

INSPECTION REPORT

HATTON HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Litherland, Liverpool

LEA area: Sefton

Unique reference number: 104878

Headteacher: Mr J Sturt

Reporting inspector: Mr D S Roberts
1743

Dates of inspection: 27th – 31st March 2000

Inspection number: 189798

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Alwyn Avenue
Litherland
Liverpool

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr P McKittrick

Date of previous inspection: 6th October 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr D S Roberts	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education	School's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Mrs F Kennedy	Lay inspector		Pupils' values, attitudes and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mrs C Cressey	Team inspector	English Areas of learning for pupils under five	
Mr B Frost	Team inspector	Mathematics Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Mrs S Williams	Team inspector	Geography History Religious education Equal opportunities Pupils with English as an additional language	
Mrs S Power	Team inspector	Science Art Special educational needs	

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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?	15
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	20
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	21
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	22
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	25
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	26
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	30

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is much bigger than most primary schools, and provides education for boys and girls from three to eleven years of age. The number on roll has grown significantly since the last inspection. The school now provides full-time education for 409 pupils, and part-time education for a further 60 pupils in the nursery. The proportion of pupils entitled to receive free school meals is above the national average. The children's attainment on entry to the nursery is generally below that found nationally. Currently, over 27 per cent of the pupils are on the register for special educational needs, which is above the national average. There are 66 pupils at stages 3 to 5, most of whom have moderate learning difficulties, and some of whom have physical, emotional and behavioural problems. The nine pupils from families belonging to ethnic minority groups, all speak English as their first language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. It makes good provision for its pupils, who by the end of Key Stage 2 achieve at least appropriate standards for their age in most subjects, and particularly high standards in English. The school provides a good level of care and support, and teaching of good quality. The headteacher, governors and staff work together successfully to create a positive ethos for learning. The school is very well led and managed, and provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- By the time they reach the end of Year 6, the great majority of pupils have made good progress in English, mathematics and science.
- At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils achieve standards which are above the national average in English, and work of high quality in physical education.
- Throughout the school, the quality of teaching is generally good. Teaching of the under fives and for pupils in Year 6, is of high quality.
- In all lessons, pupils demonstrate very good attitudes towards their work; their behaviour is good and they enjoy school.
- The pupils' personal, moral and social development is promoted very successfully.
- The quality of leadership and management is of a high standard.

What could be improved

- Standards and provision in information technology.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since the last inspection in 1996. Compared to figures published in the last inspection report, the proportion of pupils reaching national standards at the end of Key Stage 2, has increased from 52 per cent to 78 per cent in English, from 42 per cent to 62 per cent in mathematics, and from 71 per cent to 82 per cent in science. The quality of teaching has continued to improve. The proportion of lessons judged to be at least satisfactory has increased from 75 per cent to 100 per cent, and the proportion judged to be very good or better from 18 per cent to 36 per cent. The successful implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching and is helping to raise standards further. The school has been very successful in addressing the key issues identified in the last inspection report. Continuing improvements to strategic planning, assessment and monitoring procedures, as well as the purposeful involvement of the governing body, have contributed significantly towards the school's good progress since the last inspection. The school is well placed to continue improving by building on existing strengths and addressing weaknesses.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	All schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	C	B	B	A
mathematics	C	C	D	B
science	C	D	C	A

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

The table shows that in 1999 the school's test results for English were above the average for all schools, and well above average compared to schools with similar characteristics. In mathematics, results were below the average for all schools but in line with the average for similar schools. Results in science were in line with all schools and well above the average for similar schools. The school's overall performance was in line with the national average and well above the average for similar schools.

Inspection findings indicate that children make good progress in the nursery and reception classes and achieve what is normally expected for their age in all areas of learning by the time they reach the age of five. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards are broadly in line with those found nationally in all of the core subjects. By the age of eleven, standards are at least in line with the national average in mathematics and science, and above the national average in English.

The successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is an important factor in the improving picture in mathematics at both key stages. Standards in information technology generally fall short of the national expectation at both key stages, although a majority of pupils achieve appropriate standards in some elements of the subject. In other subjects, pupils work at levels which are at least appropriate for their age, and pupils at Key Stage 2 produce work of high quality in physical education.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils throughout the school demonstrate very good attitudes toward their school work. They show interest and enthusiasm, are eager to learn and generally give of their best at all times. These features are outstanding in Year 6.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	From nursery to Year 6, behaviour is of a good standard in classrooms and about the school.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is very good throughout the school and is a particularly strong feature in the early years. Pupils work effectively as individuals, in pairs and groups. As they get older, they show an increasing capacity to show initiative and take responsibility.
Attendance	Satisfactory, although slightly below the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	good	good

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

During the inspection, all lessons were at least satisfactory. In over 76 per cent of lessons, the teaching was good or better, 36 per cent were very good or better and 14 per cent of lessons were excellent.

The teaching of children under five is of high quality. At Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, teaching of English, mathematics, science and most other subjects is generally good and sometimes very good. Teaching in Year 6 is consistently of high quality. At both key stages, the teaching of physical education is generally of a high standard. Throughout the school, the valuable and effective work of support staff has a very positive impact on the progress of pupils, particularly those with special educational needs.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a rich and relevant curriculum for children under five. At both key stages, the curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant, and the development of literacy and numeracy skills is strongly emphasised. However, the range of work covered in information technology is narrow and insufficient opportunities are created in other subjects for pupils to extend their information technology skills.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision throughout the school. The work of support staff has a very positive effect on pupils' progress. However, insufficient use is made of individual education plans to inform teaching in some classes.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Generally good. Provision for pupils' personal, social and moral development is particularly strong. Good adult role models and well taken opportunities in formal and extra-curricular activities contribute significantly towards pupils' development in these areas. Very good procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development and their academic progress. In addition, the provision of educational guidance and support for pupils is a very strong feature.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good procedures in place for monitoring pupils' welfare and safety and for child protection. Arrangements for promoting attendance are good.

A good partnership has been developed with parents, the great majority of whom would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The quality of leadership and management is very good. The headteacher, deputy and senior management team work effectively with the governing body, and are strongly supported by the co-ordinators for subjects and aspects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governing body and headteacher provide clear direction for the work of the school. Governors successfully ensure that all statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good use is made of local and national comparative information to evaluate performance and set targets for improvement in English, mathematics and science. The analysis of performance maintained by the headteacher is of high quality and gives governors a clear indication of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	Very effective school development planning enables money to be spent wisely on educational priorities. All resources are managed efficiently.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The children like school. • The children make good progress. • Behaviour is good. • The teaching is good. • They would feel comfortable in approaching the school with questions or problems. • The school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best. • The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. 	<p>A small minority of parents would like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more information about their children's progress; and • the school to work more closely with them.

The inspectors agree with parents' positive views about the school. They find the arrangements for reporting on pupils' progress to be appropriate and the partnership between the school and parents to be good. The headteacher and governing body are anxious to continue strengthening procedures and will take the views expressed by parents into account when reviewing current arrangements.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

- 1 The attainment levels of children on entry to the nursery are generally below those found nationally. They make good progress in the nursery and reception classes, and by the time they enter Key Stage 1, the majority of children meet the standards set out in the nationally agreed desirable outcomes for their learning in all areas of the curriculum.
- 2 Comparative information, based on the 1999 National Curriculum test results, indicates that the performance of pupils reaching the end of Key Stage 1 in reading and writing was well below the average for pupils in all schools nationally, but in line with the performance of pupils in schools with similar characteristics. In mathematics, the pupils' performance was very low compared to the average for all schools and well below that of pupils in similar schools.
- 3 Comparative information for pupils reaching the end of Key Stage 2 in the 1999 national tests, indicates that the pupils' performance was above the national average in English and well above the performance of pupils in similar schools. In mathematics, their performance was below the average for all schools, but above the average for pupils in similar schools. In science, the pupils' performance was in line with the national average and well above the performance of pupils in similar schools. Taking all three subjects together, the school's overall performance was in line with that of all schools and well above the performance of pupils in schools with similar characteristics.
- 4 Key Stage 2 national test results for the three years up to 1999, indicate a rate of improvement in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science which is broadly in line with that found nationally. During the same period, there was no significant variation in the performance of pupils in terms of gender.
- 5 Inspection findings indicate an improving picture at Key Stage 1. By the end of the key stage, standards are broadly in line with those found nationally in speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics and science. The majority of pupils are on course to reach national standards in all of these subjects. Pupils' achievements in relation to prior attainment are good in all aspects of English, mathematics and science. The significant improvement in the performance of pupils compared to the 1999 national test results is partly due to the variation in the ability levels of different cohorts of pupils, but largely due to considerable improvements brought about by the successful implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy.
- 6 Inspection findings for the end of Key Stage 2 indicate that standards in English are above the national average, and standards in mathematics and science are in line with those found nationally. The picture in English and science is consistent with the 1999 national test results, but findings for mathematics indicate a significant improvement in pupils' performance due largely to the successful implementation of the National Strategy for Numeracy.

