

# INSPECTION REPORT

**St Anne's Catholic Primary School**  
Birkenhead

LEA area: Wirral

Unique Reference Number: 105088

Inspection Number: 188716

Headteacher: Mr T J McBeath

Reporting inspector: Mrs E M D Mackie  
23482

Dates of inspection: 4 – 7 October 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 706746

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
Type of control:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Highfield South Rock Ferry Birkenhead CH42 4NE
Telephone number:	0151-6453682
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev Fr R Warren
Date of previous inspection:	May 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Tina Bradley Lay Inspector		Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Lyn Butlin Team Inspector	English Design and technology Equal opportunities	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
David Earley Team Inspector	Science Art History	Curriculum and assessment Efficiency
Graham Laws Team Inspector	Information technology Geography Physical education Special educational needs	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Leadership and management

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## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

- The headteacher is dedicated, hardworking and has a sense of vision for the school. There was an overall improvement in the school's results in national tests in 1999.
- Provision for pupils under five is very good.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good.
- Relationships within the school are very good.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good. It is good for cultural development.
- There is good provision for the support, guidance and welfare of pupils.
- Partnership with parents and the community is good.
- The school gives good value for money.

### Where the school has weaknesses

- Standards in writing are unsatisfactory at the end of both key stages.
- I. The school's level of unauthorised absence is above the national average and a significant number of pupils are late for school.
  - II. There is no clear framework for the management of the school, with precise definition of roles and responsibilities for co-ordinators and planned involvement of governors.
  - III. Monitoring of teaching and learning is insufficiently developed.

**This is an effective school whose strengths far outweigh its weaknesses. The governors' action plan will set out how the weaknesses identified during the inspection are to be tackled. The plan will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.**

### How the school has improved since the last inspection

The curriculum is organised so that there is good provision in all classes, including those with more than one year group. Underachievement in mathematics at Key Stage 1 has been dealt with and standards are now in line with the national average; more pupils achieve at the higher level. The teaching and learning of design and technology are now satisfactory and the school's enhanced resources provide opportunities for further improvement. The quality of teaching has improved. In the last inspection, five per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed during the current inspection. Subject co-ordinators still do not have appropriate time to monitor classroom teaching and learning and this continues to be a weakness. There have been a number of recent appointments and the time is right for the school to establish a clear management structure and set up plans for monitoring. The school is well placed to continue to improve. The governors and staff are committed to raising pupils' standards of attainment. The staff are hardworking and enthusiastic and there is a shared sense of determination which will help the school to move forward and succeed.

## Standards in subjects

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds in 1998 based on the National Curriculum tests:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	Key	
			<i>well above average</i>	A
			<i>above average</i>	B
			<i>average</i>	C
			<i>below average</i>	D
			<i>well below average</i>	E
English	C	A		
Mathematics	C	A		
Science	E	D		

These comparisons relate to the 1998 results. They are based on the average National Curriculum level achieved by pupils at the school. They show that pupils' test results in English and mathematics were in line with the national average and well above average compared with similar schools. In science, results were well below the national average for all schools and below average compared with similar schools.

Pupils' results in the 1999 Key Stage 2 tests show that overall standards have been maintained in English and mathematics but fewer pupils reached the higher Level 5 in English. In science, standards rose from 62 per cent to 82 percent at level 4 and from 5 per cent to 16 per cent at Level 5. There are no published national results for 1999, so averages and comparisons are not available. Evidence from inspection confirms satisfactory levels of attainment in all three subjects except in writing, which is below average.

The majority of children enter the school with very low levels of attainment and inspection evidence indicates that pupils make good progress overall as under-fives and at Key Stage 1 and sound progress is maintained at Key Stage 2. In information technology, attainment is average by the end of both key stages. By the time they leave the school, pupils have made good progress in art and history and satisfactory progress in design and technology, geography, music and physical education. Literacy and numeracy skills are developed appropriately in all subjects.

## Quality of teaching

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 - 7 years	7 - 11 years
English	Very good	Good	Good
Mathematics	Very good	Good	Good
Science		Very good	Good
Information technology		Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Other subjects	Very good	Good	Good

Teaching of children under five is very good and throughout the rest of the school the overall quality of teaching is good. In the lessons seen, it was excellent in one per cent of lessons, very good in 33 per cent, good in 38 per cent and satisfactory in 28 per cent. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. The high quality of teaching makes a significant contribution to the pupils' attainment and progress. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and they plan together

effectively so that lessons are well balanced and interesting. Pupils are managed very well and good attitudes are promoted in the calm, orderly classrooms. Excellent teaching was observed in design and technology at Key Stage 1. Teaching is very good in history at Key Stage 2 and good in art and music throughout the school. Teaching in design and technology, geography and physical education is satisfactory.

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

## Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Good. Most pupils concentrate and work hard in all lessons.
Attendance	Well below the national average. Unauthorised absence is well above the national average and a significant number of pupils are late for school. These factors have an adverse effect on pupils' progress.
Ethos*	Very good.
Curriculum	Very good. Broad, balanced and relevant. Very good planning for pupils to gain skills, knowledge and understanding in a systematic way.
Pupils with special educational needs	Good provision which needs to be co-ordinated more precisely now that the school has new co-ordinators.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Very good and a strength of the school.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Satisfactory. The school has sufficient appropriately qualified and experienced staff who are highly committed to the pupils' education. Good, well maintained accommodation. Good level of learning resources.
Value for money	Good.

\* Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.

## The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
IV. The large majority say that their children like school. V. Behaviour in school is good. VI. The school is approachable when they have problems. VII. The school promotes positive values and attitudes.	VIII. A few are not satisfied with the amount IX. A few do not think that the school gives

Inspection judgement support parents' positive view of the school. Homework is set throughout the school and it increases in amount as pupils get older. An appropriate amount is usually set. Information is sent to all parents at the beginning of the school year about topics to be studied. The school is considering sending information at intervals during the school year.

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- .

## KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION



The governing body, headteacher and staff should:

1 Improve standards of attainment in writing by:

- reviewing the current policy, scheme of work and teaching for handwriting; *(Paragraphs 8, 84, 86, 89)*
- reducing the number of worksheets used so that pupils have more opportunities to extend their own writing and higher attaining pupils are more frequently challenged. *(Paragraph 90)*

1 Improve the overall management of the school by:

- creating a clear management framework with precise definition of roles and responsibilities for governors and co-ordinators; *(Paragraphs 58, 70)*
- establishing strategies to ensure the productive involvement of governors in monitoring and evaluation procedures *(Paragraph 58)*
- enabling subject co-ordinators to monitor teaching and learning in the classrooms; *(Paragraphs 95, 108, 119)*
- establishing formal teacher appraisal procedures. *(Paragraph 61, 64)*

1 Improve attendance levels and punctuality by:

- continuing to develop more effective strategies to encourage parents to send their children to school and send them on time. *(Paragraphs 21, 23, 47)*

Other areas for development which should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- There is weak provision for multicultural education in art and music. *(Paragraphs 41, 128, 157)*
- Teachers' marking of work is not consistent across the school. *(Paragraphs 26, 94, 106, 117)*
- There is a lack of playground equipment for pupils to use at break times. *(Paragraph 66)*

# INTRODUCTION

## Characteristics of the school

1. St Anne's Catholic Primary School is situated in Rock Ferry on the outskirts of Birkenhead. There are currently 208 pupils aged from four to eleven years old in the school. Of these, there are 21 full-time and eight part-time children under five years old in the reception class. There are 35 part-time children in the nursery. This is a decrease since the last inspection, when there were 260 pupils in the school and 23 full-time equivalent children in the nursery. Children are admitted to the reception class in the academic year in which they are five. There is a general balance of boys and girls overall in the school, although there are imbalances in some classes. Most pupils live in the surrounding area, where there is a mix of private and rented property. Most children's attainment, from assessments carried out in the first few weeks after entry to the school, is well below that expected for their age, especially in language development.

2. The school's pupils represent a wide range of backgrounds but they are, overall, below average in social and economic terms. There are no pupils from ethnic minority families and none speaks English as an additional language. Fifty eight per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is high compared with schools nationally. Thirty six per cent are on the school's register of special educational needs and this is well above the national average. Three pupils have statements of special educational need. The main school building houses the eight school classes and the nursery on two floors. There are two adequately sized playgrounds, one for infants and one for juniors.

3. The school's mission statement shows a clear commitment to Catholicism, with strong links with the church and home and respect for the dignity of the individual and celebration of achievement. The school aims to create a Christian ethos with the development of the whole child and the fostering of intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual values. It aims to prepare pupils to face the challenges of the future. It promotes a welcoming atmosphere and values links and regular support from parents.

## Key Indicators

### Attainment at Key Stage 1<sup>1</sup>

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	14	17	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	4	5	6
	Girls	12	11	12
	Total	16	16	18
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	52 (50)	52 (53)	58 (65)
	National	80 (80)	81 (80)	84 (85)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	5	7	7
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	17	19	19
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	55 (57)	61 (65)	61 (62)
	National	81 (80)	85 (84)	86 (85)

### Attainment at Key Stage 2<sup>2</sup>

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	17	21	38

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	9	14	9
	Girls	16	16	15
	Total	25	30	24
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	64 (84)	77 (66)	62 (89)
	National	65 (63)	59 (62)	69 (69)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	9	12	12
	Girls	16	16	15
	Total	25	28	27
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	64 (84)	72 (68)	69 (87)
	National	65 (63)	65 (64)	72 (69)

### Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year

		%
Authorised Absence	School	7.2
	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised Absence	School	1.7
	National comparative data	0.5

1

Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

2

Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

## Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:

	Number
Fixed period	2
Permanent	0

### 3. Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	34
Satisfactory or better	100
Less than satisfactory	0

### 3. PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

#### EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

##### Attainment and progress

4.The last inspection in May 1996 reported that standards were at least sound in all subjects except information technology, where they were unsatisfactory. Present inspection judgement is that standards have been improved in information technology and maintained in other subjects. The school's capacity for further improvement is good. This is because of the good teaching and the very good ethos, which encourages pupils to work hard and achieve.

5.Results in the 1998 national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 show that attainment levels were well below average in reading when compared with all schools and with similar schools. In writing, they were very low when compared with all schools and well below when compared with similar schools. Attainment in mathematics was well below average in comparison with all schools and with similar schools. In science, attainment as measured by teacher assessments was very low at Level 2 (the expected level) or above and average at Level 3 (the higher level). In reading, averaged over the three-year period from 1996 to 1998, the trend was upward but it was still well below the national average level. In writing, the trend was well below average with a slight rise in 1997. In mathematics, results fluctuated but they were always well below average and the overall trend was slightly upwards. In 1999, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 or above rose in reading and rose slightly in writing. In mathematics and science, it rose sharply. In all three subjects, there was a sharp rise in the percentage of pupils who achieved at Level 3.

