

INSPECTION REPORT

Holy Cross & St Mary's RC Primary School

Liverpool

LEA area: Liverpool

Unique reference number: 104633

Headteacher: Mrs M Easton

Reporting inspector: Mr G Brown
21060

Dates of inspection: 3 April – 7 April 2000

Inspection number: 189092

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Fontenoy Street Liverpool Mersey
Postcode:	L3 2DU
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr E J Burns
Date of previous inspection:	5 February 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
George Brown	Registered inspector	Science	What sort of school is it?
		Geography	How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements
		Music	How well is the school led and managed?
		Equal opportunities	What should the school do to improve further?
		Special educational needs	
Marion Howel	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school care for its pupils or students?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Linda Spooner	Team inspector	Maths	How well are pupils or students taught?
		Art	
		History	
		Physical education	
		Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage	
Colin Smith	Team inspector	English	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils or students? Assessment
		Information technology	
		Design technology	
		English as an additional language	

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	14
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	19
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	20
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	21
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	23
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	27

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in the centre of Liverpool. About one-third of the pupils travel from beyond the immediate area, attending the school by parental choice. The school roll is recovering following significant inner-city redevelopment and has also increased following the recent closure of another Catholic primary school nearby. There are currently 151 pupils on roll including 27 in the Nursery class, which still makes the school small compared to the national average. The school has traditionally very little representation from minority ethnic families and there is only one pupil who speaks English as an additional language. Some 50 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, a figure well above the national average. Thirty-seven pupils are placed on the school's register of special educational needs, but there are currently no pupils with a statement of special educational need. The attainment of pupils on entry is wide-ranging but is below average overall.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective, popular school that has undergone considerable change in recent times. Pupils reach broadly average standards in much of their work and most achieve well, particularly by the time they transfer to secondary education. The leadership of the school is well focused, leading to sound teaching and ensuring pupils reach their potential. The hard-working staff is committed to the welfare and personal development of all the pupils and the school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well, particularly at Key Stage 2.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress.
- Teaching is good at Key Stage 2 and impacts well on pupils' progress.
- Pupils behave well and have good attitudes towards their learning.
- There is a caring, supportive ethos, founded on good relationships that helps promote a real sense of community in the school.
- Under the leadership of senior staff, there is effective teamwork that gives the school strengths in several areas, including the regular celebration of pupils' achievements.
- The provision for the pupils' cultural development is good and is very good in relation to their moral development.

What could be improved

- Standards in science are below average at Key Stage 2.
- While listening skills are satisfactory, pupils' speaking skills are under-developed. This hinders their progress in some areas of learning, particularly the ability to express their own ideas.
- The assessment of pupils' work is not well organised and the results are used insufficiently in deciding the next stage of teaching and learning.
- There is no overview of exactly what the pupils are expected to learn at each stage of their schooling.
- The written aims of the school do not accurately reflect its essential nature, priorities and current achievements, and these and other whole-school policies are not projected well to parents.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February 1996, when it was reported to have some areas of serious weakness. Since that time, the school has undergone a period of change and reflection, including the appointment of a new headteacher and several staff. Satisfactory progress has been made in important areas, although not all weaknesses have been fully remedied. Standards in mathematics, music, physical education and history are now at the levels anticipated for the age of the pupils. Standards among children under five have been reviewed and improved teaching and learning have helped to ensure better all-round provision for this age-group. There has been insufficient review and development of the school's aims and objectives and some related policies and schemes of work are in urgent need of further review. The governing body has begun to carry out its responsibilities more effectively, particularly in relation to the strategic management of the school's resources. The headteacher is currently devoting less time to actual teaching, so that she can more identify more

effectively the wider needs of the school and closely monitor the quality of teaching and learning across all age-groups. Improved ways have been found to develop the spiritual development of the pupils and this is now satisfactory overall. Registration procedures have improved and potential safety hazards have been attended to. The school has good potential to improve still further and continue to raise standards from its currently secure footing.

STANDARDS

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

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

Standards in these core subjects have been relatively low in recent years compared to the national averages for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2. For example, the school's results for 1999 indicate pupils' attainment was well below the national average in English, mathematics and science. The number of pupils taking the tests is usually very small and the performance of just one or two pupils either way, can distort the overall nature of the attainment. It is sometimes the proportion of pupils with special educational needs or the low percentage of higher attaining pupils, that then becomes significant. Pupils' results are average when compared to those from similar social backgrounds. The 1999 results for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 indicate that standards in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly average, but above average when compared to similar schools. The inspection confirmed this position at Key Stage 1, but found that the good teaching and, in particular, the ongoing impact of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, has helped to raise standards at Key Stage 2, leading to now average attainment in English and mathematics. Attainment in science remains below average at Key Stage 2, but standards in all other subjects are in line with the national expectation. The current targets set by the school are appropriate to help raise attainment at Key Stage 2.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Consistently good. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and work hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall. Pupils are trustworthy and respond well to the rules promoting good behaviour. Incidents of bullying are very rare.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very positive and pupils understand the impact of their actions on others. More could be done to increase independent learning.
Attendance	Satisfactory in relation to national averages. Only a few pupils are late on a daily basis.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
52 lessons were seen	Satisfactory	satisfactory	Good

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

Teaching is satisfactory overall with strengths at Key Stage 2. The needs of all pupils are well met. Approximately ten per cent of teaching seen was very good, 33 per cent was good and the remainder satisfactory. Both literacy and numeracy are taught effectively, particularly at Key Stage 2. All other subjects are taught satisfactorily at both key stages, with particular strengths in teachers' planning, and their use of time and general learning resources. At Key Stage 2, the management of pupils is very good and teachers place high expectations on pupils' response and learning. These teaching skills are less well defined at Key Stage 1. Pupils acquire skills, knowledge and understanding at a consistent rate. The pace and rigour of work are particularly good at Key Stage 2, allowing pupils to make significant progress. Teachers lay insufficient emphasis on the promotion of pupils' spoken language.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. The curriculum still lacks an overview that would make it clear exactly what pupils will learn at various ages.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The needs of pupils are well met allowing them to make mainly good progress set against their previous learning.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very few such pupils occur on the school roll, but when the need arises, pupils are well provided for.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for spiritual and social development is satisfactory. The provision for the cultural development of pupils is good and for their moral development it is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is a caring institution and pupils' needs and welfare are well supported. The overall assessment of pupils' performance is unsatisfactory.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and senior staff form an influential and effective team and set appropriate targets for school growth. The aims of the school however do not reflect its current strengths and many written policies are in need of updating.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Statutory requirements are met. Governors manage financial and other resources well but are insufficiently involved in long-term strategic planning.
The school's evaluation of its performance	A relatively new area of development, but the school has the basic provision in place to test the effectiveness of its actions and decisions.
The strategic use of resources	The school is an efficient unit and makes satisfactory use of the resources made available to it on an annual basis.

There is a satisfactory match of teachers and support staff to help meet the demands of the curriculum, although the school does not always use support staff in the most effective way. The school is well aware of the principles of good value and employs these effectively.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching in the school is good. • Their children are helped to mature and take responsibility. • It is easy to talk to teachers. • Children like school and feel good about coming. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A greater range of extra-curricular activities. • Greater understanding of some school policies, such as homework, behaviour and how mixed classes are taught. • Information about how children are progressing.

The inspection evidence supports many of the positive views expressed by parents. Their view of the school is good overall. The school has an average range of extra-curricular activities for its size. The inspection confirmed that the school could express its aims and policies to parents in a more coherent way. The school has two formal evenings a year, but should make it clear that parents and carers are welcome to come in and discuss their concerns at any time, by appointment if necessary.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The great majority of children enters Nursery with below average attainment, particularly in relation to their pre-school literacy and numeracy skills and their knowledge and understanding of the world. They make satisfactory progress, but still transfer to compulsory age schooling with skills and knowledge below those expected for their age. The provision for the under-fives has improved considerably since the previous inspection and most children learn an appropriate range of personal and social skills, although, for many, speaking remains weak and relatively undeveloped. Children make good progress with their gross motor skills. Although below average overall, most children respond well to creative activities such as listening to loud and soft music, simple modelling exercises and painting in a variety of media. Their role-play is relatively unimaginative. By the time they are five, children's skills, knowledge and understanding remain below average, particularly in relation to language, numeracy and understanding of the world. A significant number of children, for example, struggle to find the right words to explain an activity or to contrast physical features in their immediate environment.
2. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 indicate that pupils at the school are above the national average in writing, in line with the national average in reading and below the national average in mathematics. Pupils scored above and sometimes well above the average in comparison to similar schools. Based on teacher assessments, pupils scored in line with the national average in science. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher level 3 in reading, writing and mathematics was generally below the national average. However, it must be remembered that only 12 pupils took the tests and the size of the cohort can greatly distort aspects of attainment, both up and down. This is also true when the school's results from the past four years are analysed. Over this period, standards in reading, writing and mathematics have fluctuated considerably but have remained generally close to the national average. At seven, the attainment of girls generally exceeds that of boys in the school. The recent inspection confirms that standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science at Key Stage 1 are broadly in line with the national average and that pupils' progress is satisfactory overall.
3. The adoption and practice of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are helping pupils to consolidate and extend many of their basic skills. Pupils develop appropriate listening skills, but remain below average in relation to speech, with many lacking the level of confidence and articulation to freely describe their work or share their views and suggestions. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils have average skills in reading and use an appropriate range of strategies for their age to help them tackle new words or extend their understanding. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils write grammatically sound sentences, stories have appropriate structure for their age and handwriting and spelling are broadly average. In an observed literacy lesson, many of these skills came together, with pupils reading well as a class from a 'Big Book' and recognising speech marks and other forms of punctuation.
4. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a sound grasp of basic number and show average ability to work mentally for example, in the rapid recall of number bonds and number tables. Pupils are also relatively adept at addition in its various forms, but are less secure with subtraction and in their use of mathematical vocabulary. Their use and interpretation of data are also very rudimentary, particularly on how to express results in graphic form. Their graphs to express, for example, frequency of eye colour, use computer generated data, but this aspect is not well developed overall. Most pupils know the importance of place value and have average understanding of the properties of most basic shapes. Much of the recent work undertaken in investigational science has helped introduced pupils to the concept of setting up a fair test and of explaining why things happen as they do. Pupils in Years 1 and 2, for example, carry out good experiments with melting ice. They also have sound knowledge and understanding of many topics such as living things and the human body. The range of work they cover however, is not great, and many pupils struggle to use scientific vocabulary with accuracy and confidence.

