

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Holy Cross Voluntary Aided Roman Catholic Primary  
School**

Bidston, Birkenhead

LEA area: Wirral

Unique reference number: 105087

Headteacher: Mrs D. Gilliver

Reporting inspector: Stafford Evans  
21217

Dates of inspection: 12<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> June 2000

Inspection number: 190597

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 with a nursery class

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Challis Street  
Bidston  
Birkenhead  
Wirral

Postcode: CH41 7DH

Telephone number: 0151 652 8454

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Reverend Father M. Morton

Date of previous inspection: November 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr S. G. Evans	Registered inspector	Mathematics Information technology Equal opportunities English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Mr L. Kuraishi	Lay inspector		Attendance How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mrs V. Grigg	Team inspector	Under fives Geography History Music	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Mr J. Williams	Team inspector	Special educational needs Science Art	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Mr A. Wilson	Team inspector	English Design and technology Physical education	How good are curricular and other opportunities? Assessment

The inspection contractor was:

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Alexandra House  
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Holy Cross is a Roman Catholic school with a total of 230 pupils on roll aged from 5 to 11. There are also 47 part-time children in the nursery class. The school has very recently been granted 'Beacon status' for excellence. Attainment on entry to the nursery is very low in comparison to that expected for children of this age. Seventy-eight children in the school are identified as having special educational needs. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above the national average. Two pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need.

The school is situated to the north of Birkenhead in an area that experiences serious social and economic disadvantages. There is a high incidence of pupil mobility. Seventy eight per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is very high in comparison with the national average of 20 per cent. There is a very small number of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. Two pupils speak English as an additional language.

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

This is a very effective school that gives very good value for money. Pupils achieve very well by the time they leave the school. The quality of teaching is good. Pupils' attitudes to their work, their behaviour and their personal development are also good. There is a caring and supportive ethos in the school and pupils feel valued. The school is very well led and there is a good team spirit evident.

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

- Attainment in English and science is above average by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils attain well above average in comparison with similar schools in English, mathematics and science.
- Children by the age of five make very good progress.
- Teaching is good overall, with a third of lessons observed being very good or better.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning, their relationships with one another and their personal development are good.
- Curriculum provision across the school, including that for special educational needs, is good. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are very good and used very effectively to plan appropriate work for pupils' varying needs.
- Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good.
- The very strong leadership and management from the headteacher, with the support of the deputy headteacher and staff, create an ethos that very strongly supports learning.

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

- Although pupils make good progress by the age of seven, standards in writing, mathematics and science are below the national average.
- Despite recent improvements in pupils' attainment standards in information technology at both key stages are below national expectations.
- Most pupils have a good attendance record, but there is a significant minority of pupils whose attendance is poor. Therefore, the school's overall attendance is below the national average.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The improvement since the last inspection is very good. The school is well placed to maintain the improvements and build upon them further. Pupils' standards of attainment are higher. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are very significantly better. The use of the results of pupil assessment is much more effective (key issues from the last inspection). There is no unsatisfactory teaching now (19 per cent at the time of the last inspection). The amount of very good or better teaching is 10 times as great now (32 per cent) when compared with the previous inspection findings. The role of subject co-ordinators and senior management team has improved very significantly. This was another key issue from the previous inspection. The curriculum provision is also significantly better.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			Similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	E	C	A	A*	very high A*
Mathematics	E	D	C	A	well above average A
Science	E	E	C	A	above average B
					average C
					below average D
					well below average E

Inspection evidence indicates that the high standards of 1999 have been maintained. The school is in the top five per cent nationally in English when compared with similar schools. The school assembles a range of data on pupils' prior attainment to set appropriate targets.

Standards in information technology are below national expectations. Pupils achieve well in all subjects across the curriculum. They attain high standards in art.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils in Key Stage 2 have very good attitudes to their work and pupils in Key Stage 1 have good attitudes.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is good.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils have good relationships with one another and their personal development is also good.
Attendance	The attendance rate is below the national average. There are a significant number of pupils who arrive late at school.