6.Results in national tests in 1998 at Key Stage 2 show that the percentage of pupils at achieving Level 4 (the expected level) or above was close to the national average in English, well above in mathematics and below in science. The average national curriculum level achieved was in line with the national average in English and mathematics and below in science. Compared with similar schools, average levels were well above the national averages in English and mathematics and below in science. Averaged over the three-year period 1996 to 1998, performance in English and mathematics has been broadly in line with the national average. In science, it has been slightly below. Averaged over the same period, boys achieved a higher average level than girls in all three subjects. Results for 1999 tests show that percentages of pupils reaching Level 4 or above have been maintained in English and mathematics and greatly improved in science. The percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 (the higher level) has declined in English and has improved in mathematics and science. There are no current national figures for comparison.

7.Although children have a wide range of ability when they enter the nursery the majority attain at levels well below those expected for their age, especially in language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world. Despite good progress in the nursery and reception classes, the majority of children do not meet the nationally agreed standards in language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world by the time they start the National Curriculum in the reception class. In personal and social development, mathematics and creative development, they do. In physical development, they reach the expected level but finer manipulative control for writing is not so well developed.

8.Attainment in English is broadly in line with national expectations by the end of both key stages. From a low start, progress is good overall at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. Attainment in writing is unsatisfactory but current evidence suggests that the implementation of the literacy hour is having a positive effect. Good teaching and the positive attitudes and behaviour of the pupils promote improvement. By the end of both key stages, pupils use their speaking and listening skills effectively to ask questions, explain their work and share ideas with assurance. At seven years old they use their knowledge of letter sounds to read simple stories

effectively. Their reference skills to gain information from non-fiction books are not sufficiently developed. Handwriting is often poorly formed because pupils do not hold their pencils correctly. By the time they are eleven, both boys and girls enjoy reading a wide variety of texts. Most read stories, poetry and non-fiction with understanding and more able pupils use expression to bring life to their reading. Pupils use reference skills effectively to gain information from books and they are familiar with the library index system. Sustained writing is inhibited by the over-use of worksheets so that pupils do not extend their ideas and gain experience of producing longer pieces of work. Pupils write for a wide range of purposes and English skills are used effectively to support other subjects.

9. Pupils' attainment in mathematics is in line with national expectations by the end of both key stages. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils know and use numbers to 20 accurately and the majority begin to understand place value and work with higher numbers. They recognise patterns and relationships and their mental recall of facts to 20 is sound. They name simple two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils understand place value and work confidently with simple fractions and decimals. They have a good understanding of shapes, symmetry and measures, including area. They present their work in an orderly way. Satisfactory progress is made at both key stages. Appropriate use of numeracy skills in other areas of the curriculum supports the satisfactory standards in mathematics.

10. In science, pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations by the end of both key stages. They make good progress at Key Stage 1 and sound progress at Key Stage 2. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils set up simple experiments and record their findings effectively. They name the various parts of a flower and know that creatures live in different environments. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils present observations, measurements and results clearly. They make electric circuits and recognise the importance of fair testing in their investigations. Pupils gain understanding of soluble and insoluble substances through experiments and discussion. They investigate air pressure and become more discerning in making predictions as they study life and living processes. Pupils develop appropriate scientific language at both key stages and use it well to explain understanding and share their work with others.

11. Pupils reach nationally expected levels in information technology by the end of both key stages and progress is satisfactory. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils use word processing programs and operate the computer mouse and keyboard satisfactorily. They write simple text to the screen and can save and print their work appropriately. They gain early experience in programming robots but their understanding of control in everyday life is less well developed. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils use appropriate programs to import pictures to their writing. They use their skills effectively to produce travel brochures and newsletters. CD-ROMs are used well by pupils to find information to support other subjects. They have little experience of the use of spreadsheets.

12. Progress is good at both key stages in art and history. Pupils are encouraged to share ideas and this has a beneficial effect on their progress. The teachers' positive approach, good subject knowledge and good preparation of lessons play an important part in the pupils' good levels of attainment in these subjects. In art, pupils are not afraid to experiment and try out their ideas. In history, pupils gain a good understanding of changes over time, beginning when pupils discuss their own lives at the beginning of Key Stage 1. By the end of Key Stage 2, they know about the broader changes brought about by World War 2. A major factor which supports the pupils' good progress is the teachers' imaginative use of the pupils' own experiences and the involvement of the school community in looking back at earlier years.

13. In design and technology, geography, music and physical education, pupils' progress is satisfactory at both key stages. In design and technology, pupils increase their understanding of how things are made and develop skills in a systematic way. Geographical skills, knowledge and understanding grow as pupils become more aware of the world around them and the wider world.

In music, pupils develop increasingly critical listening skills and use these to improve the quality of their singing. Skills of composition are developed effectively through well-planned activities and pupils gain knowledge of a wide range of musical instruments and how they are played. In physical education, pupils develop increasing control of their bodies and gain appropriate skills to control equipment and work together in groups.

14. Overall progress in the school is satisfactory. When children start the National Curriculum in the reception class, attainment is below average in the crucial area of literacy. They make good progress at Key Stage 1 and sound progress at Key Stage 2. Language and literacy are used effectively to develop appropriate vocabulary and to help pupils record their work in a systematic way in all subjects. Progress in mathematics is satisfactory and teachers use the subject well in other lessons.

15. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress at Key Stage 1. Many make substantial improvements in reading and spelling. Most pupils on the school's register of special educational needs reach national average levels in both mathematics and science. Good progress continues throughout Key Stage 2, where standards in English and mathematics are generally commensurate with targets established in individual plans. Progress in science is good and many pupils on the register achieve the nationally expected level by the time they are eleven. Pupils on the register who participated in the 'Successful Reading Partnership', organised by the local education authority, show significant gains in reading levels.

### **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

16. Children under five make good progress in the development of personal and social skills in the nursery and reception classes. They enjoy coming to school and show enthusiasm for their work. Behaviour is good and children keep the class rules. They concentrate for increasing periods of time and form good relationships with the staff and with other children.

17. Throughout the school, the attitudes of pupils in lessons and around the school are very good and they enjoy their work and apply themselves diligently. Most parents feel that the school promotes good attitudes. In class discussions, pupils listen attentively and want to extend their understanding by asking searching questions. Higher attaining pupils are particularly keen to interpret facts presented to them and share their ideas with others. In mathematics, pupils are prepared to learn from their mistakes. In science, they respond positively to the challenges presented to them, select resources wisely and generally take a pride in their written work. Occasionally, enthusiasm spills over into unfocused chatter but this is rare. Pupils with special educational needs, including those who have precise targets for improving behaviour, generally display positive attitudes in lessons. There were two exclusions in the previous year.

18. The vast majority of parents are very pleased with the standards of behaviour in the school. Inspection evidence supports this view. Behaviour is good and pupils move around the school confidently. They seem happy and there is an effective learning atmosphere in all classrooms. The school has an effective bullying policy and the school takes strong action against those who break its laudable code of ethics.

19. Relationships in the school are very good. Teachers and pupils respect one another and confrontational incidents are rare. Pupils support one another well in many situations, for example when they help one another with computer programs or take friends to an adult when there are minor accidents in the playground. Property is treated with respect and pupils are careful with resources. There is a sense of courtesy and good manners in the school as pupils and visitors are treated with friendliness and courtesy.

20. Pupils develop personal skills well as they grow older and assume more responsibilities in school. Pupils in Year 6 run the school bank and provide support in the library. They referee

soccer matches at playtime and help younger pupils with their reading. Teachers can always depend on a host of volunteers to help out with classroom organisation. Pupils develop important listening and sharing skills as they respect one another's views and ideas and work together purposefully in groups. These experiences help pupils to become tolerant of the beliefs, attitudes and traditions of other people.

## 20. **Attendance**

21. Attendance figures are well below the national average. Both authorised and unauthorised absences are well above the national averages and are a cause for concern for the school. The school works with parents to promote good attendance and punctuality and the majority of parents inform the school about their children's absence by telephone or in writing. However, some parents condone unnecessary absence and others take their children on extended holidays during term time. Unsatisfactory attendance and lateness have a detrimental effect on the progress of all pupils. Teachers mark the registers promptly and begin lessons on time but latecomers interrupt the learning of the whole class.

22. The school records and reports attendance according to statutory requirements. Attendance figures are provided in the prospectus and the governors' report to parents. Individual attendance figures are given in pupils' annual progress reports.

23. Since the last report, the school's attendance figures remain below the national average.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

### **Teaching**

24. The overall quality of teaching is good and it is a great strength of the school. One per cent of teaching was judged as excellent, 33 per cent as very good, 38 per cent as good and 28 per cent as satisfactory. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. Teachers work hard and show enthusiasm for their work. Teaching for children under five is very good and teachers have a very secure understanding of the needs of young children. Assessments are used very effectively to inform planning and lessons are planned meticulously to include the six recommended areas of learning. Non-teaching staff provide a very good level of support for children in the nursery and reception classes. In the best lessons throughout the school, high expectations, challenging tasks and good classroom management are significant features. Pupils are expected to work hard and complete tasks. In English and mathematics, teachers begin lessons with effective direct teaching to inform pupils and give them clear explanations. Pupils are then engaged in individual or group activities and lessons end with a review of what pupils have done and learned. This method is proving very effective as pupils make good progress in most lessons. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good in all classes and this provides an encouraging and stable environment where pupils are prepared to accept challenge and learn from their mistakes.

25. Pupils are managed well. Teachers' high expectations of good behaviour are reflected in the pupils' positive attitudes to getting on with tasks responsibly. In all classes, there is appropriate practice of letter sounds, spelling, multiplication tables and quick mental recall. Pupils recognise that they are expected to remember facts so that they build consistently on previous learning. Teachers' overall planning is very good. They make detailed medium-term and weekly plans which inform individual lesson plans. The best lesson plans set out clearly what pupils are to learn and know. There is careful planning for different groups, resources are identified and assessment opportunities are noted. Teachers keep regular checks on pupils' progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and regular termly records are kept for other subjects.



26. Throughout the school, teachers' secure subject knowledge is linked to high quality questioning. Higher attaining pupils are challenged by suitably demanding tasks in most lessons. Pupils in Year 5 were asked to use precise mathematical language to describe the wide variety of plane shapes they found as they broke down large shapes into smaller ones. Teachers use specific subject vocabulary to enhance learning in all areas of the curriculum. Appropriate links between subjects help to make learning more relevant for the pupils, for example when pupils link knowledge of materials in science to using materials in design and technology. Literacy and numeracy are used and developed well throughout the school day.

27. Teachers use comprehensive and effective ways of assessing the subjects of the core curriculum. All teachers ask searching questions to test pupils' understanding. They get pupils to use the blackboard, whiteboard, flipchart or apparatus to explain their answers. Teachers interact with pupils very effectively as they monitor class or group work and ask or answer relevant questions. They listen well to pupils. This is a strength in the teaching and it promotes confidence as individual pupils' thoughts are teased out. The quality of teachers' marking of work is variable. When it is good, there is clear information for pupils so that they know how to improve or extend their work. When it is not, there are series of ticks or simple comments such as 'Good'. In English, pupils are encouraged to plan and draft their work and then edit it with the teacher's help. This helps pupils to learn from their mistakes and evaluate their own performance.