- 7 In English, standards have improved considerably since the last inspection, and the development of literacy skills is given high priority throughout the curriculum. At both key stages, teachers build effectively on the very good foundation provided in the nursery and reception classes. Pupils at all levels of attainment make particularly good progress in extending their vocabulary and make good use of their reading and writing skills in other subjects. Teachers and pupils are aware of the specific objectives for learning in lessons, and this has a positive effect on their progress. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are able to discuss texts using appropriate vocabulary, and new skills introduced during the Literacy Hour are put to good use. For example, in Year 6, following work on persuasive language and the use of superlatives and comparatives, pupils were able to apply these new skills appropriately in class discussions, adapting the style and type of language to suit the audience.
- 8 In mathematics, pupils at all levels of attainment make consistent progress in developing their numeracy skills. The great majority of pupils reaching the end of Key Stage 1 have a good recall of addition and subtraction facts to 10 and beyond. Most are able to order and compare numbers and show a good understanding of place value up to 100. Higher attaining pupils have a good grasp of the place value of each digit up to 999.
- 9 During Key Stage 2, the great majority of pupils make good progress in their problem solving work. By the end of the key stage, pupils are quick to respond during rapid oral mental work, and use a relevant range of strategies effectively to arrive at the answers to problems. Most can explain their thinking clearly and use accurate mathematical language with growing confidence.
- 10 In science, standards at the end of both key stages are broadly in line with the national average. At Key Stage 1, the pupils extend their scientific knowledge, understanding and skills very effectively through practical investigations. By the end of the key stage, the majority are able to explain why things happen as they do and are beginning to develop a good understanding of the idea of fair testing. They are able to record their observations appropriately in their own words and drawings. At Key Stage 2, pupils develop a good level of scientific knowledge and understanding in all aspects of science, and their good use of appropriate scientific vocabulary is a good feature in their learning.
- 11 In information technology, although a majority of pupils achieve the levels set by the National Curriculum in communicating information at both key stages, and in the handling information element at Key Stage 2, overall standards are below the national expectation at both key stages. Insufficient attention is given to control technology, and there are limited opportunities for pupils to engage in monitoring and modelling activities, which restricts their progress in these elements of the subject. Throughout the school, the attention given to information and communication technology is inconsistent, and pupils are generally given insufficient opportunities in work in other subjects to extend their information technology capabilities.
- 12 In religious education, standards at the end of both key stages meet those set by the Sefton Agreed Syllabus.

- 13 Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. The introduction of additional "booster classes" to help borderline pupils at Key Stage 2 reach the National Standard is having a positive effect on their progress and attainment. There are no separate formal arrangements to provide additional support for gifted pupils, but teachers make appropriate provision within classrooms.
- 14 Pupils at both key stages, work at levels which are at least appropriate for their age in all other subjects. In physical education, pupils at Key Stage 2 produce work which is of high quality in gymnastics. In swimming, the great majority of pupils are able to swim 25 metres or more unaided before leaving the school at the end of Year 6.
- 15 Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are at least appropriate for their age at both key stages and standards of literacy at the end of Key Stage 2 are above average. The successful implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy at both key stages is having a positive impact on pupils' achievements.
- 16 The governors have set challenging targets for improvements in English and mathematics for future years, that take account of the varying ability levels of different cohorts of pupils. The school is on course to go close to the targets set for the end of the current academic year.
- 17 Since the last inspection, the school has made good progress in improving the standards achieved by pupils reaching the end of Key Stage 2. This is confirmed by comparing the national test results published in the previous inspection report with the most recent national test results in 1999. The proportion of pupils reaching Level 4, the standard set by the National Curriculum, has increased from 52 per cent to 78 per cent in English, from 42 per cent to 62 per cent in mathematics, and from 71 per cent to 82 per cent in science. In information technology, better resources have resulted in some improvements, but overall standards remain below the national expectations.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 18 The pupils' very good attitudes to learning are a strength of the school and contribute very positively to the standards which they achieve. In lessons they work hard and are keen to succeed. They contribute confidently and enthusiastically to class discussion and they present their written work thoughtfully and neatly. During practical lessons, such as art and science, they handle resources sensibly and gladly help to put away the equipment at the end of the lesson. They respond promptly to instructions in physical education lessons and pay attention to their own and other people's safety. When asked to work with a partner or as part of a group, for example in numeracy lessons, they demonstrate a real willingness to co-operate and to learn from one another.

- 19 Behaviour throughout the school is good. The pupils enjoy school and behave well in lessons, in the playground, in the dining room and in assembly. They are polite and friendly. They follow the rules and conventions and the school is a happy place in which to learn. During a literacy lesson in the inspection week a Year 6 pupil began a piece of persuasive writing with "Hatton Hill is a great place to learn but as we learn we have fun". Relationships throughout the school are very good. The pupils value friendship and have a good understanding of how their words and actions can affect other people. They respect other people's cultures and beliefs. For example, in a Year 5 religious education lesson on Judaism the pupils were very keen to understand the significance of the Bar Mitzvah ceremony and were able to relate this to experiences in their own lives. Their behaviour during this lesson was excellent. There are very few instances of serious or persistent misconduct. The vast majority of the pupils are eager to learn and to please their teachers and the other adults who work with them. However, during the past year there have been nine fixed period exclusions, for conduct which the school considered to be totally unacceptable. Exclusions are imposed only after all other means of improving an individual's behaviour have been tried.
- 20 Throughout the school the pupils respond very positively to the many opportunities they are given to show initiative and take responsibility. They are eager to help with routine tasks such as collecting in books and work sheets and returning registers to the school office. The Year 5 and Year 6 pupils contribute a great deal to the school community and set a very good example to the rest of the school both in their general behaviour and by the manner in which they carry out various duties around the school. These include assisting in the Key Stage 1 dining room, distributing milk and registers before the start of the school day, operating the overhead projector in assemblies and helping to set up physical education apparatus for younger classes during the lunch break. The school council provides a useful forum for the Years 5 and 6 pupils to express their ideas and opinions through their class representatives. Fund raising for charity is an important part of school life. During the past year the pupils have generously supported a number of charities. These have included 'Children in Need', the 'Kosovo Appeal' and the 'Tibetan Homes Foundation'. In addition, pupils initiated and raised money to purchase a computer for an individual pupil at the school, who was suffering from a particular condition. In ways such as these, the school is successfully promoting the pupils' personal development and extending their understanding of the principles of good citizenship.
- 21 The pupils' record of attendance is satisfactory, although slightly below the national average for primary schools. Illness and holidays account for almost all absence and the incidence of unauthorised absence is low, below the national average. The vast majority of the pupils arrive punctually in the mornings and lessons start promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 22 The quality of teaching and learning is generally good. During the inspection, the teaching in 76 per cent of lessons observed was judged to be at least good, 36 per cent were very good or better and 14 per cent were excellent. Throughout the school, there is a close match between the quality of teaching and learning and this is reflected in lesson evaluations.
- 23 The quality of teaching for children under five is generally of high quality. Fifty per cent of lessons observed were judged to be very good or better and 13 per cent were excellent. The very effective contribution of support staff is a strong feature in all of the classes for the under fives.
- 24 Teaching in the nursery and reception is particularly successful in promoting the children's personal and social development and this helps them to settle quickly and make good progress in all areas of learning. Throughout the early years, very good teaching is particularly effective in developing the children's speaking and listening skills. This enables children to contribute more confidently to discussions and take greater advantage of the range of learning opportunities provided for them.
- 25 The high quality of teaching of the under fives enables the great majority of children to meet the standards set by the desirable outcomes for their learning in all areas of learning by the time they enter compulsory education. The great majority make good progress in developing their early literacy and numeracy skills and in extending their knowledge and understanding of the world. Many show a growing independence when working at computer work stations and confidence in using the keyboard and mouse to work through relevant computer programmes. Very good class management and lesson organisation contribute positively towards the children's good progress in the physical and creative areas of learning. The consistent emphasis placed on extending children's literacy and numeracy skills during work in all areas of learning is a very strong feature in the teaching. Baseline assessment is used very effectively to plan provision for all children including those with special educational needs.
- 26 The quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 is generally good and sometimes very good. Over 75 per cent of lessons observed were judged to be good or better and 19 per cent were in the very good to excellent category. The teaching of English and mathematics is generally good, and has benefited considerably from the successful implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. Teaching is also generally good in science and most other subjects. However, some teachers still lack confidence in teaching information and communication technology.
- 27 The quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 is generally good. Over 70 per cent of lessons observed were judged to be good or better and 40 per cent were in the very good to excellent category. Teaching in Year 6 is consistently of high quality. Over 90 per cent of lessons were at least very good, and nearly 70 per cent were judged to be excellent. Outstanding teaching at the end of the key stage, building on generally good teaching in other Key Stage 2 classes, is a major factor in the pupils' good progress in English, mathematics and science and in most other subjects.

- 28 The teaching of English is generally of good quality at both key stages and outstanding in Year 6. Most teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and a good understanding of how pupils learn. Lessons follow closely the structure of the National Literacy Strategy. These factors contribute greatly towards the good progress made by pupils at both key stages. High quality teaching at the end of Key Stage 2 promotes very good progress and standards which are above the national average. In excellent lessons, teaching is imaginative and exciting. Expectation of pupils are consistently very high, and the teaching advances pupils learning at a fast pace.
- 29 The teaching of mathematics is generally good throughout both key stages, with some high quality teaching at the end of both key stages. Overall, the teaching demonstrates a good understanding of the expectations described in the National Numeracy Strategy. The content of work is usually well matched to the pupils' levels of attainment and a good balance is achieved between mental work, direct teaching, learning activities and the final plenary session. However, in a minority of lessons the time allocated to the final plenary is too short to be productive.
- 30 The teaching of science is consistently good throughout the school, and there is some excellent teaching at the end of Key Stage 2. Teachers have a good subject knowledge which enables them to promote effectively the correct use of scientific vocabulary by the pupils. In the excellent lessons, high levels of challenge are consistently apparent. This is reflected in teachers' questioning which is always probing for ideas and understanding. The under-use of information technology is a weakness in the teaching.
- 31 No direct teaching of information technology was observed during the inspection and it is therefore not possible to make an evaluation of the quality of teaching in the subject. Intervention by teachers and support staff to support pupils working at computer work-stations is appropriate and supportive. It is clear that some teachers lack confidence in the subject. This is contributing towards a lack of consistency in provision across the school, and consequent underachievement by many pupils.
- 32 In religious education, the teaching is generally of good quality and meets the requirements of the Sefton Agreed Syllabus.
- 33 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school. The very effective co-operation between teachers and support staff is a strong feature which helps to promote good progress by pupils in this category. Their work helps to overcome the lack of detail provided in some individual education plans.
- 34 In other subjects, tasks are pitched at an appropriate level to challenge pupils and opportunities are taken effectively to extend literacy and numeracy skills. This is apparent, for example, in science where investigations often require accurate measurements. In history, geography and religious education, teachers create worthwhile opportunities for pupils to engage in extended writing activities arising from their studies and incorporating some of the new skills acquired during the literacy lessons. Through work in art and music, the teaching promotes successfully the pupils' creative development. At both key stages, the teaching of physical education is generally good, often very good and sometimes excellent. The very effective approach to teaching gymnastics helps pupils to think carefully about ways of improving the quality of their performance and results in some high quality work.