5. At Key Stage 1, standards in all other subjects are in line with the national expectation. Computer skills, for example, are at the level anticipated for a majority of pupils aged seven; they show good response to on-screen menus and sound use of peripherals such as the mouse and printer. In history, pupils show a satisfactory range of skills when studying the history of Albert Dock and know for example, the role of the Romans and Celts in English history. In design and technology, pupils show satisfactory awareness of the design stage and carry this through to average standards when making Easter baskets or hats. In geography, pupils reach average standards in their map work and have a sound awareness of the main features of their own and some more distant environments. Standards in music, particularly singing, are very variable between classes, but are mainly at the level expected for the age of the pupils.
6. The results of the 1999 Statutory Tests for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, indicate that standards in English, mathematics and science are well below the national average. Standards in science have been particularly low in recent years, while those in mathematics have only been marginally better than in English. In English, it is the low percentage of pupils who reach the higher levels that causes attainment to fall, while in mathematics, it is the overall low percentage of pupils reaching the basic level for their age that is the real concern. When compared to similar schools, pupils' results are in line with the national average in all the core subjects. The very small cohort of pupils taking the tests in 1999 (eleven in total), included a number of pupils with learning difficulties and, as at Key Stage 1, the performance of just one or two pupils can greatly affect the school's average points score. With such small numbers taking the tests over the past few years, results continue to fluctuate but have remained generally below average in the core areas. The inspection found that attainment in English and mathematics has risen rapidly in recent times, resulting in broadly average standards in these subjects for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2. This is mainly due to more accurate targeting of attainment, the current quality of teaching within the key stage, and the impact of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Standards in science are improving but remain below the national average.
7. Pupils achieve well in this key stage, making at least satisfactory and frequently good progress in much of their learning. An exception is in their spoken language, which is characterised by short, poorly structured responses and a general lack of oral expression. In reading, pupils' standards are at the level expected for a majority of eleven-year-olds. Most pupils have a sound range of strategies for tackling unfamiliar words and phrases, understand characterisation and why certain authors or types of books appeal to them. Many are less adept in looking at non-fiction for additional information. Standards in writing are in line with the national average, but there are some weaknesses when writing at length or in a factual style, for example in science. However, there are recent examples of very detailed, imaginative writing that is well presented and is grammatically good. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 produce their own imaginative scripts depicting various explorers' lives at sea, while those in Year 6 write their own well-organised autobiographies, using word processing skills on the computer. The Literacy Strategy has done much to extend the reading and writing skills of many pupils.
8. In mathematics, pupils in Years 5 and 6 show the value of renewed emphasis on mental skills. They are relatively adept with addition and subtraction and other operations, although many do not fully understand the deeper pattern of relationships that makes number more meaningful and easier to use in problem solving. They are less secure, for example, with division. Pupils show a satisfactory understanding of a good range of topics including angles, shape, time, perimeter and area. Some of the pupils have limited experience in data handling and information technology is used infrequently to extend learning and understanding.
9. Standards in science are below average overall, particularly in relation to the pupils' use and understanding of technical language and in the development of their own investigative work. For example, they do not yet realise which experiment will help them test a particular hypothesis or how best to evaluate the results they obtain from their experiments. However, as in other core subjects at this key stage, the quality of teaching and pupils' experiences are already leading to good progress and a rapid rise in attainment. Some of the work observed on evaporation, dissolving and on liquids, gases and solids was of a good order.
10. Standards in all other subjects are broadly average, although little work was available for

observation in music and physical education. In information technology, pupils communicate well using on-screen information and use the Internet successfully to support their work in other subjects, such as history. Data handling is less convincing but nevertheless at an acceptable standard, while the use of sensors and the modelling element of information technology is weak. In geography, pupils show good awareness of their own urban environment and know, for example, how a river can flood and bring about potentially harmful results. Pupils are less familiar with world geography and do not always have the vocabulary to describe what they mean and know.

11. In history, standards are in line with the national expectation, with pupils demonstrating sometimes good levels of historical enquiry during their projects on the Depression of the 1930s and the contrasting cultures of ancient Egypt and Victorian England. In design and technology pupils show average skills when designing model lighthouses and make wheeled vehicles containing electric motors. Evaluations of their finished work are average overall. In music, pupils listen to and appraise different forms of music to a satisfactory level, but their singing is relatively lifeless and in need of greater enthusiasm. Girls, in particular, perform well on the glockenspiel, while pupils generally maintain simple rhythms on a range of instruments. Art work is appropriate for the age of the pupils and in physical education, the planned work allows them to demonstrate average standards in gymnastics swimming and games, although pupils lack experiences in competitive sport. Most Year 6 pupils can swim 25 metres.
12. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress set against their previous learning and develop skills and understanding in keeping with their individual educational plans. Pupils' achievements are mainly at the level expected for their age and circumstances. The great majority of pupils responds appropriately to the demands made on them and make satisfactory gains in their skills, knowledge and understanding as they move through and between each key stage.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils' have good attitudes to their school and work. They are well behaved and there are good relationships within the school. There has been particular improvement in the behaviour of children in the Nursery and Reception since the previous inspection.
14. Pupils enjoy coming to school and show a lively interest in their work. They are keen to take an active part in the lessons and work well together in groups or pairs. Many pupils, however, lack confidence in speaking and are unable to clearly express their views or share their knowledge with fellow pupils. The positive attitudes of pupils are seen in the take up of opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities. The lunchtime clubs are well supported, with pupils enjoying sewing, football and using the Internet.
15. The behaviour of pupils both in lessons and around the school is good. They are polite and friendly and move around the school in a sensible manner. They play enthusiastically during breaks and at lunchtime and make good use of the space available to them. The pupils have been involved in drawing up their own classroom rules and they therefore have a clear understanding and sense of ownership with regard to them. They understand the school's behaviour code and feel the rules are applied fairly by all teachers. Pupils show respect for property and their surroundings. There were no exclusions during the previous year.
16. Pupils' personal development is good. Many are given opportunities to take responsibilities for routine tasks within the school. For example, they collect the registers and act as class monitors. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 act as "buddies" to those in Years 1 and 2. This involves the older pupils being available to give support to their "buddy" during the school day and joining in a paired reading session. The younger pupils enjoy the opportunity to be with more senior pupils, who in turn benefit from the responsibility of helping and supporting their younger friends. Pupils are given too few opportunities to show their initiative or develop independence in their learning and consequently this aspect of their personal development is less effective. Over-reliance on teachers and other adults is relatively commonplace.
17. Relationships between pupils and between teachers and pupils are good. Pupils play well together during breaks and at lunchtime and very few disagreements or arguments occur. They help one another when working in pairs or groups and understand the need to respect the

views of others. The class rules for Years 5 and 6 include a reminder that pupils 'can shop where they like.' This was included after discussion about clothes worn on mufti day and the pupils' extended right to make their own choices. Pupils and staff relate well to one another, with pupils being happy to go to their teacher for help or advice. If any incidents of bullying do occur the pupils know the school will deal with them promptly and fairly.

18. Attendance is satisfactory. The attendance rate is just below the national average, with no unauthorised absences recorded. Lessons start and finish on time with very little time wasted during the day. A few pupils arrive late for the morning session and this means they miss part of the act of collective worship.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at the foundation stage and at Key Stage 1 and is good at Key Stage 2. In the previous inspection, the quality of teaching was variable, ranging from good to unsatisfactory. Only one lesson in three was judged effective in the Nursery and Reception classes. At Key Stages 1 and 2, teaching was satisfactory, with some strengths identified in science and design technology. Two key issues for improvement were highlighted for action. These were: first, to review the teaching commitment of the headteacher in order to improve the opportunities for monitoring the effectiveness of the school; and second, to improve the quality of teaching at the foundation stage. These weaknesses have been well addressed.
20. Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed and there have been significant changes in teaching staff. The improvement in the quality of teaching since the time of the last inspection is a major factor in improving pupils' attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy. During the recent inspection, every lesson observed was at least satisfactory; a third of all lessons was good and about one in ten was very good. The headteacher does not have a class responsibility and is now in a position to develop a more comprehensive monitoring role.
21. The quality of teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes is satisfactory overall. The planning of work is well linked to the Desirable Learning Outcomes anticipated for the age of the children. In the Reception class, work is not always done to ensure that planning for the under fives is translated into practice in all subjects and takes appropriate account of children's ages and abilities in a mixed age class. In both classes, teachers know the children well and relationships are good. Behaviour management is satisfactory. However, more work needs to be done to ensure that all children are fully attentive and that they know that during discussion times, they need to listen to others and wait their turn. Teachers make efficient use of time, provide good quality resources and work effectively with the nursery nurse and classroom support assistant. In the Nursery, good ongoing assessment takes place to monitor attainment and progress in specific activities.
22. At Key Stage 1, teaching is satisfactory overall and was good in 15 per cent of lessons seen. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are well established. In the literacy and numeracy lessons observed, teachers have established good classroom routines for pupils and there is an industrious working atmosphere. Some good science teaching was observed in the lower part of the key stage, where the teacher's high expectations and secure subject knowledge led to good levels of pupil achievement. In Years 1 and 2, lessons on literacy and art were particularly successful. These were well planned, the teacher demonstrated good subject knowledge and questioning skills, and had high expectations of achievement. As a result, pupils made good gains in learning in both lessons. Teachers in both classes demonstrated satisfactory control of the pupils. However, they do not consistently demand that all pupils listen to what others have to say. In several lessons, teachers missed opportunities to develop the extended language skills of the pupils, by, for example, not insisting that, where it is appropriate, pupils talk or answer in complete sentences.
23. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 is a strength of the school and a major factor in the improving standards and good achievement in English and mathematics by the end of that key stage. Teaching was good or very good in 70 per cent of all lessons observed. It is particularly effective in literacy and numeracy. Of the seven literacy lessons observed, all were at least good and two were very good. Teaching in the other subjects of the curriculum,

including science, is never less than satisfactory and is good or very good in half of all lessons. As at Key Stage 1, not enough opportunities are provided throughout the key stage for pupils to improve standards of accuracy, expression and key vocabulary in the spoken word.