28. All teachers in the school know their pupils well and staff, including non-teaching assistants, are aware of the targets set for pupils with special educational needs. These are usually followed well so that pupils build step-by-step on what they already know. Teachers often produce additional materials and resources for these pupils. Occasionally pupils are confronted with tasks which are difficult for them to follow but teaching is improving as teachers gain extra support from the local education authority's support service for identified pupils. Classroom support staff are appropriately involved in the recording of pupils' progress.

29. Resources are used well and teachers use simple resources such as blackboard and chalk or marker pen and large paper very effectively. Non-teaching staff are deployed well, often with group work, and they are involved in planning so that they work effectively with teachers to meet the lesson objectives. Volunteer support is well directed so that pupils gain maximum benefit. Time is used well in most lessons because of the teachers' good planning and brisk pace. Pupils are encouraged to change into kit for physical education quickly and carefully. Teachers are diligent in monitoring pupils' movement throughout the school during the changes between lessons and at the beginning and end of play periods to ensure that the maximum amount of time is spent in teaching and learning.

30. There is an effective home and school reading partnership which teachers use well to extend pupils' reading opportunities and to involve parents in their children's learning. Homework is set throughout the school, beginning with early reading activities in the nursery class. Pupils are expected to complete tasks at home and to do research to support learning in a range of subjects. Parents value the positive effect this has on their children's learning.

31. There has been an improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection, when there was some unsatisfactory teaching and pupils were insufficiently challenged. The improved levels of attainment at the higher levels in the 1999 end of key stage tests show that expectations have risen. The headteacher monitors classroom teaching and reports regularly to the governing body. This has been a particular feature during the introduction of the Literacy Hour. Co-ordinators still do not have sufficient time to support and advise teachers in the classrooms.

### **31. The curriculum and assessment**

32. The very effective curriculum is balanced and broadly based and enables all pupils to make

progress in all aspects of the National Curriculum. The school successfully provides equality of access and opportunity for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. It meets the statutory requirements for the National Curriculum, sex education, personal, social and health education and makes effective provision for education concerning the misuse of drugs. Pupils are effectively prepared for the next stage of their education as the curriculum promotes their intellectual, physical and personal development well. The school maintains close links with the local Catholic secondary school and pupils make preliminary visits to help them to make a smooth transfer when they are eleven years old. Topics of work begun at the primary school are continued at secondary level.

33.The curriculum for children under five closely follows national guidance and activities are very well planned to include the six areas of learning. Long-term planning is translated into very effective medium-term plans which have clear learning objectives and which identify appropriate age-related activities.

34.Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good for children under five and good at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The curriculum meets the specific needs identified in individual educational plans and no pupils are disapplied. Annual reviews of statements are fully documented. The curriculum is sufficiently flexible to ensure that all pupils have access to all activities. Procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs have recently been reviewed and the involvement of a link teacher from the local education authority has had a significant impact on the quality of provision. Early identification of pupils with special educational needs has improved with the new procedures and more pupils are now registered for extra help from outside the school. Individual educational plans are very thorough, with precise, measurable targets and monitoring of progress is supported by a comprehensive system of testing. All teachers are now supported with advice and materials for pupils in their classes.

35.Curriculum planning is very good. Staff have worked very hard to build a very well structured system of planning to ensure that the National Curriculum is taught thoroughly. The last inspection report criticised the school's provision of opportunities for all pupils, including those with different rates of learning, gender, age and background, to build firmly on previous work. This criticism has been dealt with effectively.

36.The school has implemented the literacy hour successfully and is introducing the daily mathematics lesson in a thoughtful and well-considered way. There are detailed plans which are clearly based on national guidance and which lead to effective methods of organisation and ensure that pupils' work is closely linked to what they have already learned. The school provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. In history, pupils research and write about conditions for civilians during the Second World War. In art, they describe themselves and their self-portraits. They use their mathematical skills in activities such as the measurement of water absorption in science and the use of co-ordinates in geography.

37.The school provides an interesting range of extra-curricular activities, including football, swimming, netball, cross country, tennis, choir and chess. Visits to places such as Port Sunlight, Liverpool Maritime Museum and the Sea Life Centre enrich the curriculum and bring relevance to pupils' learning. Older pupils visit a residential centre and link this with their study in a range of subjects such as science, geography, history and physical education. A variety of visitors come into school, such as theatre groups, the fire service, the police, the school nurse and the parish priest. These activities add breadth and relevance to pupils' learning.

38.The school meets statutory requirements for assessment, recording and reporting. There is a very good range of procedures for assessing pupils' work. Teachers use initial assessments effectively when children start school. Assessment is good in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and is developing appropriately in other subjects as schemes of work

become more secure. The arrangements for assessing pupils with special educational needs are very good. Teachers make good use of information from assessments to plan lessons and build on pupils' previous learning. The school makes good use of National Curriculum assessment tests and school tests to monitor pupils' progress and set clear targets for improvement. In lessons, teachers use questioning very well to check pupils' understanding and extend their learning. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. Where it is regular, clear and helpful, it enables pupils to identify areas for improvement. The school is beginning to collect samples of pupils' assessed work to provide appropriate benchmarks for standards and progress. Satisfactory use is made of homework such as reading, learning tables and spelling to enhance the work in school.

### **38. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

39. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. The warm, welcoming ethos in the nursery and reception classes gives children a sense of belonging. There are opportunities for them to develop their imagination as they play together and explore new ideas. Throughout the school, there are short periods of time for prayer and reflection at the beginning and end of the day. Assemblies reflect the strong Catholic faith celebrated in the school and themes are carefully chosen to draw on pupils' experiences and explore feelings and relationships. In lessons, pupils are encouraged to read and enjoy poetry and to appreciate art. There is provision for them to investigate the wonders of the natural world and the school curriculum encourages them to treat their environment with care and respect. Teachers value what pupils say and there is a feeling of mutual respect as the school promotes the self-esteem of every individual.

40. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good and teachers provide good role models. In the nursery and reception classes, opportunities are provided in discussion times for children to talk about good behaviour. Throughout the school, pupils are given a clear idea of what is right and what is wrong. Most parents think that the school promotes good standards of behaviour. There is a set of rules in each classroom to guide good behaviour and rewards are given to pupils who try hard and are helpful. There are ample opportunities for pupils with special educational needs to develop self-esteem. Challenging behaviour is dealt with through a variety of effective strategies. These are designed to help pupils to reflect on what they do and make better decisions about the right way to behave. The school encourages pupils to treat living things with care and to show respect for people and property.

41. Pupils are given many opportunities to extend and enrich their social skills and provision for their social development is very good. In the nursery and reception classes, very good relationships are fostered through stories, games and sharing activities. At Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, older pupils regularly help younger ones and take care of any who need help in the playground. They are thoughtful in guiding nursery children gently towards the appropriate place in the hall for collective worship. On infants' sports day, older pupils help enthusiastically with games. Pupils at Key Stage 1 have classroom responsibilities and there are rotas to ensure that everyone helps. Pupils in Year 6 help with the school bank and organise the library after school. All pupils are given the opportunity to develop social skills by fund-raising for charities and through links with local homes for the elderly.

42. Provision for cultural development is good. In the nursery and reception classes, an understanding of other faiths and cultures is promoted and children learn to value their own rich heritage through visits and class activities. Pupils at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 visit museums and art galleries and parents raise funds to pay for visiting artists and writers to come to the school. Poetry and drama have become increasingly important with the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and the school libraries contain good selections of plays and poems. Art and music form an important part of school life but multicultural aspects are insufficiently developed. Local culture is valued and work in history and geography introduces ancient and

European cultures to pupils.

43. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained the very good provision made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school is aware of the need to broaden pupils' cultural experiences to reflect the multicultural perspective of life in contemporary society.

#### **43. Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

44. The good support and guidance provided by the school stems from its care for every individual. Staff know the pupils well and this promotes a family atmosphere and a feeling of trust. Pupils are supported well in the classrooms and supervisory staff ensure that pupils play together happily at lunchtime. There are very good systems in place for effective monitoring of pupils' academic and personal progress through the teachers' assessment records. The school implements and monitors its policy on behaviour well. This has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes and promotes good relationships between pupils and staff. Discussions with pupils show that they believe the school deals fairly and promptly with any harassment or bullying and that the rewards and sanctions are effective. The school's daily life provides opportunities for every child to feel equal and to have access to all areas of learning.

45. Support for the under-fives is a strength of the school. The children are supported in a creative learning environment within the nursery and school. Children are introduced to the nursery sensitively with initial visits and transfer to the reception class is managed effectively through a planned programme of visits in the previous term.

46. The school receives strong support from a range of sources for pupils with special educational needs. The local education authority provides a specialist teacher who offers substantial guidance and expertise. This has resulted in the production of very good individual educational plans and a very positive impact on progress. The educational psychologist advises teachers on the education of pupils with statements of special educational need and the educational welfare officer visits regularly to support those with attendance targets in their individual education plans.

47. The school and the local education authority work closely together to identify and support pupils whose attendance and punctuality are poor. Certificates and book tokens are awarded for improved attendance and regular contact is kept with parents. Procedures for child protection are satisfactorily in place and there is a designated person responsible for child protection.

48. There are effective procedures for dealing with illness and accidents and appropriate records are kept. Governors on the school Health and Safety Committee make regular checks in and around the school and appropriate action is taken where necessary. The school pond has now been filled in and is no longer the safety hazard identified by parents in comments added to the inspection questionnaires.

49. Since the last inspection the positive elements in the school's support and guidance have been sustained and there are appropriate strategies for pupils' needs for support, guidance and welfare to be met.

#### **Partnership with parents and the community**

50. Partnership with parents and the wider community is good and is a strength of the school. The school develops a good rapport with parents through social events and more formal consultation evenings to discuss their children's progress. Parents are welcomed into the school and into classrooms.

51.Regular newsletters provide parents with helpful information and at the beginning of the school year there is guidance about what the children will do in their current classes. This promotes good links with home and has a positive effect on pupils' progress. The school is considering sending information at more frequent intervals during the school year so that parents have a clear idea of what is taught. Annual reports to parents on their children's progress include targets to be achieved in the coming year. This helps parents to be involved in the school's drive to raise their children's levels of attainment. There are three parents' evenings a year and these promote a secure partnership and helpful dialogue.

52.Parents rightly believe that they are encouraged to take part in the life of the school. Since the last inspection, the various strengths in partnership with parents and the community have been maintained or strengthened. Recently, staff and parents enjoyed a successful 'dialogue night' when they discussed the educational and developmental needs of the children. Parents are involved in the 'story sacks' project, promoted by a local college of higher education. Friends of the school, the parish community and local businesses provide books and interesting objects to motivate children's interest in stories. The items are placed in attractive bags which are taken home for parents to support the reading scheme for children under five. Parents, governors and volunteers come into school to provide a good supportive contribution to pupils' learning.