- 35 The school has made very good progress in improving the quality of teaching since the last inspection. The proportion of lessons judged to be satisfactory or better has increased from 75 per cent in the last inspection to 100 per cent, and the proportion judged to be very good or better from 18 per cent to 36 per cent. Significant improvements in lesson planning and assessment procedures, and the successful implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, have contributed greatly towards better quality teaching throughout the school.

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

- 36 The school provides a rich and stimulating curriculum for the children under five. It takes appropriate account of the nationally agreed desirable learning outcomes prior to compulsory education. At Key Stages 1 and 2, the school is similarly successful in providing its pupils with a good quality curriculum which meets the current requirements of the National Curriculum and the requirements of the Sefton Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Although the school has invested much time and effort in implementing the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, successful planning has meant that the basic curriculum continues to offer pupils a wealth of worthwhile and interesting activities and opportunities which are well matched to the pupils' needs. Since the last inspection, the school has reviewed its approach to the daily act of collective worship, which now meets statutory requirements.
- 37 Effective strategies have been developed for teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. These provide for high achievement and offer the pupils valuable and purposeful learning opportunities. Classroom assistants and volunteer helpers make a valuable contribution in literacy lessons, assisting effectively the smooth organisation of group and independent work during which the pupils with special educational needs receive good quality support. Recent arrangements, in numeracy lessons at Key Stage 2, to teach the pupils in ability groups from Year 4 to Year 6, reduces the spread of attainment in each group so that planning is more manageable. This arrangement makes it easier for the teachers to establish appropriate learning objectives for their groups and to maintain realistic pace and rigour in the work, in ways which motivate and stimulate the pupils.
- 38 The statutory curriculum is enhanced by a range of interesting extra-curricular activities which are open to boys and girls. Although these are mainly of a sporting nature one of the clubs involves Irish dancing. This activity is very popular and provides the pupils with a range of skills which demand high levels of co-ordination and control. The school also provides many opportunities for the pupils to take part in visits locally and further afield. For example, the Year 6 pupils recently visited Winmarleigh Hall, in Preston, where they benefited from opportunities to develop their outdoor adventurous skills and also to further develop their skills in information technology in a residential setting.

- 39 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is generally good and has improved since the time of the last inspection. In lessons, the teachers know their pupils well and are sensitive to their learning needs. The setting arrangements for mathematics and English at Key Stage 2 helps teachers to meet the needs of pupils at all levels of ability. In other subjects teachers provide suitably differentiated activities which are well matched to the learning needs of the pupils and enable most of them to make good progress. The system for withdrawing pupils from lessons, for additional support by classroom assistants and external agencies, works well in providing for the learning needs of the pupils individually or in small groups.
- 40 The school's policy for special educational needs sets out clear procedures for identifying pupils causing concern. There is appropriate consultation with teachers, parents and external support agencies although reviews are not sufficiently regular. The individual education plans for the pupils identify appropriate targets which relate closely to the area of concern. However, individual education plans are not always used effectively to inform teachers in the classrooms. Some of the plans are not sufficiently specific about the action to be taken to help pupils meet their targets, and class teacher's planning does not consistently specify the provision to be made for pupils with special educational needs.
- 41 The equal opportunities policy is inclusive, and successful in providing equality of access and opportunity for all pupils to all aspects of the curriculum. Care is taken to ensure pupils with special educational needs are able to participate and benefit from the full range of school activities. Girls and boys have equal access to all aspects of school life and work together constructively and harmoniously in group discussion and other activities in all aspects of the curriculum. There are no pupils who require additional support for English as an additional language.
- 42 Very good provision is made for pupils' moral and social development through the general life of the school and the way in which lessons are conducted. The good relationships between pupils and teachers and other adults within the school contribute very positively to pupils' moral awareness and their sense of right and wrong. At Key Stage 2, in a religious education lesson arising from the study of the Sermon on the Mount, the pupils were able to consider why rules are needed to regulate behaviour within society.
- 43 Pupils' cultural awareness is well developed within various areas of the curriculum, particularly through their work in art, music, history, geography and literature and visits to places of interest within the locality such as Martin Mere Wild Life Centre, the Walker Art Gallery and museum and field work in the local area. In their work in religious education pupils are introduced to other faiths and traditions recognising similarities and differences in their study of Sikhism, Judaism and Islam. For example, older Key Stage 2 pupils were able to consider codes and values common to Judaism and Christianity, and to compare and contrast with their own experience.

- 44 Since the last inspection, the school has been very effective in improving the provision for pupils' spiritual development which is now satisfactory. The statutory requirement for the provision of a daily act of collective worship is met, and assemblies contribute to pupils' moral, social and cultural developments as well as their spiritual development. For example, in a Key Stage 1 assembly, pupils entered the hall in a quiet and orderly way to the accompaniment of African music. Year 1 pupils enacted cameos, linked with the life of Jesus, on themes of caring, sharing and being kind and helpful. Very good support was provided for pupils with special educational needs to enable them to take a full part in the assembly. The school has also undertaken an evaluation of the ways in which the curriculum as a whole promotes the spiritual dimension of pupils' development, enabling them to reflect on their experiences in ways which develop their spiritual awareness.
- 45 The school provides a purposeful and coherent curriculum which emphasises the development of the pupils' personal and social education. Health education is taught in all classes and includes appropriate attention to drug misuse and sex education in accordance with the governors' policy. The school nurse makes a valuable contribution towards the pupils' health education programme, and personnel from a local football team also provide helpful support in this area. Older pupils participate in the 'Heartstone' project, and this scheme is successful in promoting the pupils' awareness of race issues and citizenship. The pupils are given essential facts and the necessary knowledge and skills to enable them to make informed choices now and in the future.
- 46 The school has established good links with the local community. These provide an added dimension to the pupils' learning. For example, through the Year 4 project "Mediamix" the school takes part in activities organised by the local Ormskirk group of newspapers. The experiences provided assist the pupils' understanding of the skills and knowledge required to produce newspapers in addition to improving their comprehension and general and local knowledge. The governing body is very supportive in fostering links with the local community, and has been instrumental in organising visits by local clergy which bring an added dimension to school assemblies.
- 47 The vast majority of the Year 6 pupils transfer to the local high school. Strong links are well established and appropriate arrangements are in place for the transfer of relevant records and attainment data. The oldest pupils take part in visits which include their involvement in lessons at the high school prior to their transfer. In addition, the Year 5 pupils participate with other feeder schools in an annual "Lamfest" music festival in the high school's hall.
- 48 Since the last inspection, the school has greatly improved its planning procedures so that the curriculum challenges the pupils, at different levels of attainment, in a much more systematic way. For example, the arrangements for teaching the Year 4, 5 and 6 pupils in ability groups, results in planning of work which is now matched more precisely to the pupils' needs in literacy and numeracy lessons. The successful implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has also played a significant part in these improvements. Lessons now have clear objectives. At the end of Key Stage 2 these objectives are made known to the pupils at the beginning of each lesson. This is a practice which might usefully be extended throughout the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 49 The school takes good care of its pupils and provides them with a secure, stimulating and very happy environment in which to learn. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Personal and social education are given high priority and are successfully promoted through lessons, assemblies, educational visits and talks by visiting speakers. The pupils are learning to care for one another inside school and in the wider community. Friendship, good teamwork, the principles of a healthy life style and respect for the natural world all feature in the programme of study, helping to prepare the pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. Arrangements for monitoring the pupils' personal development are very good.
- 50 The school has established effective formal systems for assessing and monitoring the attainment of its pupils. The carefully planned programme of statutory and non statutory tests throughout the school gives useful information about the pupils' attainment in English and mathematics which is comprehensively analysed and used effectively to improve curriculum provision and identify areas for development. The progress of individual pupils is monitored carefully through regular testing and during teaching and learning. The teachers keep detailed class files of test results and other assessments that enable them to identify special educational needs, make accurate teacher assessments at the end of each key stage and to write informative annual reports for parents.
- 51 The weekly planning format has the potential to ensure that ongoing assessment information is used effectively. In the reception classes and at the end of Key Stage 2 the format is used particularly well to ensure that information about pupils' progress during lessons is used purposefully to plan the next steps in learning. However, in some classes this format is not used consistently to identify clear and achievable learning objectives for lessons, and this reduces the effectiveness of on-going teacher assessment in informing future planning. The recently updated marking policy is not yet consistently implemented. At present, marking of pupils' work is not linked clearly with assessment and individual target setting. The school has identified this as a priority to be addressed in the near future.
- 52 The individual pupils' records of achievement are highly successful in promoting self-esteem and in involving pupils in the evaluation of their own progress. The identification of termly targets and areas for development, together with acknowledgement of other personal achievements, make a very positive contribution to the pupils' good progress and to their personal development.
- 53 Procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour are of a high order. The school has a very positive and successful approach to behaviour management and this enhances the quality of learning and the standards which the pupils achieve. The school rules are displayed prominently in all the classrooms, giving pupils a clear understanding of what is expected of them. Parents are involved at a very early stage whenever an individual's behaviour is giving cause for concern.