## 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.*

Teaching is satisfactory or better in all lessons. It is excellent in four per cent, very good in 28 per cent, good in 41 per cent and satisfactory in 27 per cent. The quality of teaching is good in English and mathematics. Teaching of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum is good. The quality of teaching of pupils identified as having special educational needs is good. The strengths of the teaching are the very effective use of an appropriate range of teaching methods, teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach, lesson planning, the management of pupils' behaviour and the high expectations for what they want pupils to attain.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum for the under fives is planned very well and covers all areas of learning appropriate to children this age. The school provides a broad range of work that is relevant to pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2. There is an appropriate statutory curriculum in place. Extra-curricular provision is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils who learn English as an additional language make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall, with provision for pupils multi-cultural development a weakness. There is very good provision for pupils' moral and social development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are cared for very well. Members of staff know the pupils well and treat them with understanding and respect.

There are effective links with parents. Parents have a high regard for the school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership and is very ably supported by the deputy headteacher and senior management team. Subject co-ordinators provide good leadership.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors have a good sense of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and work with the staff in their efforts to produce high standards.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school monitors closely and evaluates its performance. It knows its strengths and weaknesses and takes effective action to secure improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are managed well. The principles of best value are applied satisfactorily.

There are a large number of teachers to ensure the effective delivery of the curriculum. There are insufficient support staff in Key Stage 1. There are unsatisfactory elements in accommodation and there are also shortages in learning resources.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Their children like school.</li><li>• The school enables their children to make good progress.</li><li>• The teaching is good.</li><li>• Their children behave well at school.</li><li>• The school is very easy to approach with concerns.</li><li>• Staff have high expectations for their children.</li><li>• The school works closely with parents.</li><li>• The school is well led and managed.</li><li>• The provision for their children's personal development is good.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some parents would like homework provision improved.</li><li>• Some parents feel there is not sufficient extra-curricular activities.</li></ul>

Inspectors support parents' positive views. Inspection evidence indicates that homework provision is satisfactory but is not well supported by parents. There is a good level of extra-curricular provision in the school.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

#### The school's results and achievements

1. In the 1999 Key Stage 2 national tests attainment was well above average in English and average in mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools English was very high (top five per cent nationally) and mathematics and science were well above average. Taking the four years 1996 to 1999 together, standards were average in English, but well below average in mathematics and science. Over the same period of time girls attained better than boys in English and boys better than girls in mathematics and science. Inspection evidence indicates the high standards attained in the 1999 tests have been maintained. There is a very significant improvement in standards since the time of the last inspection.
2. Current inspection evidence indicates that by the end of Key Stage 2 standards in English and science are above the national average and mathematics in line with the national average. There is currently no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Literacy standards across the curriculum are above national expectations and numeracy in line with national expectations. The good and very good teaching across the key stage has brought about the improvement in standards since the last inspection. There is very thorough monitoring and evaluation of pupils' progress so teachers plan work accurately to meet effectively the varying needs of pupils. The setting of pupils in groups according to their prior attainment also positively affects standards. The low pupil/teacher ratio ensures individual needs are met well.
3. In the 1999 Key Stage 1 national tests attainment was average in writing, below average in reading and well below average in mathematics. In the teacher assessment for science results were also well below average. In comparison with similar schools reading and writing standards were well above average and mathematics average. Taking the four years 1996 to 1999 together, standards were below average in writing and well below in reading and mathematics. During this period girls performed better than boys did in all three subjects.
4. Inspection evidence indicates standards have improved significantly in reading and by the end of the Key Stage the percentage attaining Level 2<sup>1</sup> (the nationally expected level for seven year olds) is above average. Writing standards have fallen slightly and are below average. Mathematics and science standards have improved but remain below the national average. The quality of teaching in reading, mathematics and science is good and positively affects standards. A particular reason for standards not being as high as at Key Stage 2 is that the level of classroom support in Key Stage 1 is significantly less than at Key Stage 2. This adversely affects pupils' progress. This is evident amongst the higher attainers in all subjects. They underachieve. Very few pupils attain above nationally expected standards.
5. At the end of both key stages standards in information technology are below national expectations. There has been a significant improvement in standards over the last term. The progress pupils make in information technology lessons is currently good. Despite significant investment in information technology there are not enough computers to ensure all pupils have frequent and regular access to develop their skills at a satisfactory rate. The school is aware of this and is planning to further increase provision.

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<sup>1</sup> The National Curriculum has been written on the basis that pupils, by the end of Key Stage 1, are expected to reach Level 2. If a pupil attains Level 3 then he or she is reaching standards above that expected for a child of his or her age.