53.Partnership with parents is at the heart of the education programme in the nursery and reception classes. Parents are closely involved with induction procedures and their support continues through help with visits, events and classroom support. Parents value the nursery and want to work with the school. They feel that their children progress well in this phase of education.

54.Parents of pupils with special educational needs are appropriately involved in their children's learning. They are invited into school so that a continuing dialogue can be maintained. A number of parents express satisfaction with the school's provision for their children. Records are transferred appropriately to secondary schools to support continuity of learning.

55.Links with the parish continue to be strong and pupils play a significant role in their church community. The school's partnership with the secondary school to which most pupils transfer is very good. The quality of the school's partnership with commerce in the area has improved considerably since the last inspection. There have been good links with a company which is redeveloping Rock Ferry. Pupils in Year 5 recently won a competition to re-design a park area when they planted daffodils and were able to name the area 'Willow Park'.

56.Homework is used satisfactorily to support learning and ideas to widen its use continue to be developed. A draft home/school agreement has been formulated but it has not yet been formally adopted by the governing body and parents.

## **56. THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

### **Leadership and management**

57.There is a genuine sense of purpose in the school. Much of this hinges on the clear educational direction, vision and commitment of the dedicated headteacher. He has led the school sensitively through a difficult period since his appointment two years ago. Half of the staff have joined the school since then and the challenge to provide continuity has been met effectively. The governing body has been supportive in this process and has provided particularly strong guidance in financial matters. Several governors are now taking an interest in particular subjects to strengthen the governing body's involvement in curriculum decisions. The governors are aware of the need for them to adopt a more active role in decision-making in a wider range of school issues.

58.Co-ordinators have recently been appointed in a number of key areas and this has led to an urgent review of their roles. These are underdeveloped as there is no clear framework within which co-ordinators can manage and monitor their areas effectively. Governors have recently appointed two co-ordinators for special educational needs but their responsibilities have not been clarified to maximise their contribution to the school's good provision. The school is actively considering strategies to ensure the productive involvement of governors and staff in monitoring and evaluation procedures. The first step has already been taken with the creation of monitoring teams. Their aim is to improve the quality of teaching and learning to raise standards in the school.

59.The headteacher observes some teaching and monitors pupils' work. The school's link adviser from the local education authority also monitors and reports on teaching quality. The school's system for the appraisal of teachers is not satisfactory, as outcomes from these procedures and the school's informal system do not combine to inform a cohesive plan to help teachers improve their teaching. Teamwork is already a strength of the school. A network of teams is in place to shape curriculum planning. This has resulted in very good quality planning in all subject areas. The nursery and reception team is working particularly effectively for children under five. The involvement of all staff in the school development plan has led to a comprehensive assessment of priorities. The five-year plan shows an appreciation of practical as well as philosophical considerations. Short-term plans are succinct and have clear time-scales and identified opportunities to review criteria. These plans provide a secure basis for improved standards of attainment. There are good examples of resources being targeted to meet identified priorities, for example, in the provision of a new computer suite.

60.The implementation of the school's aims, values and policies is good. There are agreed and published aims which reflect a commitment to high expectations of what all children can achieve in terms of academic and personal development. These aims form the basis of a shared sense of purpose and very positive attitudes to learning throughout the school. They combine with very good relationships to provide a very strong ethos of trust and responsibility which permeates the school. Equal opportunities are promoted successfully.

61.Most statutory requirements are met but there is no formal teacher appraisal system. Most criticisms in the last report have been dealt with effectively. The leadership has ensured that there is very good curriculum provision in all classes. Underachievement in mathematics at Key Stage 1 has been dealt with effectively through improved schemes of work and good use of the analysis of test results. The newly appointed co-ordinator for design and technology provides very effective subject leadership which has resulted in raised standards, with excellent teaching at Key Stage 1. The school has a good capacity to continue to improve. The governors and staff are committed to raising pupils' standards of attainment. The staff are hardworking and enthusiastic and there is a shared sense of determination which will help the school to move forward and succeed.

#### **61. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

62.The number, qualifications and experience of the teaching and non-teaching staff are satisfactory throughout the school, including the nursery and reception classes. There are two newly appointed co-ordinators for special educational needs who are appropriately qualified and experienced. There have been many staff changes during the last two years and job descriptions for co-ordinators are out-of-date. There are appropriate arrangements for the support of newly qualified and newly appointed teachers.

63.There is an adequate number of support staff to meet the needs of the pupils currently on the school's register of special educational needs. The school is aware of the need to review levels

of support in the light of the increasing number of pupils identified through improved procedures.

64. Informal teacher appraisal occurs through general discussion between the headteacher and staff. There is no formal teacher appraisal system in place. Teachers attend appropriate courses to develop their knowledge and expertise. Non-teaching staff receive appropriate training to make a positive contribution to the educational standards achieved by the pupils, including those with special educational needs. The governing body is supportive of professional development and recognises the importance of staff training as part of the school's commitment to raising standards of pupils' attainment.

65. Accommodation is good for the practical delivery of the curriculum. Internal decoration is good and the entrance to the school is attractive and welcoming. Classrooms are well organised and the areas where pupils work are appropriate. Some items of furniture are rather old and in need of replacement, for example in the 'home corner' of the reception class. Displays throughout the school are attractively mounted to enhance their value to pupils and the building is very clean, tidy and well cared for.

66. The two playgrounds provide marked areas for games and benches provide seating for conversation or quiet observation in each playground. There is little playground equipment for pupils to use during break times. As identified in the last inspection report, the lack of a playing field continues to limit the teaching of athletics.

67. Learning resources are good overall and suitable for the school's curriculum and range of pupils. The resources for learning are particularly good for the teaching of English, mathematics, information technology, history, art and music. The Key Stage 2 library has improved since the last inspection. There is a good supply of big books with large text for pupils to read together during the literacy hour. Adequate resources are available for the teaching of science, design and technology, geography and physical education. Resources for pupils with special educational needs are generally a modification of those provided for other pupils. Teachers sometimes produce their own resources, tailored to meet the identified targets of these pupils. Storage facilities are good and resources throughout the school are easily accessible to teachers and pupils.

68. There has been an improvement in the provision of non-teaching staff since the last inspection and learning resources have been improved. There is a new computer suite and the provision of non-fiction books has improved at Key Stage 2. These have a positive impact on the development of pupils' skills in information technology and research.

### **The efficiency of the school**

69. The financial management and planning of the school are very good. There are clear and very well organised procedures for financial management which are directly related to the school's development plan. Financial decisions are made as a result of a very careful process of prioritisation and audit. The headteacher and governing body carefully monitor the budget and the school is very prudent in ensuring that it obtains best value for money. The governing body, together with the headteacher and staff, has a clear view of its strategic financial responsibilities in order to support educational developments.

70. This year, the school has almost doubled its financial commitment to support pupils with special educational needs. It now stands at almost six per cent of the total school budget and demonstrates the school's caring, supportive ethos. Classroom support is wisely targeted and expertise from the local education authority is used very well. Financial delegation for resources has not been clearly outlined for the two recently appointed co-ordinators.

71. The school deploys its teaching and support staff effectively. Together, they form a very hard

working, committed and conscientious team. Good use is made of the spacious accommodation and well-organised learning resources. Pupils benefit from the effective use of facilities such as specialist accommodation for pupils with special educational needs, the computer suite, art room, resource areas and libraries. There are plans to create an area which can be used both for quiet reflection and as a parents' room. Caretaking and cleaning staff ensure that the accommodation is clean and well kept and this has a positive effect on the pupils' happiness and wellbeing. Attractive displays of pupils' work raise self-esteem and reinforce their learning.

72.The routine accounting and administration of the school are very good and the school makes good use of support from the local education authority. A minimum of management time is involved so that the headteacher and staff are able concentrate on teaching. During the most recent internal audit no major weaknesses were identified and aspects requiring action have been dealt with.

73.Teaching is good and curriculum provision is very good. The majority of pupils enter the school with levels of attainment well below those expected and leave at eleven years old with levels expected for their age. Considering these factors and the effectiveness with which the staffing, accommodation and learning resources are used, the school gives good value for money.



## **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE**

74.Children have a wide range of attainment when they enter the nursery but the majority attain at levels well below those expected for their age in language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world. A significant number of children have speech difficulties. In personal and social development, mathematics and creative development, attainment is below that expected and in physical development, it is in line. In the nursery and reception classes, children make sound progress in physical development and good progress in all other areas of learning. Despite their good progress, the majority of children do not meet the nationally agreed standards in language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world by the time they start the National Curriculum in the reception class. In personal and social development, mathematics, physical and creative development, they do. Finer manipulative control for writing is not so well developed. Children with special educational needs make progress in line with other children.

#### *74. Personal and social development*

75.Most children soon settle into the class routines in the nursery. They establish effective relationships with the staff and with other children and gradually learn to take turns and share equipment willingly. They are eager to explore new activities, seek help when they need it and become more independent with their personal hygiene. In the reception class, children choose activities with confidence and show increasing levels of concentration. They begin to demonstrate independence in getting ready for physical education lessons. In the nursery and reception classes, there is a strong Christian ethos and a clear understanding of what is right and what is wrong. Children respond positively to gentle reprimands from the staff and teaching in both classes is very good. When they move to the reception class, children adapt well to the brisker pace of work. Visits during the previous term have prepared them for the change and they settle effectively to work and integrate well into the main school.

#### *75. Language and literacy*

76.In the nursery class, children develop a growing vocabulary as they listen to stories and talk about what they are doing. They begin to express their feelings, views and ideas and, as their confidence grows, children are able to sustain conversations with increasing levels of interest. They take part in role-play happily and enjoy the wide range of imaginative opportunities. In the reception class, although their level of vocabulary is often weak, children contribute eagerly during discussions and share their thoughts with candour and openness. Children in the nursery class become increasingly familiar with books and stories. In the reception class they handle books with care, turn the pages and tell stories by following the pictures but few recognise simple commonly used words. In both classes, skilful teaching helps children to learn letter sounds by relating them to pictures, playing games and copying them. Children develop writing skills in the nursery by tracing patterns and writing over the teacher's words. Pencil control is poor for the majority. In the reception class, most children write their names with appropriate upper and lower-case letters but these are often poorly formed and orientated. By the time they are of compulsory school age, few write simple words or sentences independently. Very good teaching and support helps children under five to gain skills of literacy effectively and make good progress from a well below average level when they start the nursery.

#### *76. Mathematics*

77.Children develop mathematical skills in the nursery through a wide range of activities. They sing counting rhymes and songs and play with sand and water to develop mathematical language such as 'more', 'less', 'full' and 'empty'. They gain early experience of size and order as they pretend to play in the house of 'The Three Bears'. In a variety of activities, children match

shapes, complete simple number puzzles and learn about 'bigger' and 'smaller'. Most pupils count objects and recognise numbers to ten by the time they move to the reception class. They gain understanding of measurement as they prepare ingredients to make gingerbread men. Children match, sort, order and count objects and play simple games to reinforce learning. Most children recognise simple shapes and repeat patterns by threading beads or matching cubes to diagrams. Able children know that one more than five is six and that one less than five is four as they begin to show awareness of number calculations such as addition and subtraction. In both classes, children under five make good progress in early mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding because of the very good teaching and well-organised support. Sensitive development of mathematical vocabulary is fostered when staff take time to explain things to children, many of whom have very weak language skills.