24. Throughout the school, the best teaching, both for the under-fives and at both key stages, incorporates strong subject knowledge, thorough planning, clear and well-informed introductions and suitably challenging tasks. All teachers make good use of time. Lessons start promptly and are often conducted at a brisk pace, which still allows pupils to think and learn. At Key Stage 2, especially, very good relationships help form the basis of a natural but at the same time firm control of pupils that enables good learning to take place. There is often good-humoured interaction but at no time is inappropriate behaviour accepted.
25. Teaching observed in subjects across the curriculum, such as art, history, physical education and design technology, was never less than satisfactory and often good, particularly where teachers had a special expertise or flair in that subject. The teaching of science and information technology is satisfactory overall. Over time, the work seen in pupils' books indicates that teachers provide good opportunities for pupils of different abilities to make mainly good progress. Marking at Key Stage 2 provides pupils with information on how they might improve their work.
26. Teaching in lessons and evidence from workbooks indicates that most teachers have realistically high expectations of the quantity and quality of work that pupils should achieve. All classes except the Nursery class contain a wide spread of ability as well as pupils from two age groups, but teachers plan effectively for this and provide pupils with appropriately challenging learning objectives.
27. Teachers in all areas of the school value pupils' ideas and are sympathetic to their individual needs. However, as pupils gain in knowledge and experience, only limited opportunities are provided for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. The school library and information technology are not sufficiently used for pupils to be involved in research and investigation. There is a need for this aspect of pupils' work to be developed further, especially for older pupils, some of whom are capable of higher attainment. The pattern of setting homework is well established. This includes taking home reading books as well as learning spellings and multiplication tables. Pupils at both key stages also have to find out things at home to prepare for future lessons.
28. Pupils with special educational needs are provided for well in lessons and this makes a valuable contribution to the good progress they make overall. Teachers plan work that takes account of their needs. Where appropriate, pupils are also supported effectively in small groups within the classroom. Throughout the school, classroom support staff are generally deployed effectively in lessons, although there are some weaknesses in their use. For example, during lengthy lesson introductions, support assistants are under-used to support targeted or vulnerable groups of children.

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

29. The curriculum provided by the school is satisfactory overall and satisfies the statutory requirement to offer a broad and balanced range of experiences covering all subjects, including religious education. However, there are some weaknesses in the planning and overall structure of what pupils learn.
30. The school has implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies effectively and rightly places a strong emphasis on the development of basic skills in English and mathematics. There is an effective programme of health education that deals with sex education and drugs awareness adequately. All pupils have equality of access and opportunity to the whole curriculum. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. Activities are provided to both interest and challenge them, but also to enable them to succeed and raise their self-esteem. This enables them to make good progress. The one pupil with English as a second language benefits from daily reading and discussion sessions with a classroom assistant. She is learning English quickly and making good progress. Pupils'

intellectual development is generally promoted well and most pupils receive sufficiently challenging tasks to enable them to achieve the standards expected. There are weaknesses in the planning for speech development.

31. Planning for children under the age of five is satisfactory. All aspects of the national desirable learning outcomes in the areas of learning for children under five, are suitably planned for. As pupils reach the age of five, elements of the Literacy and Numeracy strategies are brought in and this is helpful. However, when children move into the Reception class, opportunities to continue the self-directed learning established in the Nursery are significantly reduced. In this respect, the transfer from the under-fives curriculum into the National Curriculum is not as smooth as it should be.
32. Despite the overall adequacy of the curriculum, there are weaknesses in the planning. Policies and schemes of work are clearly written and some are still helpful, but many are out of date and, in some cases, do not reflect present practice. The school has adopted the national framework for planning literacy and numeracy and the co-ordinator has written a very comprehensive programme of work for information technology. These subjects have benefited, teaching has improved and pupils are making better progress. In other subjects, teachers have moved away from the original schemes, partly to link subjects together. However, these changes have been brought in randomly, without a clear overview of the whole curriculum, particularly as to how it affects pupils of different ages in the same class. As a result, in some subjects the curriculum has become fragmented. In design and technology, for example, skills are taught, but not necessarily in the right order. Without a picture of the whole curriculum, it is hard for teachers to ensure that pupils build systematically on earlier learning. Curricular aims are not always clear and there is no agreed system of checking for omissions or unnecessary duplication. This weakness was also pointed out during the last inspection.
33. Although there are weaknesses in long-term planning in some subjects, teachers and subject co-ordinators conscientiously prepare pupils' work for each forthcoming half term. The medium-term plans contain useful information about the activities to be undertaken by pupils. These are clearly described, often as a series of lessons throughout the term. However, exactly what the pupils are expected to learn is less clear and without specific learning objectives it is more difficult for teachers to assess whether pupils have been successful in their learning. To some extent, these weaknesses are compensated for in teacher's short-term planning. Every lesson is planned using a common planning sheet. These are not only invaluable to the teacher, but provide the headteacher with an effective means of keeping an immediate check on what is taught.
34. The school's relationship with the community is very fruitful and curricular provision is enriched by educational visits and visitors invited into school to talk to pupils. The use of the computer suite in the neighbouring community centre offers a rich resource. The centre also provides a tutor who teaches two classes once each week. This makes a significant impact on developments in information technology. The centre has an additional hall in which drama sessions are organised by a local authority adviser. These focus on real issues, such as dealing with violence, and play an important part in helping pupils to understand and cope with some of society's problems. The school takes full advantage of its city centre location. Pupils visit museums, galleries and attend orchestral concerts and the school becomes involved in many local competitions and promotions, such as 'The Whitbread Challenge' and food hygiene presentations.

35. Pupils increase their environmental awareness by visiting field study centres, and a residential visit to an outdoor pursuit centre is planned. These are valuable experiences that broaden the curriculum and prepare pupils successfully for the future. A satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities is provided in music, information technology and crafts, but there is little in the way of competitive sport involving matches with other schools. Booster classes for Year 6 pupils have been introduced to good effect and homework plays an important part in preparing pupils for secondary school. The school benefits from good links with partner institutions such as local high schools.
36. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils' spiritual development and this is an improvement on the previous inspection, when it was judged to be unsatisfactory. Collective worship is now more thoughtfully provided with themes for pupils to reflect on and opportunities for praise. However, pupils could be more regularly involved. Parents are invited to attend class assemblies. Although the school does not have a policy for spiritual development, whereby planned activities are integrated into different subjects, teachers are alert to opportunities to promote spirituality. In geography and science, for example, pupils learn about the wonder of the life and form and in art there are good opportunities to observe and capture the beauty of nature. Religious education lessons provide suitable opportunities for pupils to study their own religion and the major world faiths.
37. Pupils' moral development is very good and is promoted consistently and very effectively. There is a clear moral code within the school and pupils are involved in devising their own class rules, which they follow well. Pupils have a good awareness of right and wrong and the great majority behave well in lessons and around school. Pupils are given good opportunities to think about moral issues in a variety of lessons. For example, pupils in Year 6 consider moral issues such as fox hunting and saving the tiger. Through being respectful, polite and friendly, teachers and support staff provide good role models for the pupils.
38. Provision for pupils' social development is satisfactory. The school has a distinct Catholic ethos and a strong sense of community. In lessons, pupils have many good opportunities to work together in groups, learning to share and listening to each other's contributions. Older pupils have well-planned opportunities to exercise responsibility. For example, they help their 'reading buddies' in the infant classes to improve their reading. Through links with the local community and city institutions, pupils are given good opportunities to work together and to mix with people outside school. Pupils with special educational needs are integrated well into classes and encouraged to play a full part in the life of the school. Their social development is promoted well. The strong, positive and caring relationship between teachers and pupils promotes good relationships throughout the school. The school has worked hard to increase pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Success is celebrated and mistakes and disappointments are sensitively handled. However, not all teachers place sufficient emphasis on helping pupils to become independent learners. In Years 2 and 6, pupils are expected to perform their own plays and gather their own information, often through homework tasks. In other aspects of school life, independent learning and taking initiative are not strongly promoted. This is evident in the limited use of the school library.
39. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils develop an awareness of their own cultural traditions through the geography curriculum when they study their own immediate locality, and through history lessons when they learn about important events in the history of their county. Traditional skills, such as sewing, are promoted well in lunchtime clubs. Visitors to the school, such as those who talk about their life experiences, help pupils to appreciate their cultural heritage. Posters are displayed showing men and women from different ethnic groups in important social roles, such as law, education, health and police. The whole school participated in an African week earlier in the year, enabling pupils to experience Nigerian culture such as music, dance, art and storytelling. Pupils follow a Chinese health programme and gain insight into the Irish culture. The school's location has advantages because it is so close to the cultural heart of the city. Various ethnic groups approach the school to seek their participation in cultural activities because they are likely to receive a positive response. The school makes the most of these opportunities and, as a result, pupils are being well prepared for life in a multicultural society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. The school provides good support for its pupils with satisfactory arrangements to ensure their

welfare. It is a caring community where pupils are happy within a secure learning environment.

41. The staff knows the pupils well and understands their needs. The pupils know they can turn to their teachers if they have a problem and they are confident they will be listened to and helped. The friendly atmosphere within the school is an indication of the good relationships that exist. The current school policy relating to behaviour is under review. New procedures are in place with rewards for good work, behaviour or effort and these are used consistently by all the staff. Teachers, the site manager or the dinner staff can nominate pupils for an award and this approach has had a very positive effect on the behaviour in the school. The lunchtime supervisors have received training in managing children and this has also helped to ensure there is a consistent approach to behaviour.
42. There are satisfactory arrangements to promote good attendance. Parents receive letters if their child's attendance falls below ninety per cent and the school works closely with the Educational Welfare Officer. Pupils are encouraged to arrive at school on time, with a trophy awarded every half term to the class with the fewest late arrivals.
43. The school has appropriate policies and procedures relating to health & safety and child protection matters. These policies are currently under review. There is a designated person who has received training and the staff is aware of the policies. All necessary records are kept and checks carried out. The governing body is properly informed about health and safety matters. Drills and risk assessments are carried out within approved periods.
44. Procedures for the assessment of pupils' attainment and progress are unsatisfactory. Although the school has put in place appropriate systems to monitor pupils' learning in English and mathematics, there are no agreed procedures to assess learning in other subjects, including science and information technology. A new system of profiling pupils' learning in English is currently being introduced by the co-ordinator. The system has some promising features, but it is being brought in without an overall picture of the purpose and use of assessment.
45. Baseline assessment in the Nursery and Reception classes, and the statutory end of key stage assessment in English, mathematics and science, is fully in place. These assessments are suitably analysed for patterns of strengths and weaknesses. In addition, the school has also introduced a system of regularly measuring pupils' performance in reading and mathematics throughout the school. Effective use is being made of these assessments. For example, pupils' weaknesses are identified, targets are set and end of key stage booster classes are provided. These measures are helping to raise standards and improving results. Teachers consistently follow the clear marking policy and mark pupils' work carefully and positively. The school makes use of other assessments, but the purpose of these assessments has not been fully thought through. For example, samples of pupils' work are kept, as in science, but these are often not commented on or matched to a particular level. However, samples are beginning to be linked with target setting. Reading tests are undertaken twice a year and some pupils' scores appear to slip back, but it is not clear how the results are used to improve their reading.
46. All teachers keep records of individual pupils' progress. Pupils' personal progress is monitored well. Comments on pupils' personal and social development records and annual reports to parents show that teachers are well aware of what pupils need to do to improve their approach to learning and their relationships, although future targets are not always clearly stated. In the Nursery and Reception classes, more manageable records are being introduced to track children's development in the areas of learning. In other classes, record keeping is less consistent, but usually contains references to English and mathematics, such as spelling tests and reading scores. However, the only individual curricular records in the non-core subjects are the 'end of year' report to parents and these do not provide enough information on how pupils can improve their work. A major weakness is the lack of consistent and manageable assessment procedures to identify how well pupils have remembered and understood the units of work over each term. This means that weaknesses in understanding can go undetected and teachers cannot regulate their future planning to take account of pupils' rate of learning. This weakness was reported at the time of the last inspection.
47. The school meets statutory requirements to assess and plan for pupils' special educational needs. In this area, assessment procedures are good. Early identification of pupils having