- 54 Regular attendance and punctuality are strongly encouraged and form part of the home-school agreement which came into effect at the beginning of the current school year. Arrangements for monitoring attendance are very thorough. The school works in close co-operation with the educational welfare officer who is very supportive and well known to the pupils and their families. The school nurse and the community police officer also provide very good support for the work of the school. Pupil welfare is considered to be of the utmost importance and the school is quick to seek professional help when it is needed. The local education authority provides a very good level of service in this respect and sets out very detailed and appropriate child protection procedures. The school's child protection arrangements are good, adhering to the local education authority's guidelines and ensuring that all teaching and support staff receive relevant in-service training under the direction of the designated teacher.
- 55 The headteacher and governors make regular inspections of the school buildings and grounds in line with the school's policy on health and safety. Accidents to pupils are recorded appropriately and good arrangements are in place for contacting parents if pupils are unwell or if they have received a bump to the head during the day. Arrangements for school lunch are very good. The pupils are properly supervised in the dining room and lunch time is an enjoyable social occasion for them. A seating plan has been drawn up for the Key Stage 2 pupils so that they are assured of a place with their friends. This is a good example of the way in which the school strives to make school a happy place in which to learn.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 56 The school works in close partnership with parents and has built successfully on the strengths identified in the previous inspection report. Consultation with parents, prior to the inspection, revealed that almost all parents are in agreement that their children like school. The great majority of parents consider teaching to be good and feel that the school helps their children to make good progress and to become mature and responsible. Most parents are of the opinion that behaviour is good and that pupils are expected to work hard and achieve of their best. The majority would feel comfortable about approaching the school with problems or questions concerning their children. The inspection findings support all these views.
- 57 A significant minority of the parents feel that the school does not keep them well informed with regard to their children's progress. Inspection findings are that the quality of the information provided for parents is good. The pupils' individual record of achievement files, which provide very detailed evidence of their personal development and achievement during their time in the school, are presented to parents when their children leave the school.
- 58 The aims of the school are made clear in the prospectus, which is well written and gives good advice to parents on how best to help their children at home. Regular correspondence, school notice boards and the governing body's annual report keep parents fully informed of school policies and procedures. Formal parents' evenings are arranged at suitable intervals and these are always well attended. Teachers are invariably available at the end of the school day to talk to parents informally or by appointment. Communications with parents of children under five are excellent. All the children are visited in their homes prior to admission to the nursery and the parents have daily personal contact with nursery and reception staff.

- 59 The parents make a good contribution to their children's learning inside school and at home. At the pre-inspection meeting the parents spoke very highly of the 'Parents as Educators' courses which the school provides, in conjunction with the local education authority's 'Families and Schools Together' initiative. These courses are led by the teachers and involve working alongside the pupils in class. They give parents the knowledge and skill to help their children gain maximum benefit from their education and at the same time they enhance the level and quality of parental support inside school. Many of the parents involved have moved on to further education, employment or helping on a voluntary basis in the classroom. The parents enjoy helping in this way and, during the inspection, many were observed giving very good support in lessons.
- 60 The parents also give valuable support in other ways. They assist with extra curricular activities, accompany the pupils on educational visits and help to look after the school garden and the nursery outdoor play area. Parental support for the home-school reading scheme is having a very positive effect on reading standards throughout the school and the pupils' reading diaries give an added dimension to home-school communications. The parents were closely involved in drawing up the home-school agreement which came into effect last September and have also been part of the working parties set up to develop school policies on homework and discipline. The Parent Teacher Association raises considerable additional funds for the school and enhances the quality of school life by arranging numerous social events for the pupils and their families.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 61 The quality of leadership and management is very good. The headteacher provides purposeful and highly effective leadership. Headteacher, deputy and the chair of governors work closely together to provide clear vision and direction for the work of the school. They are well supported by the senior management team and staff, and the members of the governing body.
- 62 The hard work of curriculum co-ordinators contributes strongly towards the good quality of teaching which now exists. In recent years, the perceptive leadership provided by the co-ordinators for English and mathematics has been an important factor in the very successful implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy throughout the school. The school is well placed to continue to improve by building on existing strengths and addressing weaknesses.
- 63 Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their increasingly purposeful involvement is an important factor in the good rate of improvement achieved by the school since the last inspection. They work effectively and successfully to ensure that statutory requirements are met, which was an issue at the time of the last inspection. Appropriate governing body committees have been established. Some governors are particularly generous with their time, and work very hard in the interest of the pupils.

- 64 The school's main aims and mission statement are communicated effectively to parents through the prospectus. The motto " Happy Learning" is consistently reflected in all of the school's work. Governors successfully ensure that the school makes appropriate provision for all pupils including those with special educational needs, and provides equality of access and opportunity for all of its pupils. The requirements of the Code of Practice for special educational needs are generally met effectively, but there is a need to improve the quality of some individual education plans.
- 65 Procedures for monitoring teaching and the curriculum are very good. The headteacher visits classrooms regularly to evaluate teaching and the quality of curricular provision. The feedback from lesson evaluations is provided during interviews with teachers, during which personal targets are agreed for the year ahead. The standard and quality of work produced by pupils are monitored at regular intervals by the headteacher, senior staff and co-ordinators.
- 66 Responsibilities for co-ordinating subjects and aspects of the curriculum are appropriately shared and defined. Medium and short-term planning is scrutinised by relevant co-ordinators in order to check curricular balance and provision in their subjects. These arrangements have not only ensured appropriate emphasis on the development of literacy and numeracy skills, but have also been successful in maintaining a broad curriculum during the implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies.
- 67 The requirements for staff appraisal are met, and are supported very effectively by the arrangements to conduct regular interviews and set personal targets with individual teachers. There are good procedures for supporting the induction of newly qualified teachers and staff who are new to the school. Strong emphasis is placed on staff development. Teaching, support staff, governors and voluntary helpers are given opportunities to attend relevant in-service training, and the local education authority provides good support through school-based inservice training in support of a variety of initiatives. The need to improve teacher expertise in information technology has been included as a priority in the school development plan. There are well planned on-going programmes of training for classroom assistants and for lunch-time supervisors.
- 68 The school development planning process is well conceived and ensures that the views of all staff and governors are considered when identifying priorities. Development planning is appropriately seen as an on-going process, with regular reviews conducted to assess progress and adjust targets where necessary. Targets for improvements are listed clearly and detailed information is provided about action to be taken to support their implementation. Appropriate information is provided about deadlines for meeting targets, persons responsible, and criteria for evaluating the success of initiatives. The effective use of the plan to inform spending priorities ensures that money is spent appropriately on relevant educational priorities.
- 69 The school makes very good use of its income. Grants for specific purposes are used appropriately, and good use is made of the element within the school's budget for making provision for pupils with special educational needs. The relatively large amount of money carried forward from the last financial year is to finance improvements to nursery provision and the building and development of the computer suite.

- 70 The governors' finance committee co-operates effectively with the headteacher and highly efficient school administration to monitor spending and ensure efficient financial control. Administrative staff are appropriately trained and the school makes good use of information technology to support financial management. When particular difficulties arise the school is able to call on expert support from the LEA. A recent audit of finance by the local authority made a number of minor recommendations for improvements, which the governing body proposes to address as soon as possible.
- 71 Very strong procedures are in place to monitor school performance. The headteacher systematically provides information to enable the governors to compare the school's performance with that of other schools. These include national and local comparative information and an excellent analysis of the school's performance prepared by the headteacher. The governors demonstrate very good awareness of the school's performance and priorities for improvement. The governing body also seeks to secure best quality and value when purchasing resources and arranging for work to be completed. This is illustrated by the steps taken to plan for the new computer suite. Criteria were established which included ease of access and security before any cost proposals were considered.
- 72 The strategic management of all resources is very good. The school has sufficient suitably qualified and experienced teachers and support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum for pupils at all stages of their education; they are deployed very effectively.
- 73 Very good use is made of the range of facilities provided by the accommodation. The accommodation for under fives and for pupils at both key stages is appropriate for the delivery of the curriculum. Although there is no central library, the school has ample book corners around the school, allowing easy access for staff and pupils.
- 74 Standards of cleaning and caretaking are high, and the grounds are well maintained. However some parts of the perimeter fence have been badly vandalised and need to be replaced. The quality of the internal environment is considerably enhanced by displays of pupils' work which are of high quality. Outside, the work to provide a nursery garden has greatly enhanced the external environment for the under fives.
- 75 Since the last inspection, the quality of mid and long-term strategic planning has improved considerably. Action planning to improve provision in English has been particularly effective and, together with the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy, has had a significant impact on the greatly improved standards in English at the end of Key Stage 2. In addition, the strengthening of procedures for monitoring teaching and learning has resulted in considerable improvements which are reflected in this inspection's findings.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

76 In order to raise standards and quality of work further, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

- * improve standards and provision in information technology by:
 - a) producing mid and short-term planning which achieves systematic coverage of all elements of the subject in all year groups;
 - b) producing assessment and recording procedures which match those currently in place for the core subjects;
 - c) introducing work files and disks for individual pupils;
 - d) regularly monitoring teaching and learning in the subject; and
 - e) improving the confidence and expertise of teachers.

(paragraph references: 11, 31, 118, 119, 122)

In addition to the key issues listed above, the following aspect should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- * improve further the already good provision made for pupils with special educational needs by :
 - a) ensuring consistent use of individual education plans to inform the teaching of pupils with special educational needs in all classes; and
 - b) providing more specific details of action to be taken and by whom.

