching at Year 5. In the best lessons, pupils are stimulated to think and work independently. Time devoted to active participation is carefully planned and pupils clearly enjoy the discipline and challenge provided by teachers. Whilst pupils record their results adequately, they are given too few opportunities to use varied forms of written presentation such as graphs and bar charts, or in making regular use of information and communications technology (ICT).
77. The curriculum fully meets statutory requirements. Documentation in the subject is extensive, well organised, and useful. Resources are of good quality and skilfully put together for the benefit of all teaching groups. Assessment is thorough and teachers have a very good knowledge of pupils' capabilities and attainments. The subject is managed effectively. The co-ordinator has begun a system of monitoring and has come to some useful initial conclusions in terms of teaching methodology. However, longer term planning does not yet benefit from adequate precision in terms of clearly measurable targets.

ART

78. Owing to timetabling and the length of the inspection, no art lessons were observed, and it is not possible to make judgements about the quality of teaching or of pupils' learning in the subject. However, from the minimal evidence available and given the time constraints of the school timetable, pupils' achievement is at least satisfactory as it was at the last inspection.
79. Pupils have sketchbooks and examples of other work are kept in portfolios, which cover their time in the school. These contain evidence of work in areas such as portrait drawing and painting, at times in the style of a famous artist such as Picasso; self-portraits subsequently refined and re-worked in historical style and linked well with the history topic on Tudors; object drawing with 'shadow', developing from cuboids to spheres; and anatomical drawings of their own hands. There is evidence of some good achievement by individual pupils. The subject contributes particularly well to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
80. The school has a good subject policy and scheme of work although this will need to be reviewed to take account of the new National Curriculum, which becomes statutory in August 2000. The art curriculum is currently appropriate and broad, and includes evidence of collage, abstract styles, still life, and work in different media such as colour- wash, chalk and batique. No evidence of 3D work was available during the inspection. In the last twelve months, all staff have been preoccupied with introducing the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. No strategic approach is currently evident for monitoring teaching or pupils' learning in art, or to ensure that pupils' work is consistently marked or annotated to support analysis of progress. Assessment procedures are in place but, as at the time of the last inspection, are still not yet fully effective in measuring or monitoring pupils' progress in the subject, and in subsequently reporting that progress to parents.
81. Since the last inspection, the specialist art room is now used in the mornings by a part-time class of pupils with specific learning difficulties on the roll of other schools. This

is part of the school's outreach work. Whilst art is taught in the afternoons, the school library also takes up now part of the room which has reduced the available space for practical work for the pupils in the school. This has reduced the flexibility of use of the room significantly.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

82. Due to timetabling constraints, the subject was not observed during the inspection. Additional information from teachers' records is insufficient to make a judgement on pupils' achievement. As such, comparisons cannot be made with the last inspection. However, the school's policy for design and technology is clear and is supported by a well-developed scheme of work. Teachers choose units of work to match pupils' needs. A portfolio of a recent Year 6 'Christmas Cracker' project provides evidence that pupils can work through a design brief selecting materials and equipment required to make the cracker itself and a gift to go inside. They wrote a joke using word processing skills and chose a design for the outside of their cracker using 'clip art' software. Finally they designed and made a box to contain their crackers completing an evaluation of the finished product. This was an excellent example of cross-curriculum work incorporating literacy, mathematics and information technology.
83. All pupils are tested on health and safety aspects of the subject, and a detailed tracking sheet records pupils' coverage of units of work. A good range of resources including construction kits, materials, components and tools supports the subject. Informal systems are in place for monitoring the subject but assessment information is not used to analyse achievements and standards year on year.

HUMANITIES (GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY)

Geography

84. Geography was not the focus of the school's topic during the inspection and did not feature at all on the timetable. From evidence of completed worksheets and classroom displays on 'Settlement', pupils in Year 4 and Year 5 have focussed on work such as 'our school/my street' and the Wirral Peninsula. Year 6 pupils have focussed on work such as 'where we live', map co-ordinates, fieldwork involving compass points, local routes and simple mapping. As little written response is expected of pupils, progress over time is not clearly evident from this work. Whilst discussion with pupils and some evidence from teachers' records confirms what pupils know and understand of this work now, assessment and recording procedures are not yet fully effective in showing clearly pupils' progress over time. As such, there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on pupils' achievement.