difficulties leads to detailed assessments being made and pupils being placed as appropriate on the school's Code of Practice register. Individual education plans are effectively drafted, using information from assessment to plan work and set practical targets. Pupils are carefully monitored as they progress towards their targets.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. The parents are very supportive of the school and are satisfied with the education it is providing for their children and with the way their children are cared for. Their overall view of the school is good. The inspection evidence endorses most of the positive views expressed by the parents. However, the findings did not support the parents' concerns over the amount of homework set and the activities available outside lessons. These are strong enough features considering the size and nature of the school.
49. The school has satisfactory links with the parents. They are made welcome in the school and a number regularly help in the classrooms and with sporting activities. Parents help with the making of costumes for school productions and on school trips. They are encouraged to attend the weekly awards assemblies and give good support to events organised by the school. After the weekly assembly, parents are given the opportunity to speak to the class teacher. This provides a good opportunity for parents to meet the teachers for an informal talk about their children.
50. There are two meetings held each year for parents to discuss the work of their children. In addition, the teachers are available both before and after school if parents wish to ask about a specific problem or worry. Letters are sent home to keep parents advised of forthcoming events. The school also writes individually to parents if their child has been particularly good and suggests "they give them a hug" as a reward. This is a good idea that helps to strengthen and bond the home/school relationship. Nursery children have a weekly diary in which the teacher tells parents what their child has achieved during the week. Parents are also encouraged to use the diary as a two-way form of communication. The annual written reports which parents receive are satisfactory. However they do not give any indication of targets set and, apart from English, there is insufficient information about the work covered. The school is aware that the current prospectus and the latest governors' annual report to parents do not contain all the statutory information required and that this should be rectified as soon as possible. Both from the returned questionnaires and from the parents' evening, it is also clear that there is some confusion in the minds of parents as to the school's policies and aims. The quality and style of the information currently available does not provide parents with clear information about the school and its policies. Many of the policies concerned are currently under review. When the policies have been rewritten, the school intends to take the opportunity to inform parents of the relevant changes and thus end any confusion.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. The new headteacher, senior staff and governors ably manage the school and have provided fresh impetus and direction for its continuing growth. This has become increasingly important following some of the areas deemed as weaknesses during the last inspection. Of particular significance has been the growth in a corporate style of management that has helped bring clearer purpose and direction to all those who hold management roles. A basic aim has been to eliminate any errors and shortcomings of the past and to replace those with improved systems that will go a long way to ensuring better provision for children and staff and enhanced learning for the pupils. Although still in its early stages, such an approach is already having significant impact on the quality of education offered to the pupils and has helped raise their self-esteem as well as that of the staff.
52. The quality of leadership offered by the headteacher and other senior staff has not yet been fully tested but the potential is good. The headteacher in particular has a clear vision as to the educational direction required of the school and of how priorities can be both expressed and achieved. Most, but not all of the problems identified during the last inspection, have been appropriately targeted and the resulting changes have been managed effectively yet sensitively. A good strength of the headteacher's style of leadership is her emphasis on expanding team work and ensuring that all efforts reflect back to the needs of the pupils. A

strength of the school's leadership has been the determination of senior staff to lead by example. There are now greater opportunities for those working in support roles to make valued contribution to the wider life of the school. A good example of this is the increased range of opportunities for co-ordinators to manage their subjects.

53. Some improvements have occurred in the number and quality of systems now in place to help with the smooth, effective running of the school. Some of these refer to improved methods of monitoring the curriculum and pupils' standards. Although some systems are very new and are yet to be fully trialled and evaluated, there is already an improved sense of cohesion and purpose in much that the school does. A basic weakness is that the current aims of the school are rather austere and all embracing, and do not accurately reflect the true practice engaged in by staff and pupils. There is also within the aims, a lack of emphasis on the importance of raising standards still further.
54. The school has a small number of teachers and hence subject responsibilities are difficult to distribute evenly and effectively. However, the role of the subject co-ordinator is now better defined and, particularly in relation to literacy and numeracy, there have been more opportunities for co-ordinators to extend their overview of subjects across the key stages. However, other than in parts of the core subjects, there is little evidence that subject leaders are yet making sufficient impact on basic standards. The early work on improved targeting and monitoring of standards has been instigated by the headteacher, but this now needs to be carried through by other staff and for governors to be better informed as to the nature of this important work.
55. The work and contribution of governors have improved since the last inspection, when weaknesses were noted about, for example, their management of strategic resources. They are currently acting from a more informed and involved position than was hitherto the case, and there is a shared and general commitment to the priorities expressed by the headteacher. Governors have a satisfactory grasp of their overall roles and responsibilities and are willing learners in their important but hitherto limited view of the school, including its strengths and weaknesses. Most statutory requirements are met, although considerable work is required to ensure that policies are reviewed on a more regular basis. Many policies are badly in need of updating although most are still helpful to the school. Parents are unclear as to the stance taken by the school, for example, on aspects of behaviour and homework. The quality of information sent to parents has been inconsistent in the past and therefore needs to be thoroughly evaluated and then improved as necessary. The prospectus requires updating.
56. The governing body has re-established an important and influential set of working committees to help oversee their responsibilities. These are already going some way to ensuring the actions it takes is from an informed basis and that governors have at least a satisfactory role in helping to shape the future educational direction of the school. The management of the school, particularly governors, has taken only limited action on how best to evaluate the school's overall future performance.
57. The priorities expressed in the school development plan are generally those of the previous administration and the current headteacher is anxious to review these as soon as possible, in order to reflect current trends and her aspirations for the school's future. The action already taken to meet immediate targets, such as raising standards and improving the school's internal and external environment, has been good. A greater sense of corporate responsibility is being rightly nurtured. There is no recognised formal system for staff appraisal and this needs to be rectified. Good support systems are in place for the induction of new staff and there has been greater emphasis on matters of staff development.
58. The school makes satisfactory use of its available financial and other resources. Senior staff and governors are jointly involved in financial matters and available finance is appropriately linked to the school's declared priorities, most recently the development of literacy and numeracy. Specific grants are appropriately targeted and these and other expenditure is well monitored. The school is well aware of how it can achieve even better value for money and works well to that end. The day-to-day running of the school is good and largely centres on the headteacher and an experienced and efficient school secretary.
59. There is a satisfactory match of qualified and experienced teachers and other staff to meet the

needs of the pupils and the demands of the curriculum. The teaching staff is used efficiently in terms of the experience and expertise it offers to particular age-groups and subjects. The current use of classroom assistants varies between good and unsatisfactory and the school is about to begin a critical evaluation of their roles and how support staff can target a wider range of need among the pupils. The accommodation is adequate for the needs of the pupils and is warm, clean and welcoming. Particularly effective use is made of available space for the display of pupils' work. This represents good progress since the last inspection. The outside areas are rather limited in space and design, but good efforts have been made to freshen up those areas where pupils play on a daily basis. Learning resources are adequate for the correct, imaginative teaching of the curriculum, although the school does not enjoy the benefits of a typical centralised library.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

60. In order to raise standards and further improve the quality of education provided by the school, the governors, headteacher and senior staff should:-

- **Improve pupils' attainment in science, particularly at Key Stage 2 by:**

- Developing a whole-school approach to scientific investigations that will provide pupils with the opportunity to test a hypotheses, evaluate the results and encourage them to record their results in a greater variety of ways.
- Strengthening the use made by pupils of scientific and other technical vocabulary and ensuring that pupils use the correct words when discussing and writing about their everyday work in science.
- Ensuring that, as pupils' scientific knowledge and experience increases staff encourage greater freedom for them to use their initiative for example, in devising their own choice of investigative work. (see paragraphs 4, 9 and 101-108)

- **Improve the speaking skills of pupils by**

- Encouraging them to read with greater expression.
- Encouraging them to answer teachers' questions in a clearer and more secure grammatical style.
- Providing a wider range of contexts in which pupils feel confident and able to share and express their everyday views.
- Developing the use of subject-specific language across the curriculum. (see paragraphs 1, 3,14, 30, 66 and 80)

- **Improve the means and value of assessing pupils' work by**

- Extending agreed assessment procedures to a wider range of subjects.
- Providing a manageable system that will allow teachers to more closely monitor the attainment and progress of the pupils as they proceed through the key stage.
- Using the results of assessment to inform curricular planning and to more accurately set working targets for the pupils. (see paragraphs 44-47. 100, 108,116 and 141)

- **Complete the overview of the curriculum, ensuring that its impact on mixed age classes is fully considered and that pupils build securely on their previous learning.** (see paragraphs 31-33)

- **Provide sharper focus to school achievement by**

- Ensuring that the aims of the school are reviewed regularly and that they more accurately reflect current good practice and priorities, including the need to raise standards.
- Ensuring that the prospectus and annual report to parents contain all statutory information.
- Ensuring that the quality of information given to parents is improved, particularly in relation to the school's policies that affects them most. (see paragraphs 50, 55 and 56)

61. In addition to the above issues, the school should consider adding the following less important areas of weakness to its action plan.
- Greater use of pupil initiative and decision making in their own learning. (see paragraphs 16 and 104)
 - More effective use of classroom assistants. (see paragraphs 28 and 59)
 - The need to increase opportunities for competitive sport. (see paragraph 51)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	52
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	31

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	10	33	57	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	Y R – Y 6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	27	124
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	75

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y 6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	37

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

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

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	7
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	8	4	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	8	7
	Girls	4	4	3
	Total	11	12	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92	100	83
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	7	7
	Girls	4	4	4
	Total	11	11	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92	92	92
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	7	5	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	3	3	3
	Girls	5	3	4
	Total	8	6	7
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73	55	64
	National	70 (65)	69 (58)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	2	2	3
	Girls	3	3	3
	Total	5	5	6
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	45	45	55
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	0
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR–Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.7
Average class size	24.8

Education support staff: YR–Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	140

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	35

Number of pupils per FTE adult	14
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	289,297
Total expenditure	285,974
Expenditure per pupil	1,986
Balance brought forward from previous year	11,769
Balance carried forward to next year	15,092

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	125
Number of questionnaires returned	32

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	74	23	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	61	32	3	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	45	10	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	43	13	0	3
The teaching is good.	60	40	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	42	3	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	32	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	77	20	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	55	39	6	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	58	39	0	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	65	35	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	16	26	10	19

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

62. At the time of the inspection, 24 children attended the Nursery on a full-time basis and 7 children part time. Fifteen Reception children were in a class with Year 1 pupils. Eight of the Reception children were five during the autumn term. The Nursery class is staffed by a teacher and nursery nurse and the class containing children of reception age is provided with classroom support in addition to the teacher.
63. Children are admitted to the Nursery from a wide catchment area. Just over half of the children attending the Nursery are eventually admitted into the Reception class. The results of tests given on entry to the Reception class indicate that the children's attainment on entry is generally below that expected for their age. The judgements made during the inspection reflect these results. By the age of five, attainment in most of the six areas of learning remains below national expectations, but most children make satisfactory progress overall. Attainment in aspects of physical development such as running, skipping and jumping in the Nursery is broadly in line with national expectations. No physical education lessons were observed in the Reception class. By the age of five, attainment in creative work is broadly in line with expectations.
64. Many improvements have been made in the provision for the under fives since the previous inspection, when the quality of teaching and planning, children's behaviour and attitudes to learning and equal opportunities in the number of hours of teaching time were judged to be unsatisfactory. These weaknesses have all been successfully addressed.