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

78. Children gain knowledge and understanding of the world through a well-planned programme of activities and very good teaching in both classes. In the nursery, they collect autumn leaves and look at them carefully. They learn about parts of the body as they fix cardboard teddy bears together with split pins. Children learn about their environment and study houses and homes. They develop a sense of history by discussing their own lives and families. Most are keen to use the computer in the nursery but few play simple number and letter games without help. In the reception class, children try hard to drag images across the computer screen as they dress a teddy bear. Knowledge and understanding of the world is enhanced through the development of early scientific, geographical and historical skills in the reception class. Staff work hard to extend the children's vocabulary in order to increase their understanding. Children know that they are part of a family in which there are older and younger members. They draw their homes and paint bright and bold pictures of themselves. In both classes, children gain experience of fixing components together as they play with construction kits. In the reception class they explain how their models of aeroplanes and vehicles work.

#### 78. *Physical development*

79. Physical development is fostered through a satisfactory range of indoor and outdoor activities and very good teaching in both classes. Children run, jump and balance with satisfactory levels of control and co-ordination. They ride wheeled toys confidently and use the sand-play tools effectively. They have an awareness of space and use the area safely. There is an appropriate fenced area outside the nursery. Indoors, children show satisfactory manipulative control as they play with construction kits, tools and malleable materials but control of pencils and scissors is underdeveloped. Physical development is well provided for in the reception class. Children have playtimes with Key Stage 1 pupils and regular opportunities are provided for them to play on the wheeled toys in the nursery play area. They also have physical education lessons in the school hall. In both classes, teaching is very good. In the reception class, teaching is enhanced by very good demonstration of skills by the staff. Children follow instructions well and try hard to improve their skills as they balance beanbags on their heads and remember the sequence of actions in singing games.

#### 79. *Creative development*

80. In both classes, children use a wide variety of materials, including paint, crayons and collage, to make pictures with a range of textures. Displays of colourful work reflect the children's enjoyment and hard work. In music, they sing simple, repetitive songs, listen attentively to recorded music and repeat clapping rhythms. Teaching is very good and throughout the day children are encouraged to develop their imagination effectively and to observe, to explore and to discover for themselves. In the nursery class, creative activities are linked to topics and stories such as 'The Three Bears' and children paint, draw and enjoy a teddy bears' picnic. In the reception class, children gain increasing confidence in choosing appropriate materials and using

observational skills as they make collages of their own faces. The spacious classroom lends itself well to the provision of painting and constructional activities.

81.The teaching of children under five is very good overall. The nursery and reception class staff work together as a team and they have sound understanding of the needs of young children. Very good planning closely follows the requirements of the nationally agreed desirable learning outcomes and the activities provided for the children are imaginative and inviting. Learning objectives are clear and all staff are appropriately involved in the planning of work. Deployment of non-teaching staff is very good. Resources are well prepared and the organisation of the part-time sessions in the reception class ensures that children have appropriate practice in the necessary early skills of literacy and numeracy. Reception class children are well supported with encouragement and consideration when they move to the full school day. The National Curriculum is introduced in the term after children are five, or earlier if they are ready. Relationships with the children are very good and the management of all the children in this phase of their education produces a stable and atmosphere conducive to learning. Children are encouraged to be independent and teachers' expectations are high.

82.Assessment of the children's progress is very good. Parents are involved to provide initial information when children start the nursery and again when they join the reception class. Regular assessments by staff are also shared with parents during consultations three times a year. Information is used effectively to identify learning needs and compensatory work is done with children to develop their understanding and skills. Very good records are kept and shared with the children's next teachers.

83.Findings broadly match those of the last inspection but there are now more pupils with speech difficulties and accompanying low levels of attainment in language and literacy.

### **83. ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

#### **English**

84.In the national tests for seven-year-olds in 1998, the percentage of pupils who achieved Level 2 (the expected level) was very low compared with the national average in reading and writing. Average levels of attainment were well below the national average level in reading and very low in writing. In both reading and writing, they were well below in comparison with similar schools. Over the three years 1996 to 1998, the school's average level in reading rose gradually. In writing, it remained very low. In 1999, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 or more in reading rose from 55 per cent to 69 per cent. The percentage reaching Level 3 (the higher level) rose from 19 per cent to 38 per cent. In writing, the percentage reaching Level 2 or more increased from 52 per cent to 55 per cent. However, the percentage reaching Level 3 rose from zero to 21 per cent. Currently, there are no national figures for comparison but the school's drive to improve attainment is showing signs of success in the gradual rise in results in reading and the big rise in the number of pupils reaching the higher levels in writing.

85.At Key Stage 2, pupils' average levels of attainment in the 1998 tests were in line with the national average and well above in comparison with similar schools. In the tests in 1998 the percentage of pupils achieving National Curriculum Level 4 (the expected level) or better was 64 per cent which was close to the national average of 65 per cent. Twenty three per cent achieved Level 5 (the higher level) or better which was above the national average of 17 per cent. Looking at the trend over the three years 1996 to 1998, the average level of attainment in English at Key Stage 2 was broadly in line with the national average each year and there was a slight upward trend. In 1999, the percentage of pupils attaining at Level 4 or above was broadly the same as the previous year but the percentage achieving at Level 5 decreased from 23 per cent to 10 per cent.

86. Inspection judgement is that most pupils' attainment by the end of both key stages meets national expectations in speaking and listening and in reading. It is below national expectations in writing. The school analyses its test results and is aware of the need to raise standards. Writing has been targeted for improvement at both key stages and there is additional literacy support for pupils to help them reach appropriate levels for their age. Teachers now plan opportunities for pupils to write sustained pieces of work to support other subjects, such as history. Professional training and enhanced resources have been well organised so that the literacy hour has been introduced successfully. Rigorous daily practice of reading, spelling and grammar enables pupils throughout the school to acquire skills systematically.

87. By the end of both key stages, the majority of pupils attain at levels expected for their age in speaking and listening. At Key Stage 1, pupils develop a growing vocabulary and gradually extend their answers and give reasons for choices. The oldest pupils at Key Stage 1 talk confidently with adults. They explain their work and use an increasing subject specific vocabulary. At Key Stage 2, pupils report back confidently in review sessions at the end of lessons. For example, they shared their ideas for a setting of a story based on 'The Iron Man' and used imaginative vocabulary correctly and with assurance. Older pupils speak clearly and confidently as they take leading roles in assemblies.

88. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils' attainment in reading meets national expectations. They follow the text of simple stories and use their knowledge of letter sounds to build words. Pupils read with accuracy and understanding, name the principal characters and predict what might happen next in the story. Pupils develop an enthusiasm for books and handle them carefully. By the end of the key stage, library research skills are not sufficiently developed. The majority of pupils are unable to use the contents and index sections of books effectively. By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment reaches national expectations and most pupils read confidently and use a wide range of strategies to aid their understanding. They enjoy more complex stories and begin to consider the motives of characters. Higher attaining pupils read with expression to bring life and excitement to the text. A few pupils know the names of favourite authors and explain their preferences for particular kinds of stories. Older pupils in the key stage use the library system effectively and gain information from CD-ROMs.

89. Attainment in writing at the end of both key stages is below national expectations. Pupils at Key Stage 1 use word books and easy dictionaries effectively to help them with their writing. Most pupils make simple plans to help them to structure their writing. Throughout the key stage, a significant number of pupils do not hold their pencils correctly. Letters are not formed in a way which will enable pupils to progress easily to joined writing. Pupils at Key Stage 2 use dictionaries confidently and spell commonly used words correctly. Handwriting is usually joined but the standard of handwriting and general presentation is barely satisfactory. Pupils develop a growing understanding of grammar and punctuation and use this to give more structure and excitement to their writing. Much of their extended writing occurs in subjects such as history and science when pupils describe ways of life and explain their investigations. Pupils write for a wide variety of purposes. They write thoughtful prayers to be shared in collective worship. In history, pupils write about the Second World War and link this to their reading of Anne Frank's diary. They write accounts of their visit to Port Sunlight and use a range of writing styles and describe what they have seen in prose, labelled diagrams and drawings.

90. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with below average skills in language and literacy and they make good overall progress in English. In speaking, listening and reading, progress is good. Progress in writing is satisfactory by the end of the key stage but evidence from the school year previous to the inspection shows that pupils made weak progress in Year 1. At Key Stage 2, most pupils' progress was at least satisfactory in the lessons seen. They develop their skills in speaking and listening effectively and extend the range and complexity of the texts they study and the purposes for which they write. A significant number of lessons are too dependent on worksheets. This has

hindered the development of extended writing expected by the end of the key stage and has particularly negative effect on the progress of more able pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress with the systematic acquisition of skills in reading, writing and spelling. They benefit from the school's step-by-step approach to the teaching of letter sounds and regular reading practice during the literacy hour.

91. Pupils use their reading and writing skills increasingly to support work in other subjects. The school emphasises the development of pupils' spoken language and acquisition of appropriate vocabulary. These give them increasing confidence to explore literature and record their thoughts and findings. Pupils use computers with increasing assurance to word-process their work. At Key Stage 2, they edit their writing by revising grammar and moving text. Access to computers is currently limited but increased provision is in hand as part of the National Grid for Learning.

92. Pupils enjoy their English lessons and most behave well and are attentive. In class reading sessions, they try hard to follow the texts and respond thoughtfully to the teachers' questions. They contribute their ideas readily and most present their work confidently to the class during review sessions at the end of lessons. They take turns fairly to speak and listen respectfully to the views of others.

93. The quality of teaching is good overall. More than two thirds of the teaching observed was good or better and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. There was some very good teaching at both key stages. The best teaching sustains pupils' interest with a stimulating variety of activities. Work is well matched to the pupils' needs and individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are followed carefully. The pace is brisk and pupils are encouraged to extend their responses to questions. Planning indicates clearly what pupils are to do and to learn in the lesson. Parts of the lesson are carefully organised so that there is clear, direct teaching followed by individual or group activities. Teachers then ask probing questions to consolidate pupils' understanding and extend their learning. In less successful lessons, work does not have sufficient appropriate challenge for all pupils and some elements of the literacy hour go on for too long so that children lose interest and are less attentive. In most lessons, teachers support pupils with special educational needs well. Individual education plans include specific targets and there is a high level of support and advice from the school co-ordinators and the visiting specialist teacher.

94. As part of the introduction of the literacy hour, the school has assessed its policies and schemes of work and these have been revised. The co-ordinator has worked well with colleagues to establish the National Literacy Strategy successfully but she does not have sufficient time to monitor its implementation and effect on raising standards. Assessment procedures have been reviewed so that regular information from tests is used to set targets for improvement and measure pupils' progress. Marking is generally regular and informative, with clear suggestions for pupils on how they can improve their work. There are examples of unmarked work or marking which lacks appropriate comments to help pupils to correct their mistakes.