6. By the time they reach the age of five most children will attain above expected standards in reading and but below in writing and speaking and listening. Attainment is in line with nationally expected standards in mathematics and creative development. It is below expectation in their knowledge and understanding of the world, physical, personal and social development. Children achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment.
7. By the end of both key stages pupils attain in line with age related standards in design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education. Attainment is above national expectations in art. By the time pupils leave the school they achieve very well across the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment and the targets set in their individual education plans. Pupils who learn English as an additional language make good progress.

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

8. The pupils' attitudes to school life are good. Parents report that their children enjoy going to school. Pupils, particularly those in Key Stage 2, know they are there to learn. They settle down quickly and are keen to get started. They listen attentively and are usually eager to answer questions. They enjoy the challenge of learning, showing a high level of interest and involvement when given an activity to do. Pupils work hard with good levels of concentration. They speak proudly of their school and take care of its resources.
9. Parents' positive views about behaviour are confirmed by the inspection. Standards of behaviour in and around the school are good. Pupils behave particularly well in lessons, especially in Key Stage 2. The school has a clear behaviour code and pupils know what behaviour is expected. Behaviour in assemblies and in the dining room is particularly impressive. Behaviour on the playgrounds is good. Movement around the school is orderly. The pupils do not consider bullying a problem and they know whom to turn to if an incident occurs. There has been one exclusion in the past year. There has been an improvement in pupils' attitudes and behaviour since the last inspection.
10. Pupils generally show a good level of maturity and confidence for their age. They are developing essential social skills. They are very polite and friendly. The quality of relationships in the school, noted favourably in the last inspection, is good. Most pupils get on well with each other and very well with adults in the school. Relationships between many of the pupils and the lunchtime supervisory and classroom assistants are very close. Dining is a civilised social occasion with noise levels that allow easy conversation. The schools system whereby older pupils serve at the dining table means that pupils learn good table manners.
11. Pupils generally collaborate well in lessons and are prepared to listen to each other's views. They know the importance of taking turns and sharing. As they move through the school, pupils begin to show a good level of independence, with many prepared to work hard on their tasks without too much direct supervision, for example in the literacy hour when pupils generally work well at their independent tasks. Extra responsibilities like taking the register to the office are accepted enthusiastically. Older pupils are well involved in taking responsibility for many of the school's daily routines, including those involving helping with younger pupils. Throughout the school equipment and books are handled with respect. Pupils willingly take responsibility for keeping their classrooms tidy. There is very little litter around the school.
12. The attendance rates have improved since the last inspection. However, overall attendance remains below the national average. The school has made good efforts to improve attendance and this is proving successful in reducing absenteeism and

improving punctuality. Attendance registers are completed correctly and meet statutory requirements.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. The quality of teaching is good, with a significant amount of very good and excellent teaching having a positive effect on pupils' attainment and progress. Teaching is satisfactory or better in all lessons, with 41 per cent good, 28 per cent very good and four per cent excellent. The quality of teaching is very significantly better than at the time of the last inspection.
14. The quality of teaching for the under fives is very good (60 per cent is very good) and this has a significant effect on children's learning. The teaching is based upon very good planning which identifies clear learning targets in all areas. Groups of children are organised and resourced very well and this fosters the purposeful working atmosphere and good behaviour of the children. Children show increasing levels of concentration, initiative and independence for their age because the staff encourage this. There are very good assessment procedures for tracking children's progress and staff use these successfully to plan the next step in children's learning. Support staff are deployed very effectively in lessons and make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning. However, there are too few support staff in Key Stage 1.
15. At Key Stage 1 the quality of teaching is good, ranging from excellent to satisfactory (67 per cent is good or better). Teaching is good in English, mathematics, science, art, history and music. It is satisfactory in design and technology. Insufficient lessons were observed in information technology, geography and physical education to make an overall judgement. The teaching in the 'reading recovery' lessons was excellent. At Key Stage 2 the quality of teaching is good, with a significant amount of very good or excellent teaching (41 per cent). At Key Stage 2 74 per cent of teaching was good or better. Teaching is very good in science and art, good in English, mathematics, information technology and music. It is satisfactory in physical education. Too few lessons were observed in design and technology, geography and history to make an overall judgement.
16. Across the school teachers work very hard to plan and prepare lessons. The planning clearly shows what is to be taught and learnt. Teachers give pupils opportunities to develop numeracy and literacy skills in different subjects, for example in design and technology by measuring and in science by ensuring pupils record their findings in a variety of different written formats. Information technology is used to research work in science and record evidence in history. There is effective use of pupil assessment to ensure that activities are matched to pupils' varying needs and prior attainment.
17. A range of appropriate teaching methods is used. These include whole-class teaching, group and individual work, involving practical, investigative and problem solving activities. Time and resources are used efficiently. Teachers have secure subject knowledge. Pupils' behaviour is managed effectively. A strength of the teaching is the good relationships between staff and pupils. There are insufficient support staff in Key Stage 1 to support pupils' learning. This means that some pupils' progress in some lessons is slowed. This is particularly evident amongst Year 2 higher attainers.
18. The quality of the marking of pupils' work is satisfactory overall. All work is marked and the best marking places an emphasis on what pupils need to do to improve their work further. Homework is provided and extends significantly pupils' learning. The homework provision for Year 6 pupils prior to the national tests was particularly effective in providing revision work for pupils.

19. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. With the guidance of the special educational needs co-ordinator the class teachers draw up good individual education plans for pupils. The targets on the plans are specific and helpful. The special educational needs co-ordinator makes regular assessments of pupils' individual targets and uses this information to support the next stage of learning. Pupils' progress is consistently good when they are provided with support in small groups or one-to-one teaching. The setting arrangement that operates in many year groups whereby pupils of like ability are taught together has a beneficial effect on their progress.
20. The following are examples of how good quality teaching positively affects pupils' learning:
- Children's learning was good in a lesson in the nursery when the target group was involved in a listening activity. The purposeful working atmosphere was the result of very good staff relationships with the children, the very effective organisation of the lesson and the very good management of the children's behaviour. This meant the children completed a lot of work. Children had the opportunity to co-operate with one another in the travel agent's role-play situation so their learning in social skills was good. There was very focused teaching exemplified by very skilled use of the listening activity to develop the children's aural skills. The teacher's very good understanding of how young children learn meant their learning in extending their listening skills was good.
  - The teacher taught very well in a poetry lesson with a Years 1/2 class and the pupils' learning was good. There was very effective use of a well-chosen text. The text appealed to the pupils and they showed a good level of interest. Their well thought out answers showed an enthusiasm for their work. Skilled use of questioning made sure all pupils were meaningfully involved in the lesson. There were open-ended questions for the higher attainers and specific questions for lower attainers. The teacher's very high expectations of good behaviour meant pupils behaved very well and there was a brisk pace to the lesson.
  - In a Years 5/6 mathematics lesson on probability the planning clearly showed what was to be taught and learnt. This was shared with the pupils and they were clear what they had to do by the end of the lesson. They worked throughout the lesson with this in mind. Their progress by the end was good. The teacher's secure subject knowledge meant pupils were taught correctly about how to make a number 10 times bigger. Pupils listened to this explanation and used the knowledge accurately in their calculations. There were very good links with literacy. They discussed the meaning of the word 'probability' and made good use of subject specific language such as 'impossible', 'unlikely', 'likely' and 'certain'.

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

21. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum for the under fives and in Key Stages 1 and 2. There is a wide range of learning opportunities to support pupils' academic and personal development. The curriculum in English is very good. It promotes literacy well throughout the school and is enriched by the substantial contribution of poetry. Opportunities to develop literacy skills in other subjects are also carefully planned, for example in history where pupils discuss and write at length about topics such as the great fire of London. Numeracy is also promoted well; following the policies laid down in the national strategy. Subjects across the curriculum have further impact on the development of numeracy skills. For example, in design and technology pupils are regularly asked to draw upon their knowledge of measurement and shape.