Personal and social development

65. In the Nursery, most children settle quickly into the established routines at the beginning of sessions. Children relate confidently to adults they know. Most are attentive and willing listeners but a minority finds it difficult to maintain concentration for a sufficient length of time and have not yet learned to wait their turn during discussion times. In classroom activities, most children play well with others and are able to wait until it is their turn. They follow adults' instructions and know the routines of putting things away. Children of reception age are developing social skills to a satisfactory level and the majority are attentive and well behaved. A minority of children, however, are not always active listeners or participants during class discussion times and as a result miss information and the opportunity to take a full part in the lesson. In both the Nursery and Reception classes, the large majority of children are learning the difference between right and wrong in a variety of circumstances. The ability to work independently without direct supervision is not yet well developed and many children in both classes place much reliance on adult help.

Language and literacy

66. By the age of five, the attainment of the majority of the children is below that expected for their age in listening and speaking. Most children have limited vocabulary when they start in the Nursery. Although the majority listen attentively to their teachers, few are able to express themselves using extended language and many answer questions using only one or two words. Pupils listening and speaking skills develop satisfactorily and by the time they are five, many can use more extended speech to talk about subjects of immediate interest. However, the ability to speak using whole sentences is not well developed.
67. Children in the Nursery handle books carefully and demonstrate that they know how storybooks are organised. However, a significant minority is not yet able to concentrate for an expected length of time when looking at books or when asked questions about what the story or pictures are about. Some children in the Reception class are reading the first books in the reading scheme but at this time of the school year, only a minority has well-established independent reading skills that enable children to tackle unknown or more difficult words without help.
68. Attainment in writing is below national expectations. Many children in the Nursery make marks

to represent writing. A few are able to form recognisable letters. The large majority of children in Reception know that writing represents words. The majority is able to show meaning through recognisable letters and words. Higher ability children write simple phrases or sentences to accompany illustrations. The quality of handwriting and the presentation of work by the age of five are satisfactory.

Mathematical development

69. By five years of age, attainment in mathematics is below expectations. Work done previously indicates that, for example, lower ability children are able to recognise numbers to 6 and can repeat simple patterns; the majority of children are beginning to gain an understanding of addition to 5 plus and, some higher attaining children are able to add numbers to 10. In a lesson observed in the Reception class, lower attaining children demonstrated an insecure understanding of time as it relates to the days of the week. Average and above average attaining children know the order of the days of the week but some find difficulty in one-to-one counting when working out the number of things eaten each day in the story of "The Very Hungry Caterpillar".

Knowledge and understanding of the world

70. The majority of children do not have a well-established knowledge and understanding of the world. Attainment by five is generally below expectations for children of this age in most aspects but meets them in relation to the development of information technology skills. Many children enter the Nursery with rather limited experiences. When working with their teacher on melting chocolate, few were able to contribute previous knowledge on what would happen when chocolate is heated. When playing with the farm, the children were able to name the various animals. In the Reception class, children demonstrate good levels of independence when working with the computers. They use the mouse with confidence to control events on the screen and explain how to make a program work. Work previously completed indicates that children of average and above average attainment have a basic knowledge of sources of light and some animals' homes. The majority knows their address and the name of their school. They can name some wild animals and animals that might be found on a farm. Children are less secure when asked to explain the differences between animals. By the age of five, most explain that a piece of ice melts when it is in a warm place and that water turns into ice when it is put in a freezer.

Physical development

71. Physical development in dance and movement is broadly at the level expected for nursery children and most follow the routines well. They listen carefully to instructions and use the space in the school hall well. They take care of their own and the safety of others when moving around the hall. They know how to make a class circle. They can run in different directions and many are able to hop and skip with good levels of control. They respond appropriately to music and try hard to slither and stamp when being snakes and elephants. Many can dress and undress themselves with a minimum amount of adult help. Children in both classes use scissors and glue appropriately. Pencil and crayon control when writing and colouring are not yet in line with national expectations.

Creative development

72. In the Nursery, children work appropriately with a range of tools and materials and experience drawing, painting, printing cutting and sticking. During the inspection, children in the Nursery were observed making Easter cards with cotton wool and tissue paper and demonstrated satisfactory making skills. However, the quality of the finished product is often too dependent upon adult supervision and support. A majority of children in the Nursery enjoy singing and remember a range of nursery rhymes and songs. This was evident when they led the school assembly for parents and were able to sing several songs. Children in the Reception class were observed using tools and materials well to produce prints. Creative work on display for example, rag weaving and pictures of sunflowers, indicates a satisfactory level of creative development by the age of five.
73. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall in both classes. In both the Nursery

and Reception classes, lesson planning is of a good quality and provides an effective framework for ensuring that all abilities are catered for. Lesson objectives need to be further clarified to inform opportunities for assessment during or following each lesson. Teachers make good use of time and provide good quality resources to promote learning. In the Nursery and Reception classes, teachers and support staff work well together and this raises the quality of provision for different ability groups and different age ranges. In both classes, specific, planned opportunities to extend the children's vocabulary and language abilities are limited. In the Nursery, the teacher has appropriately introduced elements of the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies and also in the Reception class. Children of reception age are organised to ensure that they participate in aspects relevant to them during literacy and numeracy lessons. This approach is not consistently in place and in some subjects, for example, history and design technology, lessons are based on the National Curriculum. This is inappropriate for some Reception children. Teachers demonstrate satisfactory skills in pupil management but, on occasions, allow some inattentiveness and calling out by children. Effective provision is in place for children with special educational needs and they make good progress throughout the early years.

74. The quality of the planning is satisfactory overall but is particularly good in the Nursery. The nursery teacher and nursery nurse plan together. Planning takes fully account of the six areas of learning and makes good provision for the children to attain the desirable learning outcomes. Activities are well matched to the needs of all children. Elements of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are integrated into the planning. Planning in the Reception class is satisfactory overall. It addresses the six areas of learning but this is not always translated well into practice. Pupils with special educational needs are provided with good levels of support. The assessment of children's attainment on entry to their Reception year is undertaken in accordance with statutory requirements. In the Nursery, children's progress is also tracked against the desirable learning outcomes anticipated for their age. Attainment in literacy and numeracy is recorded well in the Reception class, but other areas of the curriculum are not consistently monitored against the key objectives appropriate to children under five. The school has acknowledged a need to change procedures and the early years co-ordinator has begun the process of review.
75. The early years co-ordinator has been in post only since January. She has worked hard to improve the accommodation. This has resulted in an attractive shared area that has enhanced provision. Opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor teaching and learning throughout the early years have not yet been put into place. Resources are bright and well maintained.

ENGLISH

76. Over the last four years, although results in national Curriculum tests have improved in line with national trends, the standard reached by pupils aged eleven has remained well below the national average. In 1999, the school's results were well below the national average because very few pupils reached the higher levels. The cohort was also very small, and is larger this year. The 1999 results were very close to those obtained by pupils in similar schools. Standards are now higher and pupils are achieving well in Key Stage 2. Three quarters of the current Year 6 pupils are reaching the standards expected for their age and a quarter of these are reaching the higher level. These represent significant improvements and are attributable to stronger teaching at Key Stage 2 together with potentially under achieving pupils being

identified and given extra teaching in booster classes. Target setting and the successful implementation of the Literacy Strategy have also contributed to the rise in attainment.

77. Standards attained by pupils at the end of Key Stage 1, have been close to the national average in reading, but much higher in writing, as the 1999 results testify. However, fewer pupils than might be expected reached the higher levels in either area. In previous years, wildly fluctuating patterns in pupils' performance in reading and writing cast some doubts over the accuracy of teachers' assessments. With the appointment of a new English co-ordinator, more reliable procedures for assessment are being introduced. The current Year 2 pupils are on course to attain standards close to the national average in both reading and writing, but the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels is greater, particularly in reading. The achievement of pupils at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory, but is beginning to increase in Year 2. The new teacher has introduced a 'Reading Buddy' scheme in which older pupils support and guide the reading of younger ones. This is beginning to raise the reading attainment of both the Year 1 and Year 2 pupils and is instilling a sense of responsibility amongst the older junior pupils.
78. Since the last inspection, the teaching of children under five is better and they make a more positive start in English in Year 1. Weaknesses in creative writing, identified at the time of the last inspection, have been remedied effectively. Pupils are now taught how to plan their own articles, often using information technology to redraft their ideas. The library has been improved and pupils use it to research their ideas. However, systems have not been set up to enable pupils to use the library more independently. For example, junior pupils are unsure about whether they are allowed to take books home.
79. At Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils' attainment in listening matches the standards expected. In almost all lessons pupils listen carefully in the literacy hour and pay close attention to explanations. This enables them to begin work promptly without instructions having to be repeated, apart from in the Reception class where instructions are sometimes given too quickly. At Key Stage 2, teachers successfully incorporate discussions in the literacy hour and also during group work in other subjects. For instance, in one Year 5 and 6 lesson, pupils debated topics such as the protection of the rain forest, before making notes about the issues.
80. Standards in speaking are much weaker. Many pupils lack confidence to speak to the whole class. They often struggle, for example, to find the exact words to explain their ideas and seldom speak in full sentences. The pupils' use of Standard English is poor and irregular past tenses such as 'dig' and 'dug' confuse them. Drama is used to good effect. When pupils act out roles pretending to be someone else, they lose some of their inhibitions and speak more fluently, but return to a more hesitant and faltering style in normal situations. Teachers are aware of the pupils' difficulties with spoken language. They provide some, but insufficient planned opportunities for pupils to speak in class and give their views. Pupils are not encouraged enough to answer in full sentences, read expressively and build up a vocabulary of words needed for specific subjects.
81. At the end of both key stages, pupils' attainment in reading is average. Reading groups are organised efficiently and most teachers have uninterrupted time to work with one group while others work independently or are supported effectively by classroom assistants. However, there is no classroom assistance for the oldest pupils because assistants are simply allocated to classes rather than being specifically and more usefully targeted to where they are needed most. This sometimes results in slower progress being made by lower attaining groups than would otherwise be the case. There is sound teaching of basic skills, such as phonics and rhyme at Key Stage 1, and good teaching of reading for meaning at Key Stage 2. Although home reading is strongly encouraged and pupils in Years 5 and 6 keep good quality journals of the books they read, not enough use is made of the home-school reading diaries to support pupils' learning. In this respect, opportunities are missed to involve parents in making constructive comments about the children's reading. Pupils read aloud accurately and fluently, but very few pupils read with good expression.