95. Resources for the subject are good. Overhead projectors in all classrooms are used well to enlarge texts and demonstrate letter patterns to improve spelling. There is a wide range of big books for class text work and there are attractive sets of pupils' books for reading a shared text. The school has enhanced the supply of poetry books and play scripts to enrich pupils' reading experiences. The non-fiction material in the Key Stage 1 library is not classified in a simple way to help pupils to gain information easily. The Key Stage 2 library is well organised and has an adequate supply of attractive and up-to-date books. Reading books are organised well and are easily accessible to pupils.

96. The last inspection commented on the lack of challenge offered to the most able and the too

frequent use of worksheets which contributed to this. From examination of written work over the past year, there is still insufficient challenge for the most able and in some classes there is an over dependence on worksheets. During the inspection, teachers planned work effectively in most lessons and activities were well matched to pupils' needs. The National Literacy Strategy is having a positive impact on the school's provision.

## **Mathematics**

97.The results of national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1998 showed that levels of attainment in mathematics were well below the national average in comparison with all schools and with similar schools. At the end of the key stage, 58 per cent of pupils achieved National Curriculum Level 2 or better, which was very low in comparison with the national average of 85 per cent. Six per cent achieved Level 3, which was well below the national average of 19 per cent. Looking at the trend over the three years 1996 to 1998, the average level of attainment in mathematics improved but it was still well below average. In 1999, there was a big improvement from 58 percent to 86 per cent at Level 2 or above and from six per cent to 41 per cent at the higher Level 3. These improved results reflect the school's thorough review of the schemes of work for mathematics as part of the firm commitment to raising standards. There are no current figures to show national comparisons for 1998.

98.Similar data for Key Stage 2 shows that pupils' average level of attainment in 1998 was in line with the national average and well above in comparison with similar schools. In the tests in 1998 the percentage of pupils achieving National Curriculum Level 4 or better was 77 per cent which was well above the national average of 57 per cent. Eight per cent achieved Level 5 or better, which was below the national average of 16 per cent. Looking at the trend over the three years 1996 to 1998, the average level of attainment in mathematics at Key Stage 2 was broadly in line with the national average each year and there was a slight upward trend. In 1999, the percentage of pupils attaining at Level 4 or above was broadly the same as the previous year but the percentage achieving at Level 3 rose from eight per cent to 13 per cent.

99.Inspection evidence broadly supports the 1999 test results. By the end of both key stages, pupils' attainment meets national expectations for their age. No significant difference was noted in the attainment of girls and boys during the inspection. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented positively and the school's major effort to improve curriculum provision and the quality of teaching has proved successful. The capacity for further improvement is good.

100.At Key Stage 1, pupils develop their calculation strategies and skills of mental recall through regular oral practice. By the end of the key stage, most pupils know addition and subtraction facts to 20 and use them to solve simple numerical problems. They have a growing understanding of the value of digits in bigger numbers. Pupils develop an increasing mathematical vocabulary which enhances their understanding and helps them to explain their reasoning. Most pupils classify simple two and three-dimensional shapes according to their geometric features and identify the number of faces on solid shapes. They add sums of money to one pound accurately in simple shopping activities. They collect information and record it in block graphs and histograms. Pupils show increasing confidence in presenting their calculations in a variety of forms and they take pride in the presentation of their work.

101.By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils have a secure grasp of the four rules of number and they understand factors and multiples. They calculate square and cube roots and work with decimals to two places. Pupils work with fractions and percentages and understand the relationship between multiplication and division. They begin to give more complex answers in which they explain the processes they have used. For example, older pupils in the key stage consider a variety of ways to calculate the area of a given space and explain their solutions to the class, using a large flipchart to illustrate their thinking. They use a helpful step-by-step approach

to break down complex problems. Pupils recognise the relationships between shapes such as the triangle, hexagon and trapezium. Less able pupils at the beginning of the key stage have weak understanding of how to estimate and measure accurately in centimetres. Pupils use their numeracy skills to investigate practical problems such as the number of people in a cinema and the cost of telephone rental.

102. Throughout the school, pupils' sound progress in the knowledge and understanding of number is enhanced through regular practice in mental calculation, revision of number facts and practical investigations. Progress at both key stages over the past year has been supported by improved curricular provision and teachers' positive approach to the introduction of the daily mathematics hour. Younger pupils are beginning to explain their thinking and develop their own approaches to overcoming difficulties from an early age. Pupils in Key Stage 2 benefit from the school's appropriate focus on improving opportunities for them to apply their knowledge of mathematical facts and processes to solve problems. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall and they benefit from the teachers' well-directed questions to involve them in class discussions and extend their understanding. Their progress during group work is less successful in a few lessons when activities are not sufficiently directed to their needs.

103. Mathematical skills are used effectively in other areas of the curriculum. At both key stages, pupils measure materials when making models in design and technology. In history, pupils use a time line to chronicle events and record significant changes in society. Information technology is used effectively to enhance pupils' numeracy skills through matching and counting programs at Key Stage 1. At both key stages, data handling skills are developed as pupils collect, order and present information in interesting ways. For example, pupils at Key Stage 1 investigated shoe fastenings, drew graphs and interpreted their data. Literacy is used well to support mathematical activities but the extensive use of workbooks and worksheets in Key Stage 1 inhibits opportunities for pupils to express their ideas in writing in their own way. Throughout the school, there are displays of mathematical vocabulary to help pupils to develop precise language and clear thinking in the subject.

104. Most pupils have positive attitudes to their work. Some identify mathematics as their favourite subject and most want to succeed and do well. They answer questions thoughtfully and share their ideas confidently. They collaborate well in pairs and groups and are keen to contribute during problem solving sessions. Most pupils concentrate well and persevere to complete tasks. They respond positively when teachers remind them to concentrate on their work. The pupils' sense of achievement in solving problems and sharing their ideas with others brings enjoyment to mathematics lessons and there is a positive atmosphere in the classrooms.

105. The quality of teaching is good overall, with a significant number of very good lessons at both key stages. Work has been well organised to meet the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy and teachers plan their lessons with increasing skill. This has a significant impact on pupils' progress. Teachers manage the pupils well and most lessons are organised effectively to meet learning objectives. In a few lessons, tasks for pupils with special educational needs do not take into account their particular difficulties. Worksheets are hard for them to read or tasks are insufficiently stimulating to keep their interest. In the best lessons, teachers give pupils opportunities to show not only what they know but to explain the reasons behind their thinking and suggest creative ways of tackling problems. This encourages pupils to become positive and enthusiastic about mathematics. Teachers use effective questioning to develop pupils' mathematical vocabulary and extend their learning. In most lessons, teachers make very effective use of simple resources such as blackboards, large numbers on washing lines, number squares and sets of cards for pupils to hold up when quick responses are required in mental work. These add pace and interest to teaching and learning.

106. During lessons, teachers give helpful comments to pupils on how work can be improved. This simple and direct form of assessment supports pupils' good progress. Teachers use information

from national and school assessments to diagnose pupils' strengths and weaknesses and plan appropriate compensatory work. This has had a particularly significant effect on the attainment of all pupils in Key Stage 1. More able pupils are achieving at higher levels in national tests. Marking of work is regular but when there are consistent pages of ticks but no comments, work seems to lack challenge.

107. Leadership of the subject is very good and is a major strength in the school's commitment to raising standards. There are clear schemes of work and helpful guidelines for teachers. Links between the key stages are being strengthened through the school's new management system in order to foster continuity of learning throughout the school. The leadership recognises that the subject co-ordinator does not have sufficient time within the school day to visit other classrooms in order to monitor teaching and learning. Resources for mathematics are good, with some very helpful items introduced in the past year to raise standards. Professional development of staff is a key element which has led to improved attainment in the last year. The school values parents' involvement in their children's learning through homework. Information on the Numeracy Strategy is to be shared with them this term.

108. Standards at Key Stage 1 are broadly in line with those reported during the previous inspection, but they are lower at Key Stage 2. Test results from 1996 to 1998 show that pupils' attainment at Key Stage 2 was broadly in line with the national average, with a slight upward trend. Evidence from current inspection indicates that the school is on course to improve standards further.

## **Science**

109. In the 1998 teacher assessments for seven-year-olds, 61 per cent of pupils reached Level 2 or better. This was very low compared with the national average of 86 per cent for all schools. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level, Level 3, was 23 per cent. This was broadly in line with the national average of 19 per cent for all schools and well above average in comparison with similar schools. The results in the 1999 statutory teachers' assessments show a significant improvement in the percentage of pupils reaching the expected and the higher levels. Seventy-nine per cent achieved Level 2 or better and 38 per cent achieved Level 3.

110. In the 1998 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2, 62 per cent of pupils reached Level 4 or above and this was below the national average of 69 per cent. Five per cent achieved the higher Level 5 and this was well below the national average of 16 per cent. Boys' performance in science over the years 1996 to 1998 was above the national average and girls' was below. The 1999 results show improvements with 82 per cent of pupils reaching Level 4 or better and 16 per cent reaching Level 5. There are no current national comparative figures for 1999.

111. Inspection judgement is that pupils reach levels appropriate for their age by the end of both key stages. This concurs with the findings for Key Stage 1 in the last report but it contrasts with the findings for Key Stage 2, when attainment was judged to be better than average. Results in 1999 reflect rising standards.

112. By the age of seven most pupils know about the different sources of light and can classify materials according to their physical properties and every day use. They understand how to set up experiments to investigate the conditions necessary for the healthy growth of plants. Higher attaining pupils observe closely, present their work neatly and describe the body parts of a snail. The work of lower attaining pupils is less well presented and their explanations of, for example, the every day use of materials, are less clear. By the age of eleven most pupils understand the functions of the heart and recognise and name major organs of the body. Higher attaining pupils explain clearly and accurately the relationship between the sun's rays and the axis of the earth in describing the length of daylight in summer and winter. Lower attaining pupils measure less accurately and their diagrams are less clearly presented. Most pupils know the elements



necessary for a healthy menu.

113. During Key Stage 1 most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and this is sustained satisfactorily throughout Key Stage 2. During Key Stage 1 pupils increase their knowledge of the parts of plants and their functions and become increasingly skilful in measuring, for example in work on temperature and the insulation properties of different materials. They extend their understanding of different habitats and extend their knowledge of magnetic and non-magnetic materials. During Key Stage 2 most pupils build effectively on this early knowledge and become more capable in making predictions, for example when they investigate the uses of friction in every day life. Pupils extend their knowledge of electric circuits, insulation and conduction. In work on air resistance, most pupils show developing understanding of how to set up fair tests. When they study the absorption rate of plants and investigate human pulse rates after exercise, pupils show increasingly refined skills of measurement.

114. Literacy is developed well in science lessons. Pupils at both key stages gain information from books and they record their scientific findings in charts, labelled diagrams and explanations. Numeracy is promoted effectively. For example, pupils measure growth in plants and record temperatures when they investigate the insulation properties of materials.