History

85. Given the time constraints of the school timetable, and evidence from the limited amount of pupils' written work and information in teachers' records, achievement in

history is at least satisfactory which is the same judgement as at the last inspection. History was the focus of the humanities topic only in Year 4 and Year 5 during the week of the inspection, and two lessons were timetabled. However, from this limited evidence, achievement is satisfactory at Year 4 and good at Year 5. Since the start of the topic at Year 4, pupils now locate Egypt on a map of the African continent without much adult support before watching enthralled, a video about modern and ancient Egypt. One pupil knows that cats were considered lucky and sacred in those times. At the beginning of the topic in Year 5, pupils had little knowledge of the facts surrounding Tudor Royalty. By the time of the inspection, most name the first Tudor king and discuss a range of interesting facts about the Battle of Bosworth, the 'houses' of Lancaster and York, and their emblems. Pupils develop their research skills to good effect. They are very keen to use their 'Key Questions for Artefacts' information sheet. This helps them compare several objects, make judgements such as to their age and usage and record their ideas and decisions. Those pupils who require significantly more adult support with their work also achieve well. In all year groups, worksheets predominate with little evidence available of extended writing other than in cross-curricular work in literacy such as 'the evacuees writing home'. Achievement has developed satisfactorily since the previous inspection with older pupils now more confident in carrying out personal research with reduced adult support.

86. Teaching and learning are good overall and particularly effective in Year 5 where the staff team links very successfully their comprehensive knowledge of the range of the pupils' special educational needs to their clear intentions of what they want the pupils to learn. This results in all pupils knowing exactly what is expected of them and no time is wasted during the lesson. Teaching is exciting and follows a set style, which incorporates initial recaps, development of lesson objectives, investigation, independent discussion, recording if appropriate and evaluation. This provides a structured routine in which teachers make very good use of discussion and questioning to probe and assess the ideas and understanding of the pupils. Humorous and very supportive teamwork also provides pupils with the initiative and self esteem to work independently and confidently. They are excited by their work for most of the time. On occasions at Year 4, teaching is less effective when resources are not immediately ready for use and additional staff not always available to support those pupils with additional needs. The 'history detective' homework is linked very well to the topic and is particularly effective when family members support this by buying relevant books as presents to help extend their children's knowledge and understanding. Teaching in history was not inspected at the last inspection to allow current comparisons to be drawn.
87. The co-ordinator of humanities is aware of the need to review the policies and schemes of work for geography and history in the light of the new National Curriculum, which becomes statutory in August 2000. Whilst time is available to advise staff on their planning for lessons, the co-ordinator has insufficient time to monitor teaching and pupils' learning in the subjects across the school and to ensure that pupils' written work is consistently marked or annotated. Assessment procedures are in place but not yet fully effective in measuring or monitoring pupils' progress in the subjects, and in subsequently reporting that progress to parents. In the last twelve months, all staff have been preoccupied with introducing the National Literacy and

Numeracy Strategies and no strategic approach is currently evident for developing or funding the humanities.

88. Every opportunity is taken to broaden pupils' geographical and historical understanding such as the school's recent 'Millennium Memories' production of words, poems and music for pupils' families and friends, visits to places of interest such as Birkenhead Priory and in regular fieldwork. Work in humanities is linked excellently to other subjects such as art and literacy which allows pupils to gain knowledge and skills in a broad and natural context and thus perceive the links between different strands of the same topic. Year groups often join together for their lessons. As a result, the subject contributes very well to pupils' personal and social development. The subject also provides pupils with greater understanding of themselves and what they think, and to their knowledge of their current lives in the context of past events.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

89. Pupils' achievements in the subject are good. Pupils enter the school with varying levels of achievements and experience. Through a well-constructed scheme of work, pupils make good progress through planned accreditation units. Pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 begin a keyboard skills and competencies programme. They are able to log on, select the programme and begin skills practice, becoming increasingly competent in letter and line spacing, at the same time increasing their hand – eye co-ordination and fine motor skills. They learn about the parts of the computer. By the end of Key Stage 2, more able pupils confidently use a word processor to enter and edit text. With minimal support, they set up frames and drop and import text and Clip Art photographs. A display of work of Year 6 pupils completed last December provided evidence of high quality work, elements of which were at an age appropriate attainment level. They are confident in communicating information to produce a recount of their science topic on sound, which involved a series of operations. These included integrating a photograph they had each taken on a digital camera and searching Clip Art to illustrate their work. Year 6 pupils of lower ability are able to search a CD ROM for information, with prompting, load a disc and save work, operate a tape recorder and record player confidently.
90. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. As it was not judged at the last inspection, comparisons cannot be made. Teachers have a structured approach to developing pupils' capabilities and share objectives clearly at the beginning of each lesson. This ensures that pupils have a good understanding of tasks and get on quickly with their work. Activities are well planned to meet the needs of all pupils enabling progress at an individual rate. This was seen in a Year 4 lesson when pupils worked on different levels of the multi-sensory keyboard skills programme. Teachers and support staff use demonstration well to explain the purpose of each activity; there is a good balance between direct teaching and unobtrusive support, encouraging pupils to become independent learners. Groups of Year 5 pupils work independently using CD ROM's to handle information related to their science topic following clear teacher exposition and demonstration at the beginning of the lesson. Teaching is based on high expectations; tasks set are challenging and extend pupils' thinking. They respond with enthusiasm, persevere and concentrate hard on tasks and are eager to learn. Pupils are