82. At both key stages, the teaching of writing skills in the literacy hour and in extended writing sessions, has a positive effect on pupils' learning. In Reception, however, progress is slower than it should be because pupils spend too long copying the teacher's writing rather than being encouraged to write their own words and phrases. In Year 1, independent writing 'takes off' and by Year 2, pupils' writing is clearly structured in sentences. Most punctuate correctly, spell reasonably accurately and write in clearly formed letters. At Key Stage 2, pupils' writing shows consistent improvement as pupils move from class to class. Pupils' work is carefully marked with many comments to coax, demand, praise and guide.
83. Teachers place appropriate emphasis on punctuation, spelling and handwriting and pupils reach creditable standards in these areas. Teachers have high expectations of the standard of written work they expect, which results in pupils taking a pride in the presentation of their work. Progress in Year 6 is particularly good. Pupils attack their writing with confidence, determination and pride. They understand how authors choose words and phrases to influence and persuade the reader to think in predetermined ways and begin to employ these techniques in their own writing.
84. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Their learning needs are clearly identified and well documented in their individual learning plans. Teachers use these plans to provide work at the right level. Classroom assistants offer valuable support in most classes by targeting skills such as word recognition and the use of dictionaries. In Years 4 and 5, for example, the classroom assistant makes word cards to help pupils to understand that 'c' can sound like 's.' This is a valuable exercise, particularly for the pupil for whom English is a second language. The school has recently won an award to create the first 'Dyslexia Friendly Primary School' in Liverpool.
85. Pupils' attitudes are satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and consistently good at Key Stage 2 where they reflect the teachers' high expectations on their capacity to listen attentively, concentrate well and to do their best. In all classes, pupils are keen to learn. They get on well together when working in pairs or groups, and enjoy friendly, but respectful relationships with their teachers.
86. The quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 1 are satisfactory and sometimes good. At Key Stage 2 teaching and learning are consistently good and very good in Years 5 and 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers have a good level of expertise. In both key stages, lessons are well planned and usually challenging. The work given to pupils is carefully matched to their learning needs. This enables higher attaining pupils to work at more advanced levels. Teachers use questioning particularly well to involve pupils in class discussions and to assess their level of understanding. In Years 5 and 6, for example, the teacher asks very challenging questions, but values pupils' contributions and reassures them when they make mistakes. When asking for a word beginning with 'c' to describe a joint protest, one pupil answered 'Crusade', having related this to his knowledge of history. His bright and unexpected idea was greeted with spontaneous applause by the rest of the class. Literacy skills are promoted soundly through other subjects, such as history and science, and information technology is used effectively to support pupils' learning. Teachers manage their pupils well, and there is often a very positive climate for learning and higher achievement, particularly at Key Stage 2. Teachers use interesting texts to motivate their pupils to want to do well.
87. Procedures for assessing pupils' achievements are satisfactory and the information gained is used to plan the next step in pupils' learning. This is best demonstrated in Years 2 and 6, where teachers specify in the lesson plan exactly what they intend to assess. The recently appointed co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has made a positive start. She has introduced several successful strategies to raise standards, such as tracking pupils' performance and shared reading. A system of monitoring standards and teaching has been introduced and every teacher has been observed teaching literacy. However, the impetus for improvement is largely attributable to good teamwork and a collective aim to succeed. The quality of learning resources

is satisfactory although the school lacks a traditional centralised library and this hinders the independent learning of the pupils.

MATHEMATICS

88. In the 1999 tests for seven-year-olds, attainment in mathematics was below the national average. When compared to similar schools it was above average. The percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 and above was below the national average but was close to the national average for those reaching Level 3. In the years between 1996 to 1999, results have fluctuated considerably as a result of the relatively small numbers of pupils involved in the tests.
89. In the 1999 tests for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, results indicate that attainment was well below the national average but in line with those obtained by pupils in similar schools. The percentage of pupils who attained the expected Level 4 and above was well below the national average and the percentage attaining the higher Level 5 was close to the national average. The 1996 to 1999 results taken together indicate that performance has been below the national average as a trend. The 1999 results were lower than in previous years and have brought down the school's average overall. As with Key Stage 1, the small number of pupils who took the tests makes statistical comparisons unreliable.
90. Inspection evidence indicates that the proportions of pupils attaining the expected standards in mathematics by the end of both key stages are in line with the national average. Since the 1999 tests, the school has successfully implemented the National Numeracy Strategy and this, combined with more effective teaching, has made a significant contribution to raising standards. Current standards indicate an improvement at Key Stage 1 since the last inspection, when attainment was judged to be below the national average.
91. Most children enter the Reception class with below average attainment in mathematics. At both key stages, there are no significant differences between boys' and girls' achievements. Different ability groups demonstrate satisfactory levels of achievement at Key Stage 1 but this increases in Year 2. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. At Key Stage 2, levels of achievement are good for all groups of pupils including those with special educational needs.
92. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils have a secure understanding of number and are developing a satisfactory ability to use their knowledge in other aspects of the subject. The large majority counts, recognises and successfully orders numbers up to 100. They double simple numbers and add and subtract to 20. Most pupils can recite the 5 and 10 multiplication tables and explain how to identify odd and even numbers. An understanding of place value including 3-digit numbers is well established. The ability to use mathematical terms such as subtraction or multiplication is not well developed, although pupils are able to use these operations when the terminology is simplified.
93. In other aspects of the subject, pupils recognise, name and describe the main features of simple two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. Work completed previously indicates that by the end of the key stage the majority of pupils have a secure understanding of how to tell the time to the hour, with higher attaining pupils working to half past the hour. Many pupils do not have sufficient skills to enable them to select the correct number operations to use when attempting to solve mathematical problems and rely on adult support. The majority of pupils demonstrate a limited understanding of data handling such as simple tallying and block graphs.
94. Pupils currently in Year 6 achieve a secure level of numerical understanding and application. Lower attaining pupils have a good understanding of place value to 4 digits. They can multiply by 10 and 100 and can add, subtract and multiply 2 digit numbers using a carry figure. Previously completed work indicates a basic understanding of the relationship between decimals, fractions and percentages. Pupils of average ability double larger numbers correctly and work with common denominators and numbers to two decimal places. Higher attaining pupils demonstrate a secure understanding of improper and equivalent fractions average and higher attaining pupils could calculate multiplication of numbers independently using a range of strategies and were able to make good estimates of the likely products.

95. The scrutiny of previously completed work indicates that most pupils are able to use their number skills to work out real life problems for example, planning a trip or devising a television programme timetable. In other aspects of the subject, pupils can calculate the perimeters and areas of regular shapes and are developing an understanding of angles, although this is in the early stages. Evidence from the inspection indicates that pupils are able to collect mathematical data, convert them into simple graph form and employ basic interrogation strategies. The ability to interpret data through an understanding of modes, medians and class intervals is not well developed.
96. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and was good or very good in three out of four lessons seen at Key Stage 2. It is never less than satisfactory. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy throughout both key stages is good and this is reflected in the quality of lesson planning. Lesson objectives are clear and tasks and activities are almost always well thought out and provide a good match to ensure that all ability groups are provided with an appropriate challenge. The quality of pupils' learning closely matches the skills and pace of the teaching.
97. At Key Stage 1 teachers make good use of resources and adult support. At Key Stage 2, teachers demonstrate a satisfactory subject knowledge and expectations are high in most lessons. Where teaching is very good, lessons are conducted at a challenging and productive pace, clear objectives are shared with the class, pupils and activities are efficiently organised and relationships are of a high quality. In a small number of lessons at both key stages, tasks are not well matched to the abilities of all pupils. Some minor, inappropriate behaviour by younger pupils at Key Stage 1 is not sufficiently well controlled to ensure that they are attentive at all times.
98. In most lessons pupils are well behaved and have a positive attitude to their work. At Key Stage 2, they listen attentively and are keen to make contributions during class discussion times. Pupils settle promptly to their tasks, and work productively both independently and when asked to collaborate. They gain confidence when sharing their knowledge with the class, although a significant minority does not make full use of mathematical terms and this affects the clarity of their explanations. During lessons, pupils enjoy the challenge and competitive element provided by their teachers.
99. The curriculum is broad and balanced and satisfies statutory requirements. However, across the school, pupils' mathematical skills are not given enough emphasis in other subject areas. Teaching and learning are well supported by good leadership of the subject. The National Numeracy Strategy, although only in its first year of implementation has successfully been put in place through staff training and teachers' positive attitudes to its introduction. There is an appropriate emphasis on the development of mental, oral and written number skills.
100. There are no formal procedures in place for monitoring and evaluating the quality of pupils' completed work throughout the school. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. Although satisfactory use is made of assessment to inform annual reports, information in records is not currently used well to track the progress of individuals and groups of pupils as they progress through the school. Currently, there is no system of moderation in place to guide teachers' assessment against national Curriculum levels of attainment. The use of homework makes a positive contribution to the standards attained in the subject and resources are satisfactory.

SCIENCE

101. The results of the 1999 teacher assessments in science indicate that pupils at the school achieve close to the national average in all elements of their work, but with strengths in experimental and investigative science. Pupils did particularly well in terms of the percentage which reached the higher levels. It must be borne in mind that only 12 pupils were eligible to take the tests at the end of the key stage. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 are broadly average in terms of their skills, knowledge and understanding and make satisfactory progress overall.
102. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests in science for pupils at the end of Key Stage

2 indicate that pupils at the school score well below the national average. In comparison to those from similar schools, pupils at the school score broadly average results. Over the past 4 years, pupils have failed to register even average scores, with relatively low numbers achieving the higher levels. The results of the present inspection confirm that standards in science remain below average, but that attainment is rising, with pupils beginning to achieve well and with some good teaching helping to raise standards overall. Standards have only marginally improved since the previous inspection.