(paragraph references: 33 and 40)

Proposals to improve standards and provision in information technology are included in the current school development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	83
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	11

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
14%	22%	40%	24%	0%	0%	0%

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	30	409
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	150

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	13	116

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.9
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
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	28	26	54

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	23	24
	Girls	17	14	15
	Total	40	37	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74	69	72
	National	82	86	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	27	27
	Girls	21	18	22
	Total	44	45	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81	83	91
	National	82	83	87

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	22	23	45

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	11	16
	Girls	21	18	21
	Total	35	29	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78	64	82
	National	70	69	78

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	12	16
	Girls	21	21	21
	Total	35	33	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78	73	82
	National	68	69	75

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	1
White	358
Any other minority ethnic group	8

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	9	
Other minority ethnic groups		

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)	16
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28.4
Average class size	29.2

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	171.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	30

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	15
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	703,593
Total expenditure	688,552
Expenditure per pupil	1,632
Balance brought forward from previous year	55,800
Balance carried forward to next year	70,841

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	300
Number of questionnaires returned	101

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	30	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	63	34	2	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	40	7	2	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	46	5	3	4
The teaching is good.	60	32	1	0	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	39	46	11	4	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	30	5	3	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	29	1	2	0
The school works closely with parents.	42	47	9	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	44	47	5	2	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	36	3	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	50	36	9	0	6

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

77 The school's provision for children under five is very good, and is provided in the nursery class and two reception classes. The curriculum for children under five is rich and stimulating, and is based appropriately on the 'six areas of learning'. It provides the children with a very broad and balanced range of experiences. The school provides a wide range of challenging and focused activities to promote children's learning in language and literacy, mathematics and personal development. Although there is considerable fluctuation in the ability levels of children entering the nursery, baseline assessment indicates that they are generally below those found nationally. A significant number of children have very poorly developed speaking and listening skills. However, during their time in the nursery and reception classes, the majority of children make good progress and achieve standards that are in line with desirable outcomes for their learning by the time they are five.

Language and literacy.

78 Language and literacy are given a very high priority. The nursery and reception classes provide a wide range of effective experiences and activities to develop and extend children's language and literacy skills. In the nursery, children listen carefully to their teachers and learn to follow instructions. They are encouraged to sit quietly at the beginning of the sessions and at story time. In the reception class children are attentive listeners. They enjoy listening to stories and rhymes, and join in familiar ones with enthusiasm. In both nursery and the reception classes, they increasingly share conversations with adults, and are given good role models to develop their spoken language. Structured play situations, puppets, snack time and 'together times' provide opportunities for children to use and extend their vocabulary. Clearly labelled displays, alphabet and sound friezes, and individual name cards help children develop early reading and writing skills. Children are encouraged to make marks on paper, and by the time they enter reception, many draw recognisable pictures. Children are learning to recognise their own names and older children are able to write their names with increasing accuracy using capital and small letters. Comfortable and inviting book corners promote a love of books and children are learning to handle books with care. In the reception class, children become familiar with the characters of the reading scheme and recognise their names in books and around the room. A small number of children read simple books with confidence and understanding. They recognise initial sounds and use these to read unfamiliar words. Nursery children are encouraged to choose a book with their parents or carers, and all children take books home on a regular basis to share with family members. This has a very positive effect on children's progress in learning to read.

Mathematical development

- 79 The nursery and reception classes provide a wide range of activities to promote mathematical understanding. Children have opportunities to compare, match, sort, order, sequence and count using a range of games and experiences. Through well-planned topic work they explore number, pattern, shape and measurement. Teachers place great emphasis on developing appropriate mathematical language and children make good progress in considering size, shape and position when playing with small world toys. During the inspection, children in the nursery were learning about circles, and were able to identify them in a range of interesting places such as in their round sandwiches at snack time. Most nursery children are able to join in with the teacher and count to ten and beyond to see how many children are present. In the reception class, children are able to solve simple problems, such as what is two more than three. Higher attaining children develop a good understanding of addition and subtraction and are able to record their answers in a formal way.

Knowledge and understanding of the world.

- 80 Children develop a very good understanding of the world around them. They learn about the passage of time through celebrating birthdays and festivals. They become familiar with the days of the week and the changing seasons and weather. They put considerable effort into, and make good progress in improving, their skills of cutting, folding and sticking. Children learn to operate the tape recorders and computer, and many are very confident and competent in using the 'mouse' to work through relevant computer programmes. Children in the nursery use magnifying glasses effectively to observe the transformation of frogspawn into tadpoles. In the spring and summer months, the excellent nursery garden becomes a hub of activity as children plant potatoes and strawberries and collect the cherries from the tree. In the reception class, the children plant their own seeds and this engages their imagination and interest and helps them to develop a very good understanding of change and growth. Construction toys are used well to encourage children to design and make their own models. Older children respond well to the challenge of creating a vehicle which will move a large stone in 'Mary Mary's Quite Contrary's garden'.

Creative development

- 81 Children enjoy a very good range of experiences in art, music, story and imaginative play. Through such experiences children make good progress in using appropriate vocabulary and developing their use of language to express ideas. They make good use of opportunities to select and use materials in a variety of ways, and are able to explore colour, shape and texture effectively. Role-play is particularly effective in supporting creative development. At the time of the inspection, children in the reception class were able to decide which nursery rhyme character they were going to arrest and take to the class 'police station' for wrong doing. The list included Humpty Dumpty for falling off the wall and the blackbird who pecked of the maid's nose! Children play musical instruments on a regular basis, using them to enhance their role-play and to accompany their singing.

Physical development

- 82 Very good provision is made for children's physical development, which promotes good progress of the pupils. In the nursery children have well planned daily opportunities to use wheeled toys, small apparatus, climbing frames and slides. They learn to run, hop, skip and jump and balance with increasing co-ordination. Nursery and reception children have structured physical education and dance lessons to promote further development. The majority develop good skills in handling tools, construction toys and malleable materials.

Social and personal development

- 83 Children's personal and social development is given a very high priority. In the nursery, particular emphasis is given to helping children develop positive behaviour. By the time they move into reception this has been very effective and children behave very well. The children are able to share and work together in a variety of situations, such as games and snack time in the nursery, and circle time in the reception classes.

- 84 Children enjoy coming to school and are eager to learn new skills and to explore new ideas. Older ones work independently for sustained periods of time and take great pride in their achievements. Relationships are very positive and children are encouraged to reflect on their feelings, actions and experiences.

Teaching

- 85 Teaching in the early years is very good. The very good teaching in the nursery is continued in the reception classes. All staff have a secure understanding of how young children learn and of the importance of play and first hand experiences. Teachers and classroom support assistants are enthusiastic and have high expectations of the children. Lesson plans are very clear and detailed with appropriate learning objectives. Staff work very well together and this has a positive effect on the quality of the learning. Parental help enhances the learning and provides parents with a valuable insight into how young children learn. Experiences are interesting and challenging and are focused very closely on what children need to learn. Throughout the early years, very good teaching is particularly effective in developing the children's speaking and listening skills. Activities are well organised and place strong emphasis on promoting the children's language and literacy and mathematical development. There is a very good balance between teacher directed and child initiated activities. Staff provide very effective support for all activities, interacting to check and extend children's understanding. Praise and encouragement are very effective in promoting positive behaviour and personal and social development. Children are given very clear instructions about what it is they are expected to do. Staff use questions, comments and observations very well to assess children's progress and to plan for future learning. Baseline assessment is used very effectively to help teachers plan an appropriate learning environment for children under five. All staff contribute to a useful record system which indicates children's progress towards some of the desirable outcomes. However, these do not provide sufficient detail to give an accurate picture of progress in all aspects of the areas of learning and they are not consistent through the nursery and reception classes.

ENGLISH

- 86 By the time pupils reach the end of Key Stage 2, standards are above the national average. This is consistent with the most recent national test results and represents considerable improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be below the national expectations. The great majority of pupils in Year 6 are on course to meet, and a significant majority to exceed, national standards at the end of the key stage.
- 87 By the end of Key Stage 1, standards are in line with those expected nationally. This represents a significant improvement on the most recent national test results. This is due partly to the ability levels within the cohort but largely to the effective implementation of the National Literacy Strategy.
- 88 At both key stages, literacy is given a high priority throughout the curriculum, and in relation to their prior attainment, most pupils at all levels of attainment make good and often very good progress in developing literacy skills. They build successfully on the very effective foundation for learning provided for them in the nursery and reception classes. All areas of weakness highlighted in the last inspection report have been addressed with rigour and enthusiasm. Emphasis is placed on reading and writing in a variety of contexts and for a wide range of purposes. Pupils at all attainment levels make significant progress in extending their vocabulary. They use their reading and writing skills well in other areas of the curriculum, for example when recording their investigations in science lessons or designing a poster for a particular project. The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy Strategy and this is having a very positive effect on raising standards. Teachers and pupils are aware of the skills they are teaching and learning, and lessons have an atmosphere of hard work and commitment to high standards. The school has also adopted the National Literacy Strategy guidelines for additional support and 'booster sessions' for pupils needing extra help to reach the required standards. These are all having a positive impact on pupils' progress and standards.
- 89 Throughout both key stages, pupils with special educational needs generally receive good support and achieve standards in line with their prior attainment.
- 90 The school places considerable emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills, and as a result most pupils make very good progress. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are above those expected nationally. Pupils are confident and articulate speakers. In assembly, the younger pupils are able to stand in front of the whole school and confidently act out scenes from the life of Jesus. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are confident speakers, eager to answer questions and to talk about their work. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are able to discuss texts using appropriate vocabulary. They express ideas clearly, using interesting and grammatically accurate language. New vocabulary, introduced during the literacy hour, is used well in class discussions. During the inspection, teaching and learning in Year 6 concentrated on the use of persuasive language and the use of superlatives and comparatives. By the end of the week, pupils were able to use a wide range of persuasive vocabulary very accurately in their class discussions, adapting the style and type of language according to the audience.