well managed, relationships are good and this enables them to make good progress. Ongoing assessment is used well to inform future planning and is often shared with pupils at the end of lessons. Teachers are well supported by support staff and they work effectively together in planning and assessment.

91. Pupils are responsive learners. They show positive attitudes and interest in the use of computers. Most pupils discuss their work and explain the activity in which they are involved. Year 5 pupils are excited by their own success in increasing their information technology skills and thrilled when they use the CD ROM to extend their scientific knowledge. Groupings are carefully planned to develop social and co-operative skills. Year 6 pupils work very well together to use their computer to store, sort and retrieve information they had previously kept in a card index system. Pupils are very helpful and polite to each other, more able pupils supporting the less skilled. They plan work together, discuss choices and agree jointly a course of action such as when programming the Roamer.
92. Information technology is used well to support other curriculum areas. Pupils are developing effective research skills using computers with CD ROM, for example when finding information about Sir Isaac Newton or accessing information from a dictionary. Whilst developing communication information skills, pupils re-order instructions about crossing the road or making a piece of toast. Many opportunities are taken to consolidate literacy skills through reading text, following instructions, spelling, dictionary work and keyboard skills based on letter recognition and consonant blends. In a design technology project pupils used the computer to write jokes for their Christmas Crackers. Effective planning supports the development of self-organisation and independent learning.
93. The subject has made good improvement since the last inspection. Modelling has been securely included in the information technology programmes of study, ensuring that National Curriculum requirements are fully met. The quality and quantity of resources have increased. Four new computers were brought last term using specific grant funding and an additional one is leased, enabling all classes to have one hour each week of discrete subject time, in addition to work in their own classrooms. Benching has been installed in the information technology areas using monies from the school budget and a wide range of discs has been purchased to support learning across the curriculum. The school has recently gained Internet access, but this has yet to be used. Co-ordination of the subject has been irregular in recent years due to staff retirement and illness; currently the deputy headteacher is acting co-ordinator. The information technology policy requires updating . There is no formal cross-curricular planning or consistent monitoring through the school; this is a shortcoming in the management of the subject.

MUSIC

94. From the observation of music in three lessons and from discussion with staff, achievement is judged to be good and improved from the last inspection when some pupils were more passive learners and their achievement was unsatisfactory. In all year groups pupils demonstrate an understanding of pitch and rhythm, and of the links between music and other aspects of creative activity such as language and art. Year 5

pupils recognise musical symbols and read simple notation. All year groups progressively demonstrate the capacity to compose simple pieces based on story or picture stimuli. Pupils have a weekly opportunity to sing as a whole school and learn new material successfully.

95. Overall, teaching and learning in music are good. There is much in lessons to stimulate and challenge pupils, with teachers possessing a keen awareness of the importance of musical activity in relation to the specific learning difficulties of the pupils and of its links with other curriculum areas. Although time for the subject is limited, good use is made of what is available and lessons have a brisk and purposeful pace. This encourages all pupils to join in fully and is an improvement from the last inspection.
96. The music curriculum meets statutory requirements. The scheme of work is appropriate and provides a good basis for the effective planning of lessons. Pupil achievement is adequately monitored. Resources are sufficient in breadth and number. The subject does not currently benefit from an audit and review process, which identifies clear medium and longer-term priorities.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