103. Pupils attain sound standards at Key Stage 1, although the range of their work is not extensive. Pupils show satisfactory recall of topics such as the human body and the development of their senses. Where investigative science occurs, such as in the topic on light and freezing and melting, pupils show average skills in their abilities to carry out a suitable experiment and draw an appropriate conclusion. Pupils struggle to use the right levels of technical language in both their oral and written work. However, they always begin correctly with some sort of prediction, and understand the need for carrying out a fair test if the results are to mean anything.
104. At Key Stage 2, there has recently been an improvement in both the quantity and quality of investigative work and this has helped to raise attainment to nearer the national average. Pupils illustrate their knowledge of science in topics such as the human digestive system and show sound understanding of the animal kingdom when studying food chains, habitats and categories of animal behaviour. Pupils have developed a more systematic approach to their investigative work of late and have become a little more rigorous in how to interrogate and evaluate their results. A major weakness still exists in relation to their knowledge and use of subject-specific language, a shortcoming that is reported to let them down in the end of Key Stage 2 exams. A further shortcoming is the lack of experience in exploring and experimenting for themselves, including the use of their own choice of materials and methods.
105. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall at both key stages, but many pupils achieve well, particularly at Key Stage 2, as a result of the rapidly improving teaching and their own good response to the work they are asked to do. In a lesson involving condensation and evaporation, pupils in Year 6 were aware that these are two quite distinct stages that water goes through, but only a few were able to extend this knowledge to the water cycle and how rain occurs. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils make accurate observations as to how water freezes and melts under different conditions and were able to write sensibly and accurately about what they observed. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 make good progress in their topic on solubility and know the basis on which solutions occur and how certain mixtures can be separated. They also achieve well when investigating the differences between a gas, liquid and solid. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall. They are well supported by classroom assistants and the work they undertake is at the right level for them to understand and consolidate their learning.
106. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1, but is sometimes good at Key Stage 2. Teacher expectations are generally high for the oldest pupils, although at times there is a tendency for teachers to over-direct their pupils, who then learn little about independent working or how to evaluate their own results. There is also a tendency for pupils to be pointed in only a few directions when recording their work, with insufficient time given over to data handling or the computer being used to reinforce basic learning. There has been some improvement in teaching pupils the importance of using scientific vocabulary, although much remains to be done in this area. The teaching of science investigations, coupled with the good management of pupils in a practical setting, are strengths of teaching at Key Stage 2. Pupils make the sharpest gains when the teacher shares the aims of the lesson with them, as illustrated in a particularly good Reception/Year 1 lesson involving light and the creation of shadows.
107. The response of the pupils is also a key factor in learning. During science lessons, pupils show good attitudes to their learning and are enthusiastic about the tasks they undertake. At Key Stage 2, pupils work particularly well together and share resources sensibly and safely. To refine their learning still further, there is scope for more pupils to question each other and to learn from their shared experiences.
108. The subject is led satisfactorily by the headteacher despite her many other commitments. There is a good scheme of work, although this is now in need of further refinement as new

initiatives and directives come on stream. The assessment of pupils' work is undertaken in an agreed manner, but this largely relates to the collection of work samples rather than to the more rigorous assessment of pupils' standards and the use of assessment to inform the next stage of teaching and learning. The resources for science are satisfactory and sound use is normally made of the classroom assistants when group work is the chosen way of working.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

109. Pupils' attainment in information technology is in line with the national standards expected at the end of both key stages. Standards were also broadly average at the time of the last inspection. The school has continued to improve and has comfortably kept pace with national developments. Pupils achieve particularly well in communicating and handling information, in text and graphics, but they are also making sound progress in most other aspects.
110. Year 2 pupils use computers with confidence and achieve well in communicating and handling information. They type stories, short passages and lists and then edit their work, correcting errors and adding detail. They understand how to import pictures into their text to produce 'Wanted posters' and birthday cards. These are enhanced by using different fonts and borders. They use information technology effectively to sort and classify numerical data, for example when making graphs of eye colour. Teachers encourage pupils to be independent and self sufficient with information technology. Consequently, pupils save and retrieve their work themselves and print out their own pages. Pupils have learned to control equipment, such as programmable toys, by giving instructions. More recently, pupils have become aware of the Internet and, with support, pupils know how to search for information and download it. As a result, pupils know a lot about the author Roald Dahl.
111. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 achieve well in handling numerical information. Using specific programs such as Excel, pupils feed in the information collected and examine it for patterns. They learn how to drop down menus to search for different forms of presentation. The work displayed on the most popular pet and football team is evidence of their capability. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 confidently organise, refine and present information in different forms and styles, with an appropriate awareness of audience. For example, they make notes from various sources and turn these into persuasive messages for the reader by designing leaflets about protecting the rain forest. Frequent opportunities to use computers enable pupils to acquire a wide range of skills and techniques, such as resizing and shaping charts in which to place clip art pictures or text. These skills are incorporated well in projects such as writing autobiographies and designing and making reading books for younger pupils.
112. Competence in handling numerical information does not significantly increase beyond Year 4, although pupils do know how to search for and extract information, using CD-ROM. The transfer of skills gained from the Internet Club and acquired in class lessons significantly improves pupils' awareness of the potential of information technology. For example, Year 6 pupils know how to log onto the Internet, frame questions for searches, download information and print it out. Pupils have less understanding of using information technology to control and monitor events, such as operating model traffic lights. However, they do understand how to program electronic toys to carry out a series of moves. Pupils have little experience of using information technology to explore patterns and relationships.
113. Attitudes to learning are good throughout the school and pupils are interested and keen to learn. They make the most of every opportunity they are offered to develop their skills. The level of co-operation displayed by pupils as they work is impressive. They support each other and learn from each other. Pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to use computers to help them plan and sort out their ideas. They make good progress and by Year 6 they are able to use computers independently to make their own booklets.
114. Only two lessons were seen, but pupils were observed using computers at various times during the week of the inspection. On this evidence, teaching is at least satisfactory and often good, particularly at Key Stage 2. Most teachers have confidence and a secure understanding of the subject and all teachers are enthusiastic about using computers. Pupils in all classes, other than in Reception and the Nursery, have weekly lessons in the neighbouring community centre, where there is a suite of ten computers and an instructor. These sessions are particularly valuable because teachers prepare the work in advance. For example in Years 5

and 6, pupils drafted out their ideas for a 'Protect the Rain Forest' leaflet.

115. The good partnership between the class teachers and instructor ensures that pupils understand exactly what to do, and so use their time to good effect. By the end of the session, most pupils had produced a professionally finished leaflet. Years 1 and 2 engaged in a similar experience, but in this lesson the opportunity to discuss their work beforehand was missed. However, the high number of adults present ensured that pupils met few problems in typing out their stories. Teachers make good use of homework throughout the school. They ask pupils to spend time at home gathering their ideas together and planning their work so that they can make the best use of time on computers in school.
116. Information technology is used effectively to support the teaching of English and to a lesser extent in mathematics, although opportunities in other subjects, such as science are too few. The co-ordinator is recently appointed, but very well qualified, enthusiastic and determined to move the subject on. She has drawn up an impressive scheme of work that recognises the need to strengthen the weaker areas of controlling and modelling. The co-ordinator is also aware of the unsatisfactory situation regarding the lack of assessment and has plans to address this. Teachers are enthusiastic and some are currently updating their knowledge through further training. The good leadership and management of the subject is already beginning to raise standards. The school's resources are building up rapidly and a new computer suite of its own is almost complete.

ART

117. Pupils' attainment in art is as expected for their age at both key stages. During the inspection it was not possible to observe all classes taking part in art lessons. However, in addition to those lessons seen, work previously completed and on display provides a secure basis for judging standards across the school. In the lessons seen, the quality of learning was good towards the end of Key Stage 1 and in lower Key Stage 2. In other lessons seen it was satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs take a full part in art, are well supported in lessons and make good progress. The school has maintained the standards judged at the previous inspection.
118. Younger pupils at Key Stage 1, when working with prints of photographs, match a range of colours to produce designs. In the Year 1 and 2 class pupils make good use of tools and materials when producing a range of printed work. They work practically and imaginatively and confidently explain the various printmaking techniques they are using. They are willing to

concentrate for a good length of time in order to make the finished product as attractive as possible.

119. At Key Stage 2, pupils in the years 3 and 4 class develop a good understanding of the work of the abstract artist Escher. They work hard to produce images in a style similar to that of the artist and talk with confidence about the difference between translation, rotation and tessellation when asked about the work they are doing. Pupils in the Years 4 and 5 class develop satisfactory levels of observation and interpretation. This was evident when they were looking at the work of Turner and comparing it to that of the artist Delauny. The skills of translating the idea of abstracting images to produce a non-realistic piece of work are still in the early stages of development for the large majority of pupils.
120. They use the available tools and materials to a satisfactory level. It was not possible to observe the oldest pupils taking part in an art lesson.
121. Pupils' work is attractively displayed around the school. At Key Stage 1, samples of work of rag-weaving, light and dark patterns and expressive chalk drawings of cats demonstrate a good range of techniques. At Key Stage 2 and as part of the school's celebration of African Art and Culture, very attractive batik and tie-dyeing work was on display. Art provides satisfactory support for other subjects of the curriculum. This was evident at Key Stage 1 where art has been linked with science to produce collages of different types of materials and at Key Stage 2 where pupils have produced 'scratch drawings' of Greek vases as part of their work in the history of the Ancient Greeks.
122. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall at both key stages but there was also evidence of good teaching. Where teaching is most successful, lessons are carefully planned and organised. Pupils are provided with clear and practical strategies for developing skills and teachers offer real opportunities for pupils to make choices, thus promoting good levels of independent learning.
123. The planning for the subject in the long- and medium-term is of a good quality. It addresses the full programme of study for the subject and provides a secure framework for teachers to plan lessons. The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic about the subject and has a clear vision for its development. Procedures for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and achievement are not yet in place. Resources and their use are both satisfactory. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

124. Pupils' work in design and technology is within the normal range found in most primary schools and standards are similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection.
125. Pupils soon learn to choose which material is best suited to the task because the teacher discusses their properties before pupils begin their work. In Reception, for example, pupils learn that card is stronger than paper and more suitable for folding and fastening. Pupils show originality in finishing their work and higher attaining pupils, particularly produce attractive Easter baskets elaborately decorated with ribbon, crepe and crumpled tissue paper. By Year 2, pupils have begun to plan ahead well and produce clearly labelled designs showing the intended finished model. However, because they are not shown the materials available beforehand, some of their Easter Hats bear little relation to the original design.
126. Pupils continue to make steady progress through Key Stage 2. In Years 3 and 4, they produce carefully thought out designs and make effective use of illustrations to develop their ideas. Pupils apply techniques such as curling paper to create the effects of wispy beards and eyelashes, effectively to add reality and originality to their Greek masks. However, insufficient emphasis is placed on the need to relate the design to the finished item. Some pupils ignore the design and simply make the model as they go along. The quality of their work suffers and opportunities are missed to work at a more advanced level by modifying their designs. A good feature of the Year 3 and 4 work is the use of evaluation. When models are nearing completion pupils are asked to discuss possible improvements. This helps them to become more self-critical.