115. At Key Stage 1, the response of most pupils is usually very good. They are very interested in their work and participate in discussions and activities very enthusiastically. They work hard and sustain their concentration during investigations so that they deepen their understanding and progress well. Most pupils listen attentively and pose and answer questions carefully. They handle materials and equipment such as plants and containers carefully and try hard to present their writing and diagrams neatly. At Key Stage 2, the response is mostly good and often very good. Pupils enjoy their work and look after equipment, such as that used in lessons on dental hygiene, carefully. Most pupils co-operate well with others and maintain their interest over longer periods of time when they study the growth of plants. Where response is very good, pupils work very well when not under the immediate supervision of the teacher. Most pupils use research materials such as books and CD-ROMs effectively to investigate such topics as the working of the heart.

116. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 is very good overall. At Key Stage 2, it is mostly good and often very good. Where the quality of teaching is very good, teachers present their lessons in very interesting ways so that pupils want to learn. For example, they use children's literature to introduce work on plant growth. They revise previous work very well to ensure that pupils build on earlier learning and use questions very effectively to challenge pupils to think hard. They listen very carefully to what pupils have to say and show that they value their opinions and suggestions. Pupils with special educational needs are supported with appropriate levels of work. At both key stages, most teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and they use specific vocabulary very well. This extends pupils' scientific language and helps them to explain ideas very clearly.

117. Teachers plan their work very carefully and share lesson objectives with pupils but opportunities for pupils to plan their own experiments are limited. Most teachers manage pupils well and deal effectively with the few who need to be reminded about their behaviour. Pupils and resources are generally well organised and this ensures that lessons run smoothly and pupils remain on task. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is not consistent. Work is usually marked regularly and when teachers' comments are clear, they help pupils to understand how they can improve or extend their work. Teachers praise and encourage pupils to motivate them to work hard.

118. There are regular assessments of pupils' attainment and records are well kept. The effective analysis of results from national tests and teacher assessments has helped the school to raise pupils' standards of attainment in 1999. Curriculum planning has been adjusted to strengthen weaker areas of learning. The co-ordinator works hard and shares her expertise with colleagues.

There is a useful policy and teachers have worked together to produce a helpful scheme of work. Classroom teaching is not monitored but enthusiastic teamwork helps the co-ordinator to know what is going on in the classrooms. Resources are generally satisfactory and they are well organised and stored.

118.

## **OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

### **118. Information technology**

119. Pupils' attainment meets national expectations by the end of both key stages and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress.

120. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils use the keyboard successfully to type text and print their own work. They compose stories and letters directly onto the screen, use capital letters and full stops, edit by using a backspace key and change text and font size with confidence. Pupils use the arrow keys to move the cursor to the start of lines and the space bar to re-align text. They are aware of terms such as 'mouse' and 'icon' when using a program to generate pictures on a screen. With help, they begin to search for information in CD-ROMs. For example, they use an encyclopaedia program to produce maps and flowers for a topic on plants. Their understanding of control in everyday life is less secure, although records indicate that they can control the movements of a floor robot by giving a series of instructions.

121. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils successfully alter and insert text and can merge artwork into their writing. Control programs are used efficiently to draw shapes and generate repeating patterns. Pupils in Year 6 produce impressive travel brochures to link in with their project on mountains. They cut and paste headlines, text and pictures and publish regular newsletters to report the school's sporting achievements. Pupils search successfully for information in a range of CD-ROMs and produce very good work on famous people such as Queen Victoria and Neil Armstrong. There is no evidence of pupils using spreadsheets efficiently.

122. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. They demonstrate increasing confidence in the use of computers with different operating systems and an increasing range of software. They build well on previous learning. In word-processing, for example, younger pupils type and print their work, whilst older pupils confidently correct and change text, sometimes adding illustrations. In data handling, younger pupils enter data, whilst older pupils interrogate their database to extract information. All pupils are aware of the skills they need to produce a computer generated design. This progress is mainly due to well-planned class and group teaching as new programs and techniques are introduced. Good links with the secondary school have resulted in pupils having extra 'master classes' to increase their skills and understanding.

123. Pupils' attitudes to information technology are good. They listen carefully to instructions and show good concentration when working with equipment. They work industriously on their own and co-operate well when with a partner. They behave well and are keen to complete tasks to the best of their ability. Equipment is handled with care.

124. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are carefully planned to include opportunities to use the computer but the quality of teaching varies. Rota systems operate in all classrooms so that pupils have equal access to equipment. Teachers generally give clear information and use straightforward language so that pupils understand instructions. Although the range of work is generally satisfactory, there are few opportunities for older pupils to undertake work in modelling.

125. The subject is managed effectively by a committed co-ordinator who has produced a

comprehensive system for teachers to record pupils' attainment. A suite of eight computers has recently been installed. This enhances opportunities for teachers to give direct instruction to larger numbers of pupils. It also provides for pupils to have longer periods of practice to consolidate their skills.

126. Since the last inspection, the school has made a determined effort to improve teaching and subject knowledge in this area. All staff have undertaken regular training. Assessment now matches attainment to National Curriculum levels and standards have improved, largely due to careful planning. The enlightened leadership of the co-ordinator, the keen support of the headteacher and the enhanced resources indicate that the school is well placed to continue to improve standards.

## 126. **Art**

127. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in both key stages. This contrasts with the findings of the last inspection where progress was found to be satisfactory at both key stages.

128. Pupils learn to use a good range of techniques and media, including pencil, paint, crayons, oil pastels, chalk and collage. At Key Stage 1, they become increasingly skilled in the use of a range of implements. They produce well-observed sketches of leaves and show increasingly developed cutting skills in collage work about harvest. Most pupils mix paints with increasing care and produce detailed and colourful pictures of events during their holidays. Work in exercise books is illustrated with lively drawings. At Key Stage 2, pupils increase their skills in three-dimensional work when they make flowers and carefully painted masks. In their study of how famous artists work, they produce well-finished sketches in the style of painters such as Klimt and Rockwell. Pupils copy techniques such as pointillism and design pictures and patterns influenced by the ideas of Picasso and William Morris. In their sketchbooks, pupils demonstrate increasing understanding and skill in the use of line and tone and develop interesting work in a range of media. They use their artistic skills to enhance other subjects. In history, they produce skyline silhouettes of bombing raids in the Second World War. Pupils produce interesting designs based on African patterns but there is insufficient evidence of the multicultural influence in the world of art.

129. Pupils enjoy their work and sustain interest and concentration during lessons and in the completion of tasks over longer periods. They co-operate well in the use of resources and discuss their pictures and collages confidently and thoughtfully. Most pupils are well behaved and work well independently. They take a pride in their achievements and are eager to produce well-finished work.

130. The quality of teaching at both key stages is good. Teachers have a good knowledge of media and techniques and explain these clearly to pupils so that skills are reinforced. They listen carefully to pupils and value their efforts and opinions. This increases pupils' confidence and enhances the pride they take in their work. Teachers demonstrate methods carefully, for example when they show different ways of working in collage. They have high expectations of pupils and encourage them to produce careful and imaginative work. The effective use of art to enhance other subjects, such as English, geography and design and technology, is a strong feature of the teaching. Planning is very clear and detailed and lessons are well organised so that learning objectives are understood by the pupils and lessons run smoothly.

131. Teachers present and display pupils' work carefully and this helps pupils throughout the school to value one another's work. Prints of pictures from a wide range of artists such as Constable, Monet, Van Gogh and Lowry are displayed to enrich and enhance pupils' artistic knowledge and understanding. The co-ordinator leads the subject well and there is a sense of

confidence and enjoyment of art at both key stages. Resources are good and they are organised and stored efficiently. The school makes good use of the nearby Lady Leverhulme Art Gallery to enhance pupils' experience of a wide range of artists.

## **Design and Technology**

132. Few design and technology lessons were seen during the inspection and none were seen at Key Stage 2. Evidence from the lessons seen, discussion with pupils and the subject co-ordinator and scrutiny of work and policy documents indicates that pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school, with recent very good progress at Key Stage 1.

133. At Key Stage 1, pupils acquire skills in a systematic way as they work with a wide range of materials and components, including sheet materials, reclaimed material and construction kits. Pupils design, plan, make and evaluate a range of simple products. They design purses, then cut and decorate felt to match their designs. They investigate ways of fixing material together and use staples, adhesive or stitching to form their purses. They evaluate their work and discuss how improvements could be made. At Key Stage 2, pupils gain understanding of how simple mechanisms such as hinges and levers can be used to produce different kinds of movement. They develop a clear idea of what has to be done and measure, mark out, cut and shape a range of materials. Pupils develop an appropriate vocabulary for naming and describing the equipment, materials, components and processes they use. Work is linked with study in science as pupils investigate how structures such as bridges can fail when loaded. Pupils consider a range of processes for building different types of bridge.

134. Pupils respond well to the subject and enjoy the process of bringing their designs to finished products. They work well together and are keen to get on with practical tasks. During planning periods, pupils attend well to instructions and are prepared to re-think their ideas. They show real joy and pride in their achievements.

135. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 is excellent and this is reflected in pupils' recent very good progress. There is clear, direct teaching of skills such as cutting, measuring and marking. High quality questioning helps pupils to consider which materials and fastenings they should choose. From an early age, teachers expect pupils to make choices and use appropriate vocabulary to describe what they have done and learned. Activities are prepared meticulously and pupils are encouraged to put away resources at the end of lessons. Staff ensure that pupils are aware of health and safety issues concerning the use of tools in the classroom. No lessons were seen at Key Stage 2 but scrutiny of project booklets indicates that teachers have appropriate expectations of the progress pupils should make in the acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding.

136. The recently appointed co-ordinator has worked with other teachers to identify activities which have been successful and link them to other subjects so that they are relevant for the pupils. Improved schemes of work ensure that pupils gain skills step-by-step in a systematic way. Objectives have been clarified for activities so that teachers know what pupils are expected to do and understand. Resources have been organised and recorded so there is good access to the items needed for lessons. Teachers have begun to assess and record what pupils can do and plans are in hand to assemble a portfolio of work based on written records and photographs. The co-ordinator's considerable expertise is being used very effectively to raise standards. All issues from the last inspection have been successfully addressed.

## **136. Geography**

137. No teaching was seen at Key Stage 2 but from the lessons seen at Key Stage 1 and

examination of work and displays, pupils' progress is satisfactory at both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress by the end of both key stages.

138. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils develop a growing awareness of the differences between urban and rural life. They gain field study skills as they study their own locality. Pupils know that there are similar features such as churches, shops, schools and pubs in different towns and villages. As they investigate, pupils develop increasing confidence in using symbols and marking key features on maps and plans. They gain knowledge and understanding of how climate affects crops. Higher attaining pupils begin to form hypotheses about different environments.

139. At Key Stage 2, pupils expand their geographical vocabulary. They become more accurate at plotting the position of the main towns in Great Britain by using six-figure grid references. Pupils are more aware of different climates and environments throughout the world, including the polar regions. They develop their understanding of the features of high and low pressure effectively but are less confident when asked to interpret data. In their research, they use a good range of sources such as books, atlases, maps and CD-ROMs to extend their geographical knowledge and understanding.