- 91 By the end of Key Stage 1, attainment is in line with the national expectation for reading. Pupils are aware of authors and illustrators, and are able to identify the main characters and events in their favourite books. Younger pupils read simple books with increasing accuracy and understanding. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 use a variety of strategies to help them recognise unfamiliar words, such as letter patterns and sounds, context and pictures. They read aloud with confidence and appropriate expression and understanding.
- 92 Pupils take books home regularly for family members to hear them read. This has a very positive effect on pupils' standards and progress. At Key Stage 2, pupils continue to make good progress. Most read a range of texts fluently and accurately. Books are now well matched to pupils' attainment and interest levels, and pupils are very enthusiastic readers of a wide range of texts. Older pupils express a preference for particular authors and they choose books because of particular interests such as animals or adventure stories. Higher attaining and average attaining pupils understand plot, setting and characterisation. They show a mature understanding of different writers' styles and accounts, and make deductions and inferences from their reading. The study of Anne Frank in the literacy hour had so caught the imagination of one pupil that she ordered the adult version of Anne Frank's life from the local library. She was utterly engrossed by its attention to detail and its inevitable sad ending. Most pupils develop good independent research skills. They use dictionaries, thesaurus, encyclopaedias and CD ROMs. They have good library skills and can locate books on different subjects.
- 93 By the end of Key Stage 1, standards in writing are in line with the national expectation. The majority of pupils spell common words correctly and make good attempts to spell more complex words. They record science experiments accurately using appropriate layout and vocabulary, and write interesting stories about famous people in history. Pupils observe the rules of punctuation, using full stops and capital letters. Higher attaining pupils use question marks and apostrophes and some are beginning to use speech marks to add interest to their stories. Handwriting is almost always very neat and well formed, with even the youngest pupils learning to join their letters.
- 94 At Key Stage 2, pupils progressively develop their ability to write for different purposes, using a wide range of styles. This is an improvement on the last inspection. They write poems, book reviews, character portraits, letters, scientific, geographical and historical accounts. Writing is very well organised. Higher attaining pupils use chapters, paragraphs, correct punctuation, complex grammatical structures and rich appropriate vocabulary to enliven their writing. Information technology is used effectively to support and develop drafting skills across both key stages. In Year 6, pupils have produced their own newspaper reports using a computer program. Their work shows an awareness of the need for different presentational skills, vocabulary and style and makes very good use of well chosen vocabulary to capture the imagination of the reader.

- 95 Behaviour is very good. Pupils show very favourable attitudes to learning and enjoy positive relationships with each other and with their teachers. This makes a considerable contribution to their rate of progress and the high standards of attainment achieved. Most pupils are very eager to learn, stay on task and show very good levels of independence and concentration. Pupils work very hard to improve their handwriting and presentational skills. They show pride in producing work of a high standard. Opportunities to work collaboratively and to develop personal skills are well used. Pupils enjoy English lessons and respond very well to the structure of the literacy hour.
- 96 Teaching at both key stages has improved since the last inspection. It is now never less than satisfactory, usually good or very good and outstanding at the end of Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 1, 75 per cent of lessons were good or better. At Key Stage 2, 70 per cent of lessons were good or better. Teaching of English in Year 6 is consistently outstanding. All teachers are confidently implementing the National Literacy Strategy. Teaching is carefully structured and well planned to meet the needs of pupils at all attainment levels. Teachers share learning objectives with pupils and ensure that pupils are very clear about what it is they are expected to learn. Speaking and listening continues to be given a high priority. Carefully structured role-play activities are used effectively to enhance pupils' skills in this area. Particular attention is given to encouraging boys to develop their speaking skills through play situations which will grasp their imagination such as the 'police station' and the 'garden centre'. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are given a particularly high priority and pupils' knowledge and understanding of basic skills are apparent in their writing. Numerous opportunities for extended writing are provided to ensure that progress in this aspect of English is maintained. Teachers use praise, comments and questions effectively to check understanding and extend thinking. Where teaching is of high quality, the work is consistently challenging, and the teachers' enthusiasm, explanations and knowledge have a very positive effect on attainment and progress. In such lessons, teaching is highly imaginative and exciting, and moves pupils learning on at a fast pace. In most lessons, pupils are constantly reminded of the strategies they need to improve their work such as good handwriting, correct spelling and punctuation, and plenary sessions check effectively that pupils have understood the lesson and also extend their thinking, pushing them just that bit further. Teachers and pupils share the same purpose and there is an expectation on both parts that learning is an enjoyable, all consuming activity. Pupils confidently offer answers to teachers' probing and difficult questions, knowing that even if their answers are incorrect, the teacher will help them to discover for themselves the right answer. Comments such as 'I really like that idea, let's explore it a little further' gives pupils the confidence to try harder and explore tentative ideas. Relationships are very good, and teachers have high expectations of their pupils' behaviour and attainment. This results in very good discipline and high standards. Pupils are encouraged to believe in their own ability to succeed. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is generally good. However, there is some lack of clarity in the use of individual education plans to support teaching. Support staff are used well to give additional help to designated individuals and groups of pupils. Their contribution, and that of the many parent helpers, greatly enhances the learning opportunities for the pupils. Teachers use a range of appropriate and high quality resources to support the teaching of literacy. Some teachers are proficient in their use of information technology to produce individual templates, work sheets and tasks. This has a very positive effect on the quality of the provision, making the teaching and learning of English challenging and interesting.

- 97 Assessment and record keeping are very good. National Curriculum tests and other published tests are used very effectively to set individual targets for pupils to raise standards and to identify areas for school development. Teachers mark work on a regular basis and pupils are given helpful suggestions on how they can improve their work. Homework is set to extend work done in lessons and to check that pupils have fully understood new concepts.
- 98 The curriculum meets statutory requirements. The co-ordinator and her team are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the subject. Formal monitoring of the teaching and planning takes place and staff are given feedback on how to improve the quality of the teaching and learning. National test results, internal tests and teacher assessments are carefully scrutinised to improve standards, track pupils' progress and to set targets for improvement.

MATHEMATICS

- 99 By the end of both key stages, standards are broadly in line with the national average. At both key stages, inspection evidence indicates an improving picture compared with the most recent national test results. This is partly due to the natural level of ability within the cohort, but largely due to the close attention which the school has given to the subject during the past year and the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. At Key Stage 1, most pupils at all levels of ability make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils make generally good progress during the early stages of Key Stage 2, and very good progress towards the end of the key stage. Since the last inspection, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of pupils reaching the national standard at the end of Key Stage 2.
- 100 The youngest pupils can count with increasing accuracy numbers to 10 and beyond. They are able to order and compare numbers and are quick to recognise number patterns. By the end of the key stage, they demonstrate quick recall of addition and subtraction facts to 10. The Year 2 pupils have a growing knowledge of place value. They know that the position of a digit signifies its value in ordering numbers to 999. In a Year 2 class, for example, the pupils used arrow cards to partition large three digit numbers with a high degree of accuracy. They were able to explain their thinking clearly and, in discussion, demonstrated the good progress they were making in their numeracy work. Although the pupils' progress slows a little in some of their numeracy work in Years 3 and 4, they make good progress in their numeracy work towards the end of the key stage, particularly in year 6. They have a good understanding of place value and become increasingly accurate in calculations using the four rules of number. By the end of Key Stage 2, the great majority make good progress in their problem solving work. They are quick to respond during rapid oral mental work and use a range of relevant strategies confidently to arrive at answers. Most can explain their thinking clearly and use accurate mathematical language with growing confidence. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils are secure in understanding and using extensions of the number system, including negative numbers, fractions, decimals and percentages.

- 101 The pupils use and consolidate their numeracy skills effectively in other areas of the curriculum. For example, at Key Stage 1, roleplay, singing games and rhymes and activities such as baking contribute to the pupils' numeracy development. At Key Stage 2, work in a number of subjects contributes towards their understanding of mathematics. For example, a Year 5 class used a force meter to measure apparent changes in the weight of objects in air and in water prior to the pupils calculating differences. During topic work, in the same year group, the pupils completed scale drawings of the outdoor play areas. They were able to measure accurately and convert their findings, using an appropriate scale, to produce well drawn plans.
- 102 At Key Stage 1, the pupils make good progress in work related to shape, space and measures. By the end of the key stage, pupils know how to sort and classify three and two dimensional shapes, and higher attaining pupils are able to use more than one criterion. At Key Stage 2, older pupils show a good understanding of reflective and rotational symmetry. They know how to measure angles to the nearest degree, and can calculate the third angle of a triangle when two are known.
- 103 By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils make good progress in handling data. They demonstrate effective skills collecting, recording and interpreting information using charts, diagrams, tables and graphs. In a Year 6 class, for example, they showed increasing skills extracting information from a frequency chart and converting the data into a pie chart. They engaged successfully in extension work, building progressively upon their prior learning. The higher attaining Year 6 pupils have a secure understanding of the use of measures of average and are able to use the mode, median and mean in relevant problem solving contexts. In probability work the Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of the concept and are able to use accurately the probability scale from 0 to 1.
- 104 The higher and average attainers in Year 6 demonstrate good skills in using and applying their mathematical skills, particularly in developing their own strategies for solving problems which they use within mathematics lessons and in other subjects. They present information in a well organised way and can explain clearly the strategies they use.
- 105 The pupils at both key stages have good attitudes towards their work in mathematics. The pupils are generally attentive and keen to contribute. They enjoy the work and settle well to the tasks they are set. The pupils are well behaved and, when faced with minor difficulties, they persevere well. In group tasks they co-operate willingly and usually work productively. However, in some of the classes of younger Key Stage 2 pupils, especially when the work presents too little challenge, their attention wanders and they become restless. Overall, the pupils try hard to record their work neatly and are proud of their achievements.

- 106 The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and generally good at Key Stages 1 and 2, with some high quality teaching at the end of both key stages. Overall, the teaching demonstrates a good understanding of the expectations described in the National Numeracy Strategy. The content of the work is usually well matched to the pupils' level of attainment and a good balance is achieved between mental work, direct teaching, group and independent tasks and the final plenary. However, in a few classes the time allocated to the final plenary is too short to be productive. The high quality teaching in Year 2 and Year 6 has a number of significant characteristics. Staff have high expectations for their pupils, the teaching is brisk and lively and the pupils are set clear targets which are made known to them. Classes are very well managed and organised promoting high standards of behaviour. The teaching makes appropriate demands on the pupils and helps them to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding systematically. The content interests the pupils, who learn at a good pace and demonstrate much concentration towards their learning. Throughout the school, classroom assistants are very well deployed and play a significant part in supporting the learning of pupils with special educational needs.
- 107 The school has made a good start in implementing the National Numeracy Strategy. The subject is very well co-ordinated. Assessment procedures effectively identify where pupils need to improve and the school has good strategies in place to help all pupils to reach the standards the school expects of them. However, there is some inconsistency in the implementation of programmes outlined in the individual education plans for those with special educational needs.
- 108 Since the last inspection the pupils' attainment overall is much higher. The teaching has improved considerably although the contribution which mathematics makes to the development of the pupils' information technology skills is less than it might be. The subject is allocated an appropriate amount of time and the content of the work meets fully the requirements of the National Curriculum.