22. There is sound provision for personal, social, and health education. Issues such as healthy eating are explored effectively through science. However, there is no policy in place to promote drug awareness and this aspect of provision is unsatisfactory. The school is aware of this omission and there are plans to include drugs education in the curriculum. All pupils have opportunities to explore other moral and social issues, including through sex education. Educational visits, including a residential trip for older pupils to an outdoor pursuits centre, play an important part in developing social skills and independence
23. The quality of learning opportunities provided for pupils with special educational needs and for pupils for whom English is an additional language is good. The effectiveness of teaching strategies for their literacy and numeracy development is also good. These pupils are provided with a broad and balanced curriculum. Those with special educational needs have well constructed individual education plans which are well matched to their needs.
24. The provision for extra-curricular activities is good. It includes a range of sports opportunities such as football, netball and rounders. Teachers also give their time generously to provide regular after-school clubs. These include art, computers, science, French, guitar and country dance. The school's curriculum is fully inclusive and promotes equal opportunities well.
25. The community makes a sound contribution to pupils' learning and there are strong links with the local church. Pupils regularly visit nearby places of environmental interest such as Bidston Hill and Thurstaston. Visitors to the school such as the school nurse and road safety officers make positive contributions to pupils' learning. The school is an effective provider of training opportunities for students on work experience and initial teacher training.
26. The curriculum has significantly improved since the last inspection in terms of its quality and depth. The school now provides its pupils with a richness of experience in most subject areas and through its extra-curricular opportunities.
27. The school provides well for pupils' personal development. Provision for the spiritual moral social and cultural development of pupils is good overall. This broadly matches the findings of the last inspection.
28. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. The school's assemblies have a strong religious ethos and make a sound contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Teachers use assemblies to offer pupils insight into values and beliefs and periods of reflection. There is a strong feeling of community in the coming together of the whole school. Lessons provide pupils with opportunities for spontaneous expressions of delight such as when listening through a stethoscope they can actually hear the beating of their own heart. Other moments of joy occur when sharing some outstandingly good poems by a local poet or when using a programme on the new computer for the first time pupils compose good quality coloured pictures.
29. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The school has developed rules to guide behaviour in class and around the school, which pupils understand well. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong. The school encourages good behaviour and achievement with certificates and other commendations. Members of staff provide very positive role models which give pupils an effective example of good behaviour and insight into what is right and wrong. The school does not tolerate aggressive behaviour and deals immediately with any problems of this nature. Assembly themes often contain guidance on behaviour and the importance of rules for the common good. The school

has a strong caring ethos which teachers emphasise regularly, making effective use of the mission statement, "Love God and love one another".

30. The provision for the pupils' social development is very good. During many lessons pupils have the opportunity to work together sometimes in groups and sometimes in pairs. In a science lesson pupils display high levels of co-operation when involved in a science experiment. When offered opportunities to do so pupils readily share ideas and equipment, as in design and technology and art lessons. Older pupils form good relationships with younger ones serving them at lunchtime and by visiting them to read them stories. Pupils are caring and supportive of each other. The pupils with special educational needs have full involvement in the life of the school. The teachers value them and their work and this has a beneficial effect on their self-esteem. Pupils take part in fund-raising events for local and world charities and their participation in team games helps to generate a sense of pride and common purpose. They develop an awareness of their local community through a range of events such as activities at the local church as well as through their studies of local geography and history. The residential visit pupils make at the end of the key stage also makes a very good contribution to pupils' social development.
31. The provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory overall. Opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of western culture via art, music and literature are satisfactory. The breadth of the school's art curriculum is particularly impressive, including the work of famous artists and a visit from a wood carver. Pupils study a variety of literature during lessons and learn much about their own cultural heritage through lessons in history and on visits to museums, art galleries and other places of interest. The school also offers its pupils opportunities to appreciate the richness and diversity of other cultures through lessons in history, geography and art. For instance, pupils closely examine an African mask as part of a study of different kinds of patterns and learn about aboriginal art and art from Papua New Guinea. They study a limited number of world religions and pupils have the opportunity to experience music and stories which derive from other cultures. However, these opportunities are too few in number to prepare its pupils well for life in a multi-cultural society.