127. Although design and technology projects continue through Years 5 and 6 there is little further development in designing; for example, step by step instructions and measurements are not included at the designing stage. However, designing and making reflect greater purpose. This is evident in the work of Year 5 and 6 pupils who interview Year 2 pupils and take account of their requests and interests in designing and making reading books for them. These are of good quality, not least because they are produced using information technology, and become treasures of the infant library.
128. Pupils enjoy practical work, concentrate well and show pride in achievement. The careful presentation of designs is an improvement on the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs are given plenty of support and this helps them to make good progress. For example, they assemble, arrange and fasten stickers, feathers and cut paper to decorate their Easter Hats or Greek masks and achieve satisfying results.
129. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but there are also some good features. The importance of working safely is invariably pointed out. Design and technology tasks are chosen carefully to appeal to pupils' interests. In Year 2, for example, the story of 'Mrs Honey's Hat' is read as a starting point. Pupils know exactly what to do because teachers explain the tasks clearly. Teachers use questioning effectively to make pupils think. In Year 1, for example, pupils are asked to think why stapling is more effective than using glue and in Year 2 the teacher asks, 'Who is the hat for? Think about this when you design it.' Lessons are well prepared and pupils are encouraged to select their own materials and use their own ideas. Some weaknesses arise partly from unclear planning. The use of the published scheme of work is being relaxed, giving teachers more choice of activities: however, this is being done without an overall picture of the skills being taught or the type of projects offered. Consequently, pupils use paper and card often and textiles and wood far less. This creates an imbalance and less certainty that pupils will build on previous learning. Lack of assessment compounds the problem because teachers are unable to track pupils' progress to discover the gaps. Reception pupils are sometimes involved in specific designing and making activities before they have acquired the necessary skills to complete these successfully. This leads to messy work with glue and wasting time queuing for teacher's help.

GEOGRAPHY

130. There were only a few lessons available for observation at Key Stage 2 and none at Key Stage 1. From scrutiny of exercise books and talking to staff and pupils about their work, a firm judgement can be made. Standards in geography are broadly in line with the national expectation and most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress overall. Standards have remained the same since the previous inspection.
131. A framework of geographical themes is identified and studied over a two-year cycle, ensuring that pupils work on their own environment as well as more distant places. At Key Stage 1 pupils attain sound standards in their basic work on routes and early forms of map work. They are introduced to an atlas and understand something of foreign countries as well as the impact of landscape on human activity. Pupils are able to describe and contrast different environments and know about their own city and immediate area.
132. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils undertake a major study of a country such as India and compare and contrast the working life there with life and cultures in Britain. Important links are made with the Liverpool Environmental Centre and pupils understand something of the importance of re-cycling and care of the environment. They undertake good studies of rivers and their work is given a good topical feel by linking it with studies in science and the water cycle. The cultural and moral development of the pupils is well supported by their work on flooding, which looks at the implications of heavy rainfall and flooding in places such as Mozambique.
133. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. During an 'African week,' pupils were able to combine their geographical knowledge with music, art and drama as part of their studies on the Yoruba culture. When opportunities are given to work in the environment or to visit more distant places, pupils speak enthusiastically about their knowledge and learning. A forthcoming residential visit will include some additional map reading and environmental skills.

Teachers have satisfactory knowledge of their topics and work well to present activities in a variety of interesting ways. Some of the work would be better focused if clearer objectives were given rather than the pupils concentrating on the activities for their own sake. Pupils are interested in their work particularly those at Key Stage 2 who go on to use the Internet to help support their wider learning.

134. The curriculum for geography meets statutory requirements but is in need of review in the light of less time now being available to promote the subject in its own right. In those instances where teachers are adopting a more thematic approach, perhaps linking the work with history, more care is needed to ensure that skills are taught progressively and that enough geography is taught to sustain pupils' knowledge and understanding, particularly of the more distant regions. The subject is well used to extend pupils' cultural development. Although lessons are well planned, insufficient written information is raised as to how assessment will be integrated into daily work.

HISTORY

135. During the inspection it was not possible to observe any history lessons in the two upper Key Stage 2 classes. The scrutiny of pupils' previous work, lesson observations, work on display and discussions with pupils indicate that at both key stages standards of work are typical of those observed in the majority of schools. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection, when standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were judged to be below national expectations.
136. At Key Stage 1, most pupils are developing a satisfactory understanding of the differences between the past and present and are beginning to understand how reading and enquiry can help them to find out more about what they are learning. By looking at books they compare life now and in the past. Younger pupils in the key stage know that some of the present day's activities were not possible in the past because electricity was not available. They have a satisfactory understanding of the difference between household goods of today and those of the past. Pupils in the Years 1 and 2 class are developing an increasing sense of chronology and starting to compare the past and the present in, for example, their studies of children in the 1940s and in Victorian times. More recently, their studies of famous people in the past, such as Grace Darling, are providing pupils with an understanding of how individual people can affect the lives of others. During the inspection, the Lord Mayor of Liverpool made a special visit and in collaboration with Year 6 pupils, pupils prepared and asked him sensible and relevant questions.
137. At Key Stage 2, pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of different periods in history. Work completed previously indicates that they have acquired a satisfactory understanding of aspects of life in Ancient Egypt and Ancient Greece. During the inspection, pupils in this class learned about the Greek food available in Early Greek life and were able to take part in a tasting experience. Pupils in the Years 4 and 5 class have worked extensively on a wide range of aspects of life in Victorian times. This included a local study of Bootle where recorded work demonstrates a sound ability to use research methods to gain information. The oldest pupils in the key stage develop a secure understanding of, for example, the Spanish conquest of Mexico and life as an evacuee during World War II. Work in books and discussions with pupils demonstrate a satisfactory knowledge of events and a developing understanding of the implications of people's actions on the lives of others. The work of older, higher attaining pupils demonstrates an understanding that there are often different perspectives surrounding an historical event.
138. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall at Key Stage 1. The better features of teaching in this key stage are demonstrated by the provision of interesting artefacts to support pupils' learning and understanding, whilst the involvement of outside visitors is well used to promote pupils' understanding that history is a continuous process. A scrutiny of previous planning indicates that it has not always provided a suitable basis for learning, for example in the work undertaken on the War of the Roses and the Black Death.
139. Only one lesson was observed at Key Stage 2 and therefore, an overall judgement of teaching cannot be made. However, a scrutiny of completed work indicates that pupils are provided with satisfactory opportunities to work at a level appropriate to their level of ability. Higher

ability pupils in Year 6 are expected to consider historical issues at levels beyond the purely factual.

140. The scrutiny of work and lesson observations indicate that pupils demonstrate satisfactory attitudes to the subject overall. Where pupils are provided with the opportunity to take an active part in their learning, as observed during the Lord Mayor's visit, they respond very positively and this has a good impact on learning. This all reflects an improvement since the previous inspection, when pupils' attitudes to the subject were judged as unsatisfactory.
141. Although long- and medium-term planning is in place for the subject, this has partly fallen into disuse and does not currently provide a coherent framework for use across the school. The school has yet to agree a system for recording what pupils know and understand in order to inform planning and to ensure that reports to parents fully reflect pupils' achievements.

MUSIC

142. At both key stages, pupils attain standards that are broadly in line with the national expectation and achieve satisfactorily in all elements of music. There are, however, increasing concerns that the subject is becoming under-developed in terms of the wider curriculum.
143. At both key stages, pupils sing to the levels anticipated for their age and attempt an appropriate range of songs with both a national and overseas flavour. They understand the importance of singing in unison and of maintaining both tune and pitch in their individual contributions. The overall effect, however, is rather flat and expressionless. Pupils' learning is not accelerated or refined owing to the lack of an instrumentalist or teachers who can lead well using their own voices with confidence.
144. Pupils listen to a range of music and are able to pick out and name particular instruments as well as express their own personal likes and dislikes in music. Their performance skills are rarely better than average, although a substantial number of pupils, almost exclusively girls, play the glockenspiel extremely creditably during worship.
145. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, although currently lessons do not demand enough of the pupils' intellectual and creative efforts. Pupils enjoy their lessons and this adds to their own motivation and efforts, but others lack concentration and ability to work independently of the teacher. Teachers work hard in this subject area although there are some clear limitations to their own subject knowledge and ability to extend the pupils. Great importance is attached to a commercial scheme which, while helping deliver the basic curriculum, is heavily centred on pre-recorded tapes that tend to miss out on that vital and immediate contact between teacher and pupil.
146. Resources for music are satisfactory and are both attractive and well maintained. Some use is made of the nearby facilities within the City, such as the Philharmonic Hall. The co-ordinator is not a specialist and rightly feels that the school is struggling to develop the subject further in the wider curriculum. While music provision is satisfactory overall, opportunities are being missed to heighten pupils' cultural awareness and for them to develop a greater range of rich experiences in the subject.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

147. During the inspection, one lesson in gymnastics was observed at Key Stage 1 and one lesson in dance at Key Stage. Standards at Key Stage 1 are broadly in line with expectations for pupils of this age. It is not possible to make a judgement on the standards attained at the end of Key Stage 2 as no lessons involving Year 6 pupils were observed. The full range of physical activity is undertaken over the year and older pupils have some opportunities to engage in adventurous activities during their final school year. There are swimming lessons in Years 4, 5 and 6 taught by the pupils' own class teachers as part of the Local Education Authority's swimming policy. The school's records indicate that over half of Year 6 pupils are able to swim at least 25 metres unaided. Standards by the end of Key Stage 1 indicate an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs receive appropriate support for their individual needs and make good progress overall.

148. At Key Stage 1, pupils use the space in the school hall well and pay good attention to their own safety and that of others. They travel changing direction and using different parts of their bodies and develop satisfactory ability to move in different ways across the apparatus. Landing skills demonstrate appropriate control. Pupils' skills in sequencing movements on their own or in a small group, are not yet sufficiently well developed.
149. At Key Stage 2, pupils in Years 3 and 4 develop satisfactory skills in dance. They evaluate the work of others, although this is in the early stages. They remember what has been covered in the previous lesson and demonstrate good ability when building upon the dance sequences previously rehearsed. When working in their groups, they respond well to each other's movements and work positively towards producing a finished piece.
150. The quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory in one lesson observed and good in the other. Effective teaching demonstrated high expectations of behaviour and effort. The teacher shared the lesson objectives with the class and set targets for each part of the lesson as it progressed. Good opportunities were provided for pupils to demonstrate the results of their group work and to observe and appraise the work of others. Limited opportunities are provided at Key Stage 1 for pupils to develop sequencing skills.
151. Satisfactory long- and medium-term planning is in place but is not consistently reflected in teachers' lesson planning. There is no agreed system of recording attainment and progress in the subject as pupils progress through the school. A lunchtime football club is organised and run by a parent and attended by both boys and girls. The school is not involved in any competitive inter-school sport and this is a weakness of the all-round provision.