SCIENCE

- 109 By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are in line with those found nationally. This is consistent with the most recent national curriculum test results. The great majority of pupils are on course to meet or exceed the national standard by the end of the key stage. At Key Stage 1, the great majority of pupils achieve, and many exceed, the national standard.
- 110 Throughout the school, the substantial majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Standards of attainment in science have improved since the last inspection. The programme of work meets the needs of all pupils and meets fully the requirements of the National Curriculum.

- 111 At Key Stage 1, the pupils extend their scientific knowledge, understanding and skills very well through their involvement in practical investigational tasks. Most know what works by electricity and can draw a picture of a simple circuit. They know about natural and man-made materials and use appropriate scientific vocabulary to describe the characteristics of different materials. The great majority of pupils are able to investigate and record how the shape of some materials can be changed. For example, in their investigation of how materials change when heated, they were able to make sensible predictions based on previous experience and to describe visible changes, using correct vocabulary. In another class, pupils were able to suggest reasons for cress plants wilting and, with teacher support, they suggested ways in which they could test their ideas. Throughout the key stage, most pupils make good progress in developing scientific investigational skills. They are able to record their observations in their own words and drawings, articulate their ideas about why things happen as they do and are beginning to develop their ideas of fair testing.
- 112 At Key Stage 2, the pupils continue to extend their scientific knowledge and understanding through high levels of involvement in well-planned investigational science. Most are good at making predictions as to what they think will happen in their investigations, giving perceptive reasons for their predictions. The great majority know how to use standard measurements with reasonable levels of accuracy; for example, they measured water temperature in degrees Celsius, using a thermometer, and measured balanced and unbalanced forces in newtons using forcemeters. They were able to record their observations and measurements in tables, charts and graphs and to interpret their data, giving reasons for the patterns they observed.
- 113 At Key Stage 2, pupils display generally good levels of scientific knowledge and understanding. They know that pulse rate increases with exercise; they can name and locate the main body organs; they know about the circulatory and respiratory systems and use the correct scientific vocabulary in explaining their ideas. They know about physical and chemical changes in materials such as dissolving, evaporation and condensation and are able to explain why some materials are good conductors of electricity. They understand how sound and light travel and know about shadows and reflection. Through a variety of investigational activities they develop a good understanding of forces such as gravity and friction. They also show a good understanding of different electrical circuits and can represent these correctly in diagrammatic form.
- 114 Throughout the school, work in science helps the pupils at both key stages to develop their literacy and numeracy skills through the use of measurement, the construction of graphs and charts and the reports they write about their investigations. The pupils show very good attitudes towards their work. They demonstrate high levels of curiosity and a mature sense of responsibility when engaged in experimental and investigative work.

- 115 The teaching of science is consistently good throughout the school and some excellent teaching was observed at the end of Key Stage 2. Over 80 per cent of lessons were good or better and all of the lessons in Year 6 were excellent. Throughout the school, the teachers display a good level of subject knowledge which enables them to promote the correct use of scientific vocabulary and ensures that the correct scientific concepts are being developed. The pupils are involved in high levels of practical investigation in activities that are well matched to their ages and previous learning levels. In the excellent lessons, the levels of challenge to pupils' thinking are very high and questioning is used very effectively to probe ideas and understanding. The pace of lessons maintains high levels of pupil interest and involvement and promotes very good progress in learning. Relationships between pupils and teachers are very positive and the pupils feel confident in expressing their ideas about science. Good relationships ensure that there are very few behavioural problems during practical activities. High levels of good behaviour make a significant contribution to the good progress they make and their enjoyment of science. The enjoyment and enthusiasm of the pupils was particularly apparent in a Year 6 investigation of pulse rate that required high levels of co-operation and concentration.
- 116 The school is in the transition stage of adopting the national scheme of work for science but the scheme is not scheduled to be fully implemented until September 2000. The present subject provision is comprehensively evaluated by the co-ordinator and the findings are used effectively to improve resourcing, planning and teaching.
- 117 Assessment of the subject is correctly identified as an area for future development. Information technology is significantly underused in the subject due to a combination of low levels of teacher expertise and a lack of appropriate software.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- 118 By the end of Key Stage 1, overall standards are below the national expectation, although pupils develop satisfactory skills for their age in word processing. By the end of Key Stage 2 overall standards are below the national expectation. Although a majority of pupils achieve standards in line with the national expectation in the communication and handling information elements of the subject, their skills in the control, monitoring and modelling elements are under-developed.
- 119 At both key stages, the range of learning opportunities in information technology is narrow, and the attention given to the subject is not sufficiently systematic. While pupils in some classes are given appropriate opportunities to extend their skills, those in other classes receive only limited opportunities and consequently make insufficient progress in relation to their prior attainment.

- 120 In communicating information, pupils reaching the end of Key Stage 1 are able to use the computer keyboard effectively to assemble text. They use appropriate keys, such as space bar and delete, as they produce short pieces of written work connected to their studies. By the end of the key stage, the majority achieve standards which are appropriate for their age. At Key Stage 2, progress is inconsistent and varies from class to class. However, the opportunities created in classes towards the end of the key stage, enable pupils to reach standards which are appropriate for their age by the end of Year 6. The majority of pupils at this stage are confident in using the keyboard and mouse to achieve their objectives. They are able to incorporate graphic images to complement their writing, and their growing awareness of audience is reflected in their appropriate choice of typeface and layout.
- 121 In handling information, pupils at Key Stage 1 make only limited progress, and standards in this element are below the national expectation by the end of the key stage. At Key Stage 2, although progress is inconsistent, the majority of pupils reach appropriate standards for their age by the end of Year 6. They are able to save data collected after class surveys, and know how to access information which has been stored, in order to add or change the data. When using CD-Rom to search for information to support their studies of various topics, most pupils recognise the importance of accuracy in matching the phrasing of questions to the information being sought.
- 122 Although there are some examples of work in the control, monitoring and modelling elements of the subject, coverage is not sufficiently systematic to enable pupils to make consistent progress. Despite this, pupils in some classes receive valuable opportunities to use information technology for specific purposes. In Year 4, for example, pupils made good use of relevant technology to monitor the weather.
- 123 Although there are some good examples of information technology being used constructively to support learning in other subjects, particularly English and mathematics, this is not a consistent feature throughout both key stages. In general, insufficient opportunities are created in other subjects for pupils to consolidate and extend their information technology capabilities. When given the opportunity, pupils enjoy working at computer workstations. They work sensibly, often with a relatively low level of supervision. Their ability to work together in pairs is a good feature, and their behaviour is always of a good standard. Older pupils benefit considerably from the annual residential visit to Winmarleigh Hall Preston. The availability of a computer suite at the centre enables the pupils to practise and extend their skills.
- 124 No direct teaching of information technology was observed during the inspection and it is therefore not possible to make an evaluation of the quality of teaching. Intervention by teachers and support staff, to help pupils experiencing difficulties when working at computers, is appropriate and supportive.
- 125 The recently appointed co-ordinator is working hard to improve provision in the subject, and the school has included information technology as a main priority in its development plan. These proposals include provision for a purpose built computer suite, to allow access to computers by large groups of pupils, and introduction to modern communication facilities such as electronic mail and the internet.

- 126 Since the last inspection, the school has made significant progress in improving resources and some progress in raising standards in the communication and handling information elements. However, the subject remains a priority for development. Curriculum planning and assessment procedures are currently unsatisfactory. They need to be developed and implemented consistently in order to achieve regular and systematic coverage of all elements of the subject.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 127 At both key stages, pupils achieve standards which are in line with those outlined in the Sefton Agreed Syllabus. This is consistent with the standards achieved at the last inspection. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in relation to their prior attainment.
- 128 At Key Stage 1, pupils are able to discuss and retell Bible stories which they are able to relate to their own lives and experiences. They are familiar with, and can talk about, religious festivals and traditions in the Christian calendar and are beginning to recognise that there are other faiths and traditions. By the end of this key stage, pupils are becoming aware of the significance of signs and symbols used in religious traditions. For example, following a visit to the local church and a talk by the Vicar, pupils produced a model of the nave, designing an altar cloth and simulating a wedding ceremony. The work was supported by the good use of resources and a loan collection of artefacts.
- 129 At Key Stage 2, pupils extend and deepen their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major world faiths, and are increasingly able to reflect on their own values and beliefs. For example, older pupils were able to discuss the codes and values common to Judaism and Christianity and, following their study of the Ten Commandments and the Eight Paths of Buddha, were able to consider the importance of rules and laws and how these apply to their own lives at school and in society as a whole. Older pupils also undertake a study of Islam and gain an understanding of the Muslim celebration of Eid.
- 130 Pupils display interest and enthusiasm for their work in religious education. They are alert, are keen to discuss issues arising from their work and are able to appreciate similarities and differences between Christianity and the other faiths and traditions which they study. At both key stages, the discussion and reflection on religious issues make an important contribution to pupils spiritual, moral social and cultural development.
- 131 The teaching in religious education is always satisfactory, and particularly good in the older Key Stage 2 classes. Lessons are well prepared, reflecting teachers' secure knowledge and understanding of the subject. They are very well organised, and the use of a range of appropriate strategies ensures pupils acquire a knowledge and understanding of the religions, traditions, writings and practices they are studying, while also having time to reflect on and discuss their own views and opinions. The management of pupils is highly effective and, through sensitive intervention, teachers are able to help pupils develop confidence in their own beliefs and values and to respect the beliefs and values of others.