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

32. The staff know the children and their families well and constructive relationships are established from the start. The class teachers monitor pupils' personal development informally. This procedure is sound and works effectively. Pupils who behave well are awarded certificates and recognition is given in the weekly assemblies. Parents are kept informed about their children's behaviour and personal development.
33. The school provides a secure and enjoyable learning environment for all its pupils, including those with special education needs. As a result the children are happy, confident and trustful in establishing good relationships with adults and with one another. Parents responding to the questionnaire strongly agree that their children like to come to school and that they are happy or very happy at school. All staff make it a priority to settle children well, with an established and successful pre-school meeting between teachers and the carers. The school pays good attention to pupils' educational and emotional needs and provides adequate attention to provide help and appropriate support.
34. Staff have a firm commitment to working with other services and teachers have developed good understanding of what can be contributed by other professionals. Effective use is made of support and advice from a range of sources where children have

medical problems and where there are emotional, social, behavioural or learning difficulties.

35. The school complies with child protection procedures. These procedures provide clear instructions about action to be taken and agreed inter-agency procedures. Staff are alert to the issues and the headteacher is a properly qualified and nominated child protection person who has received appropriate training. A second member of the senior management team has also received training in child protection matters. Mid-day staff are sensitive to the need to be alert for child abuse but have not received appropriate training in child protection procedures. There is satisfactory arrangement for first aid and the staff are aware of the procedures in case of an emergency. A health and safety policy is in place. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers and support staff promote hygiene effectively as part of the curriculum and there is generally good attention to safety matters. Some health and safety issues have been drawn to the attention of the school caretaker.
36. Procedures for monitoring attendance are rigorous and regular contacts with the education welfare officer and parent/carers are maintained. The school has made good efforts to improve attendance and this is proving successful in reducing absenteeism and improving punctuality.
37. The school effectively promotes good behaviour, providing a relaxed learning environment and friendly working atmosphere throughout the school. Staff set a high standard, with a written code of conduct for which children and parents are regularly reminded. The policies make clear the school's intolerance of bullying and racial harassment. A system of incentives for good behaviour is in place and parents and children understand the hierarchy for incentives and sanctions for inappropriate behaviour. There is no unkindness or harassment and children from different social backgrounds are taught to respect one another. A few children act aggressively or immaturely but these are carefully observed and prompt intervention by teachers prevents repetition. Procedures for recording and reporting incidents of misbehaviour or perceived bullying are firmly in place.
38. The range of sporting activities and clean school environment promotes healthy and safe living. However, the inspectors noted lack of fresh vegetables in the daily school menu.
39. Pupils with special educational needs receive very effective support from both the school and the special educational services of the local education authority. The good liaison that has been established between the two parties and with parents has a positive impact on the attainment of these pupils. Parents express appreciation for the help given to their children.
40. Very good assessment systems are in place throughout the school for each pupil. There is a particular focus on the core subjects for which the procedures are especially well developed. There is an appropriate marking policy, although it is not yet consistently being applied throughout the school. Otherwise, the school's formal assessment documentation is fully in place and regularly updated by teachers. There is close liaison between staff at times of transfer from class to class. There are useful portfolios of work for most foundation subjects which provide good guidance for teachers about the standards which should be achieved.
41. Assessment results are analysed meticulously and used well by teachers when planning their lessons. The analysis is further used by co-ordinators to adjust the curriculum and schemes of work if necessary and to set targets for both individual pupils and for the whole school. They are used particularly well to identify and support achievement in

literacy. The school has worked hard to establish assessment systems which are sufficiently detailed to be useful but which are manageable working documents. There is a strong management team who work closely together to ensure that the systems are used efficiently. Consequently, the assessment procedures and their use have continued to improve since the last inspection.