140. Pupils have good attitudes to their work and show enthusiasm for the subject. They co-operate well in group work and are always willing to share their views and experiences. Written work is generally well presented. Maps and drawings are clear and completed with attention to detail.

141. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1. Planning is good and builds effectively on knowledge and skills. Resources are well prepared but often lack imagination. Questioning techniques are sound and teachers require pupils to think as well as recall facts. Activities generally build on pupils' previous knowledge, although in some classes too much emphasis is placed on the completion of worksheets. No judgement can be made about the quality of teaching at Key Stage 2. The use of display is not always fully exploited to extend learning at both key stages.

142. The newly appointed co-ordinator has ambitious plans for the subject. A new policy has been formulated and imaginative schemes of work are being drawn up for use at Key Stage 1. In the week following the inspection, a 'geography action' programme was due to take place, under the auspices of the Geographical Association. The development plan is sound and pinpoints appropriate priorities.

143. Standards remain the same as those recorded at the last inspection. The framework now being established gives the school the good capacity to improve pupils' levels of attainment.

### 143. **History**

144. Although no lessons were seen at Key Stage 1, there is enough evidence from pupils' work, discussions with teachers and scrutiny of planning to indicate that most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and that this is continued throughout Key Stage 2. These findings concur with those from the last inspection.

145. At Key Stage 1, most pupils develop a sense of time as they study their own lives. They increase their knowledge of famous people, such as Mary Seacole and Grace Darling and begin to develop an understanding of some of the events in the past such as the Gunpowder Plot. They extend their skills in research, for example when they write letters to ask grandparents about wartime conditions. Pupils make increasingly accurate comparisons between life now and at the beginning of the century.

146.As they move through Key Stage 2, most pupils become increasingly skilled in using evidence to answer questions about the past. They understand the significance of primary and secondary sources. Pupils research newspapers as they study the Second World War and use CD-ROMs to find out more about artefacts and writing from the Ancient Egyptian period. Most pupils deepen their understanding of different perspectives of the past. For example, they consider the Spanish conquests in South America from the points of view of the native peoples and the colonists. They build up a good level of factual knowledge about events and people in the past. Well-presented local studies and work on the evacuation of children during wartime show pupils' understanding of the consequences of events for ordinary people.

147.From the lessons seen at Key Stage 2, pupils have very good attitudes to history and this reflects the very good teaching. Pupils sustain their concentration, for example when they listen to tape recordings, examine artefacts and handle materials very carefully. Most pupils enjoy their work and are very eager and confident to pose and answer questions. They present their work neatly and persevere when conducting research. Most pupils work very well when not under the immediate supervision of a teacher and co-operate well to complete tasks. Pupils empathise with the experiences of people in the past, for example in work on child workers in Victorian times. They are usually well behaved and polite, take a pride in their work and work very hard.

148.Pupils develop literacy skills effectively in history as they do research to extend their knowledge and understanding of a range of historical periods. They present their findings in note form, extended writing and diagrams. Numeracy skills are practised as pupils investigate time lines and calculate periods of time when they look at dates.

149.The quality of teaching at Key stage 2 is very good. Most teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and understand the importance of providing opportunities for pupils to make use of sources of evidence in the process of historical enquiry. This enables them to offer pupils effective guidance in increasing their knowledge and understanding. They have high expectations of pupils' work and use questions very effectively to make them think hard. Teachers' planning is very thorough and detailed and their explanations and descriptions are very clear. This helps both pupils and teachers to know exactly what is expected. Teachers generally manage pupils well and present lessons in lively and interesting ways so that pupils are motivated to work hard and to enjoy their learning. Most teachers organise pupils and equipment efficiently so that lessons run smoothly.

150.The co-ordinator leads the subject well. There is a sense of staff enjoyment of the subject and this has a positive effect on the pupils. The good progress reported after the last inspection has been maintained at Key Stage 2. Pupils' progress at Key Stage 1 was satisfactory and it is now good. Resources are good and these are enhanced by the school's effective use of the local education authority's loan service.

150.

## 150. **Music**

151.Few music lessons were seen during the inspection. Hymn practices were observed at both key stages and one lesson was observed at each key stage. Judgements reflect these observations, singing during collective worship, the examination of teachers' planning and the school policy for music. At both key stages, pupils' progress is satisfactory over time.

152.By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils develop a growing awareness of sounds and how they are made. They experiment with a range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments and explore rhythm, pitch and dynamics. They sing simple songs and have a good sense of pitch. By the time they are seven, pupils have a good repertoire of known songs and hymns and they sing tunefully and rhythmically. Appraisal of their performance develops appropriately as pupils listen to one another and try to improve their singing.

153.By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are aware of elements of music such as tempo and duration. They gain knowledge and understanding of a growing range of musical instruments such as the euphonium, tenor horn and cornet. Pupils play percussion instruments with increasing control and work together in groups to create compositions based on tunes such as themes from soap operas. The quality of singing is satisfactory and pupils sing hymns thoughtfully, with regard to the meaning of the words. Pupils listen attentively to a range of styles of music, including folk songs, as they enter the hall for collective worship.

154.Pupils, including those with special educational needs, gain skills, knowledge and understanding during both key stages which improve their musical education and extend their cultural awareness. They acquire a growing repertoire of known songs and develop skills of composition and performance which help them to gain enjoyment from the subject.

155.Pupils enjoy their music lessons. Most listen attentively to advice from the teacher and try hard to improve their performance. Social skills develop effectively during musical activities, when pupils want to do well. They realise that it takes effort from everyone to achieve a good performance. Pupils show respect and thoughtful attitudes when they sing during collective worship. They sang, 'Be still in the presence of the Lord; the Holy One is here', with great reverence.

156.Literacy is developed effectively in assemblies when pupils follow the words of hymns and there are library books and CD-ROMs for pupils to find information about composers and the history of music. Pupils gain experience of musical composition using information technology. The school has introduced a program for them to compose tunes on the screen.

157.Teaching by the recently appointed specialist teacher is good at both key stages, with some very good teaching at the end of Key Stage 2. This leads to good progress within the lessons. Planning is effective, with clear learning objectives and appropriate resources. Objectives are shared with the pupils and this is a strength in the teaching. Pupils' interest is captured effectively when they have opportunities to use instruments and perform. The elements of music are taught systematically and there is a clear sense of progress in lessons. A commercial scheme is supplemented by a wide range of materials and there is a useful school music policy. There is insufficient evidence of the development of multicultural music. Resources for music are good and they are well organised and stored. The school provides opportunities for pupils to extend their musical experiences. Instrumental lessons for brass instruments are held at the school and there is a junior choir which performs for special religious occasions and concerts.

158.Inspection findings are broadly in line with those in the last report. Provision for musical composition has improved.

## **Physical education**

159.By the ages of seven and eleven, most pupils reach levels typical for their age. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress.

160.During the inspection, no dance or gymnastic activities were observed. At Key Stage 1, most pupils show a good awareness of space during warm-up activities. They control their bodies effectively as they twist, jump and dodge. They gain skills systematically to play simple competitive games and develop and practise a variety of ways of sending, receiving and travelling with a ball. Proficiency in striking a ball is variable but pupils understand the principles that characterise good technique.

161.By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils change speed and direction effectively as they

develop skills for competitive games. They understand and play small-sided games and improve the skills of sending and receiving a ball. Most pupils handle a tennis racquet and strike a ball with a reasonable level of control. Several are able to bounce a ball using the edge of the racquet. Pupils co-operate well in group activities and help each other by analysing one another's performance. As part of the school's physical education programme, pupils at Key Stage 2 visit the local pool to develop swimming skills. By the end of the key stage, most pupils can swim at least 25 metres.

162. Pupils are enthusiastic in lessons; they respond well to instructions and enjoy energetic activities. In a tennis session, pupils in Year 5 maintained high levels of concentration and were determined to develop the correct techniques. They often show initiative and demonstrate confidently for the rest of the class. A few pupils do not bring their kit to school regularly. In one lesson, five pupils were unable to participate because they did not have appropriate clothing.

163. Teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are well planned and teachers organise pupils effectively. Teachers' strong organisational skills compensate for some insecurity in detailed knowledge of individual skills. High standards were promoted by a qualified coach who led a tennis lesson. The school uses a scheme devised by a local sports centre to draw on expertise to enhance pupils' skills. At Key Stage 2, the school has developed an excellent assessment sheet to be completed by pupils who are unable to participate in the lesson. Teachers use these sheets very effectively.

164. The headteacher is currently responsible for the co-ordination of the subject. The outdated policy is due for review in the next academic year. A number of staff support the varied extra-curricular programme, involving all major games. These are reported by pupils in regularly published bulletins. Resources are adequate and the spacious hall is suitable for a range of activities. The school has to use playing fields nearby, since there is no grassed area adjacent to the buildings. Several parents expressed their pleasure at the format of the 'Infants Fun Day', which replaced the traditional sports day. Almost all Year 6 pupils participate in the annual residential visit to Oaklands in North Wales where they are involved in climbing, walking and swimming.

165. The satisfactory standards reported at the time of the last inspection have been maintained.



## PART C: INSPECTION DATA

### 165. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

166. A team of five inspectors, one of whom was a lay inspector, spent a combined total of 19 days in the school. Prior to inspection they considered a range of documentation provided by the school. On an initial visit the Registered Inspector met the headteacher, the staff, the governing body and parents. Further documentation, including teachers' plans and policy documents, was scrutinised during the inspection. The total time spent in classes, discussion with pupils and evaluation of their work was 59 hours. The inspectors observed 85 lessons or parts of lessons and they observed assemblies. They listened to pupils read and examined samples of their work. They observed registration sessions, breaks, lunchtimes and movement between lessons. They talked to pupils, governors, staff and parents. Before the inspection, 18 parents attended a parents' meeting. Responses to parents' questionnaire were also considered. Attendance registers, records of pupils' progress and reports for parents were checked.

166.

### 166. DATA AND INDICATORS

#### 166. Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR – Y6	208	3	76	120
Nursery Unit/School	17.5	0	10	0

#### Teachers and classes

##### Qualified teachers (YR – Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	9.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.9:1

##### Education support staff (YR – Y6)

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked each week	77.0

##### Qualified teachers (Nursery school, classes or unit)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.5

##### Education support staff (Nursery school, classes or unit)

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked each week	32.0

## Financial data

Average class size:

26.0

Financial year:

1998/99

	£
Total Income	371 755
Total Expenditure	373 286
Expenditure per pupil	1 659
Balance brought forward from previous year	15 254
Balance carried forward to next year	13 723

## PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

184

Number of questionnaires returned:

33

### Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	70	27	0	3	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	76	15	0	6	3
The school handles complaints from parents well	39	39	18	0	3
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	21	52	12	12	3
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	36	45	6	9	3
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	33	42	15	6	3
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	39	45	6	9	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	27	45	12	15	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	64	21	9	6	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	58	36	6	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	67	27	3	3	0