ART

- 132 At both key stages, the pupils work at levels which are appropriate and sometimes above those expected for their age. The great majority, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in art during their time in school. Progress across the key stages has improved since the time of the last inspection.
- 133 Throughout the school, the pupils develop good skills in using a range of media in two and three dimensions. Extensive use is made of different drawing media such as oil and chalk pastels, pencils of varying degrees of hardness, charcoal and paint. They are able to use techniques such as printing, wax resist and collage to great effect, for example in the collage figures of 'People Who Help Us' in Year 1.
- 134 Very good use is made of the work of other artists as a starting point for art lessons. For example, pupils in Year 1 looked at Van Gogh's studies of sunflowers and produced their own impressions of similar flowers with great sensitivity, good brush control and observational detail. They were able to mix paint effectively and use different sizes of brush in different ways to produce texture and shading. The work of Cezanne and Kandinsky are used very successfully as starting points for still life drawings and geometrical composition. At Key Stage 2, the pupils study the work of Andy Warhol, and create their own portraits in a similar style starting with photographic images. Some Year 6 pupils produced some very good work when they explored patterns in natural forms, such as fruit and vegetables, and then interpreted these forms in abstract style, using collage. They were able to produce high quality observational studies of natural forms and made highly effective use of the collage to interpret the forms. In another Year 6 class, the pupils showed very good levels of knowledge about the work of great artists and used the work of Paul Klee to produce their own work in the same style.
- 135 Displays of art work around the school indicate that pupils make good progress in the development of their observational drawing skills and their control of different media. High quality observational drawings of ethnic musical instruments and shoes, self portraits, 'calm' studies and harbour scenes in the style of Simon Hart all show good levels of attainment in relation to the ages of the pupils. Pupils' art work is used effectively to complement their work in other areas of the curriculum. In a lesson about Judaism in Year 5, the pupils used Hebrew writing to create pattern, made a Star of David out of modelling clay and created a Menorah image using fabric and thread.
- 136 The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers have good levels of subject knowledge. This is reflected in their very positive use of the work of famous artists, the choice of stimuli and in the teaching of appropriate skills and techniques. The scheme of work for art shows an appropriate balance of investigating and making and makes relevant links to class topics. However, the present scheme makes no provision for the use of information and communication technology in the subject. The school is planning to review present arrangements to bring the scheme in line with the requirements for the new curriculum in September 2000.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 137 Due to the timing of the inspection and the school's timetabling arrangements, there was insufficient evidence available to make a full evaluation of work in design and technology. However, scrutiny of work produced previously by the pupils and examination of long and mid-term planning, indicates that the school provides an appropriately balanced programme of work in the subject during the course of the year.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

- 138 In both geography and history, the large majority of pupils work at appropriate levels for their age. Most, including those with special educational needs, make good progress during their time at school.
- 139 Evidence from the lessons observed and scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning indicates there is a balanced programme of work in each subject. In history, pupils at Key Stage 1 acquire a good sense of chronology by the sequencing of events and objects, and the use of terms relating to the passing of time. For example, as part of a series of lessons on famous men and women, following the viewing of a television programme about the life of Alexander Graham Bell, pupils were able to sequence different types of telephones and relate changes to the present day. Pupils are able to recognise changes in their own lives, and draw on the memories of family and other adults around them, to identify differences between ways of life at different times.
- 140 This early understanding is refined and developed as pupils progress through Key Stage 2. Pupils learn to place the events and the periods studied within a chronological framework. Very good use is made of time-lines in helping pupils to use dates and terms relating to the passing of time. The consistent development of enquiry skills promotes effective learning in history. For example, in a younger Key Stage 2 class, pupils preparing for a visit to Chester in connection with their study of Roman times, were able to distinguish the types of evidence which would survive from Roman settlements and the kind of information which can be inferred about ways of life in earlier times. Older pupils are able to recognise different ways in which the past is represented and interpreted, and make good use of a variety of sources of information, such as documents, artefacts, pictures, photographs and buildings.
- 141 In geography, early work focuses on the physical and human features of the pupils' immediate surroundings based on direct experience and field work in the immediate locality of the school. Pupils acquire the use of geographical terms to describe their surroundings, and become increasingly aware of similar and contrasting localities further afield. Younger pupils are able to make their own maps, such as that of the imaginary island of Struay, drawing information from their reading of the Kate Morrag stories.
- 142 At Key Stage 2, pupils build successfully on their earlier learning. They are able to use and interpret globes, maps and plans at a variety of scales, using primary and secondary sources to inform their work. In Year 6, for example, pupils were able to use and interpret maps of different scales to study their own locality including the River Mersey in Liverpool. They made appropriate use of secondary sources, including aerial photography, and evidence from their field work to establish that rivers have sources, tributaries and mouths, and that they receive water from a wide area and eventually flow into the sea.

- 143 Pupils understand how settlements differ and change, how their character and location reflect the types of economic activity, and how people may affect the environment, for example, by mining, quarrying or combating river pollution.
- 144 Pupils' learning in both geography and history is enhanced by their good attitudes. They are interested and keen to contribute from their own knowledge. Their work is carefully presented, and they enjoy making and interpreting maps in both subjects. When working in groups they collaborate well, for example, when interpreting primary evidence from their own experiences during field work expeditions.
- 145 The quality of teaching in both geography and history is consistently good. Lessons are well prepared, carefully planned and have clear objectives. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace which sustains pupils' interest while allowing time for them to consider and contribute their own ideas. Opportunities are provided for pupils to undertake extended writing. In a Key Stage 2 class, for example, some pupils produced lively written accounts of life as a servant in Victorian times, and lower attaining pupils were given good support to enable them to produce work of an acceptable standard. The good quality of the teaching and the pupils' positive response are effective in promoting appropriate levels of achievement in both history and geography.

MUSIC

- 146 The great majority of the pupils, at both key stages, work at levels appropriate for their age. The substantial majority, at all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress during their time in the school.
- 147 By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils sing tunefully an increasing repertoire of songs. They have a good sense of rhythm and can clap a steady beat. They know how to hold and play a range of percussion instruments correctly. As they progress they develop skills in devising basic graphic scores, often making adjustments to improve the quality of their performance.
- 148 The older pupils at Key Stage 2 build successfully upon this sound start. They sing confidently with increasing control of pitch and diction. Many of the pupils develop skills in playing a range of instruments including strings, woodwind, guitar and recorders. In doing so, they demonstrate developing skills in reading basic staff notation. Many of the pupils, at Key Stage 2, know how to use a growing musical vocabulary accurately in talking about their work and in answering questions posed by their teachers.
- 149 The pupils respond well in music lessons. They are motivated and enthusiastic. They are attentive and listen carefully. They are keen to contribute and co-operate effectively in music making in class and in school productions.

- 150 The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and often good with some high quality teaching in Year 6. The latter makes a significant contribution to the pupils' ability to make imaginative use of music to achieve an intended effect, and to develop the pupils' theoretical knowledge. Overall, music lessons are well planned and organised effectively to include an appropriate balance of performing and composing, listening and appraising. Although the pupils are introduced to a range of music from our own and other cultures, opportunities for them to develop further their skills in singing more complex two part songs or in playing pieces which have several parts are limited.
- 151 Since the last inspection, the school has made improvements to the music curriculum. In particular, the teaching of music has improved. The pupils are now given more time to explore and develop ideas for themselves, to reflect on their work and to make improvements to the quality of their performance. The overall quality of the teaching now helps the pupils to make the progress expected of them in developing their musical skills and understanding of the subject by the end of Key Stage 2.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 152 At the end of both key stages, pupils work at levels which are at least appropriate for their age. Much of the work produced by pupils at Key Stage 2 in gymnastics is of high quality. Throughout the school pupils at all levels of ability, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. The programme of work makes good provision for all pupils.
- 153 In dance and gymnastics, younger pupils make quick progress in learning how to find and use space. They move in different directions, varying their speed and the levels at which they work in response to teacher guidance and music. Older pupils transfer their work effectively from floor to small and large apparatus, working purposefully to improve the quality of their performance. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, produce some high quality work when performing a variety of balances, using different parts of the body. They demonstrate an ability to link actions together to perform fluent sequences of movement, and to improve their performance through evaluation. The performance of many pupils is greatly enhanced through participation in extra-curricular gymnastics and dance clubs.
- 154 In games, pupils at both key stages develop good skills through practice, and are able to apply them in competitive situations. Many pupils benefit from extra-curricular activities in netball, football, short-tennis and rugby.
- 155 Many pupils achieve high standards in swimming, and nearly all pupils are able to swim at least 25 metres unaided before leaving the school at the end of Year 6.
- 156 The programme of work also includes athletics during the summer term. Again, the level of performance of many pupils is greatly improved through participation in extra-curricular activities including indoor athletic competitions. Older pupils gain some experience in outdoor and adventurous activities during residential visits.

- 157 Pupils at both key stages derive great enjoyment from their work in all aspects of physical education, and respond enthusiastically in all lessons. Younger pupils change into appropriate dress quickly and without fuss and move sensibly through the school to the hall. Older pupils take a pride in their performance and show a strong desire to improve the quality of their performance. Behaviour is consistently good at both key stages.
- 158 At both key stages, the quality of teaching and learning is generally very good. During the inspection, 63 per cent of lessons observed were judged to be very good or better, one of which was excellent. Very effective co-ordination of the subject and good support by the local education authority adviser have been important factors in the continuing improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. Lessons are well thought out and prepared. They achieve a good balance between teacher direction and purposeful activities. In gymnastics, the perceptive use of the points and patches approach helps pupils to think about different ways of balancing and helps to promote their physical and intellectual development. Very good class management is a strong feature at both key stages, promoting hard work by the pupils and encouraging them to make good use of the time available to practise their skills. Sensible intervention by teachers in the work of individuals to encourage improved levels of performance, results in better quality finish to pupils' balances and movements.