97. Due to timetabling arrangements, it was only possible to observe teaching in three lessons in Years 5 and 6. Judgements draw upon analysis of the physical education policy, schemes of work, records and discussion with the subject co-ordinator. Many pupils enter Orrets Meadow experiencing difficulties in fine and gross motor skills, memory, and spatial and body awareness. By the end of Key Stage 2 more able pupils plan, perform and evaluate their activities as individuals and in a range of groupings. In gym, they show body control, precision and accuracy, they run races of different distances understanding the differences in running techniques required. They are confident in water and swim unaided using any stroke for at least 25 metres. Pupils of lower ability plan a simple response to tasks set by the teacher and follow instructions recognising the need for safety procedures. In games they send and receive a variety of objects. In lessons observed at Year 5 and Year 6, pupils attainments were mostly at an age appropriate level. Year 5 pupils make a variety of flight jumps, giving consideration to take off and landings; they evaluate their performance and describe what they found difficult or easy to the rest of the class. At Year 6 in games, pupils demonstrate considerable skill in ball passing and select the high level tactics required.
98. The quality of teaching and learning show an improvement from the last inspection when it ranged from very good to unsatisfactory. Overall, it is now good with some very good elements. Lessons are well organised, teachers set clear expectations and their sound knowledge of pupils and their subject knowledge ensures activities are appropriate to the needs of pupils, enabling pupils to practice and reinforce their performance. Effective management results in pupils making good use of space and maintains high levels of behaviour and concentration. By recapping at the beginning and end of lessons teachers encourage pupils to consider skills and tactics and discuss ways in which they can improve their skills. Pupils' demonstrate clear enjoyment. They show interest in the activities and are keen to succeed. They concentrate hard on improving their skills such as Year 6 pupils who develop their ball passing skills and

tactics through well planned invasion games such as piggy in the middle. Year 5 pupils put considerable physical effort into improving their flight jumps and are confident in attempting new techniques and demonstrating newly acquired skills to other pupils. Pupils work well individually and collaboratively, taking turns and supporting each other in developing new skills; they demonstrate clear enjoyment in achieving success.

99. The physical education curriculum is enhanced by external support such as coaching by local league footballers and training by a national gymnastics coach. This has the added benefit of providing male role models for the pupils. The school has joined the 'Top Sports' scheme, which provides opportunities for professional development on a range of activities for staff. These include hockey, quick cricket, rugby and swimming. On completion of the course, the school has access to Top Sport 'bags', which provide additional resources for the school. Other opportunities to enrich and extend pupils' experiences include table tennis coaching, cross-country running, participation in local football tournaments and regular residential visits to a North Wales Outdoor pursuits centre.
100. The allocation of time for physical education activities has been reduced since the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy. However, the school has not yet evaluated the impact of this on pupils' achievement in physical education. No structured monitoring of the subject takes place and attainments are not analysed from year to year, which is a shortcoming in the subject management. The poor state of the playground identified in the last inspection has not yet been repaired but is scheduled to be done very shortly. The school has made satisfactory improvement in the subject since the last report.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

101. Standards have remained high since the last inspection and pupils' achievement in religious education is still good. Many pupils demonstrate very good recall of factual information and are able to apply this knowledge appropriately to a broad range of concepts. Year 4 pupils discuss Holy Communion being the 'Body and Blood of Christ', and describe Jesus as the 'Light of the World.' Year 5 pupils know that Jesus had a father on earth but that his 'real' father is God. They have views and express them clearly in relating parables to the current times. More able pupils relate very well the names of organisations such as Oxfam, Age Concern and The Samaritans to the good work they carry out, whilst less able pupils understand the word 'neighbour' in its broadest meaning. By Year 6, pupils have a developing understanding of diverse religious traditions such as in discussing Judaism, and handling religious artefacts and recording their findings. Pupils are interested in the subject and respond very positively in their lessons. They write productively on their own or with others in a group.
102. The quality of teaching and learning is very good; lessons are well planned and along with the policy document and scheme of work match the Wirral Agreed Syllabus. The subject knowledge of the teacher is very strong and expectations of pupils' work and behaviour are high. Teaching in religious education characterises the very best teaching in the school. Learning objectives are clearly explained at the beginning of the lesson, learning is exciting and fun, and maintains a brisk pace throughout the lesson

which keeps pupils concentrating and involved. This was very evident in a Year 5 lesson about parables. The teacher's tone of voice and non-verbal cues quickly built up an atmosphere in the introductory story in which pupils participated willingly, including some in role-play. They responded with enthusiasm and were eager to answer questions about 'responsibility' and 'who is really my neighbour'. Questions were individually directed at pupils to maintain their active participation in the lesson, to develop thinking and improve understanding regardless of their ability and to assess pupils' understanding. Questions are re-phrased when necessary, to gain more appropriate responses.

103. There is a strong multi-faith element within the subject with visits to Mosques and Synagogues as well as local Churches and Cathedrals. Visitors from other faiths regularly come into school to talk to pupils. Photographic evidence and wall displays demonstrate the wide ranging experiences of the pupils, showing celebration cards for Muslims and pictures of Sidhartha and Buddhist customs. Day to day assessment of the subject takes place well during lessons, but the use of this information is not yet fully effective in measuring or monitoring pupils' progress in the subject. Daily assemblies positively support religious education within the school and together, contribute very well to pupils' knowledge of themselves and their spiritual development. Resources for the subject have been improved and are good for the needs of the pupils.