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

42. Most parents who responded to the questionnaire or who were interviewed during the inspection agree that their children like to come to the school. Most parents at the meeting for parents or who were interviewed during the inspection are generally satisfied with the quality of education provided and the standards achieved by their children. Nearly a fifth of those responded to the questionnaire indicated that they do not think that their children receive the right kind of homework, more than half expressed their dissatisfaction with the range of activities on offer at the school. However, the inspectors noted that the school provides a wide variety of sporting activities after the school hours and that they are well supported by the pupils.
43. Inspection evidence indicates that parents are generally supportive of the school and the staff appreciate their help in maintaining good behaviour, which enables all children to make good progress.
44. Parents' evenings are well attended. There are many other opportunities for informal meetings between parents and teachers. There are regular letters regarding attendance, pupil's behaviour and other school events, which keep parents/carers informed about the school events. There is no strategically placed parents' notice board so parents cannot easily refer to dates and events related to the school calendar. The school prospectus and governor's annual report are thorough, written in plain English and contain statutory information. The quality of information to parents is good.
45. Most parents feel that pupils' annual reports are satisfactory, but inspection of a range of reports in the school are found to be rather general and lacking in detail which would help parents in supporting areas of learning where a child has weaknesses. These reports on pupils are completed conscientiously and many are of sound quality, but some give insufficient information about what pupils know and can do in certain subjects. Reports indicate some strengths and weaknesses, but are often descriptive and do not contain advice on the steps required by the pupils to make further progress. The report on information technology is not in accordance with the statutory requirement as this is linked with design and technology for reporting purposes. It is required to be reported separately to give parents clear information.
46. There are effective and flexible induction procedures for new pupils. At an introductory meeting the school establishes mutual expectations and responsibilities in respect of behaviour, attendance and needs for additional educational support for pupils for special educational needs.
47. Some parents are actively involved in the school life, help with extra-curricular activities, attend school events, accompany children on school outings and provide occasional help in the classrooms. Not all parents make sufficient contribution to their children's learning in the school or at home. There are few helpers in the classrooms and parent's involvement with the homework is minimal. Therefore, insignificant improvement has been made since the last inspection. The school continues to seek ways for developing better understanding with parents.

48. Relationships with parents remain satisfactory and have been sustained since the last inspection. Most parents have signed home-school agreements and there exists an effective working relationship between the majority of parents, carers and the staff. This enables them to share information about pupil attitudes to learning and the progress they make. Parents of children with special educational needs are properly involved in their children's education plans and the school provides them with the opportunity for participating in an annual review. Pupils with English as additional language receive appropriate support.

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

49. The school is very well led by the headteacher who provides clear educational direction and strong, influential and supportive leadership. The deputy headteacher and senior teachers, who together with the headteacher provide a very good senior management team for the school, very ably support her. There is a shared commitment within the school and the governing body to bring about further improvement. A good team spirit exists throughout the school. The school is well placed to build upon the very good improvements made since the last inspection.
50. The senior management team and subject co-ordinators effectively monitors, evaluates and supports teaching and curriculum development. The school has responded very well to national initiatives. The co-ordinators for English, mathematics and information technology provide good leadership in implementing the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and the recent innovations in information technology. The quality of leadership of other co-ordinators is also good. The special educational needs co-ordinator liaises well with class teachers and outside agencies. She keeps careful records of their work and ensures effective provision for pupils with special educational needs. The governing body has a good overview of provision through a named governor.
51. The governing body meets regularly and fulfils its statutory requirements. There is a sound understanding of roles such as that provided by the governor with responsibility for special educational needs. The governing body provides advice and encouragement to the staff during its meetings. The governors are kept informed by the headteacher about the life of the school and the standards and quality of education pupils receive. Governors visit school regularly and have first hand experience of how the school runs. The chair of governors works very closely and very effectively with the school. The relationship between the chair of governors and the school is a strength of the school. This contributes to the governing body's good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
52. School development planning is good. It clearly identifies appropriate priorities and makes the raising of standards the cornerstone of all developments. The school takes very effective action to meet its targets. There is effective long term strategic financial planning. The principles of best value are applied satisfactorily. The day-to-day administration and management of the school is very good. Efficient and friendly administration staff very ably support the headteacher. The very few minor recommendations in the latest auditor's report have been implemented. The school ensures it allocates its grant for staff training to support targets in the school development plan and in this way relates them directly to pupils' learning.
53. All teaching staff are qualified for this level of education. Teachers' secure subject knowledge enables them to meet the demands of the National Curriculum. The level of provision of teaching staff is high, with one teacher for every 19.2 pupils, compared with 23.5 nationally in 1999. Within the nursery there is the support of a nursery nurse and a recently appointed assistant is in place in the reception class for children under five.

There are no learning support assistants in Key Stage 1, nor have assistants been previously provided for the reception classes. This adversely affects the progress that these pupils make.

54. No new staff have been appointed since the time of the last inspection. The need for a programme for induction of new staff noted in the last report has not arisen, although the need for a staff handbook has been met. The headteacher and senior teachers undertake staff development interviews while the appraisal scheme is not operating. The good programme of training relates to national and school priorities and takes into account the professional development of staff. This contributes to the overall effectiveness of teaching and non-teaching staff. The school provides placements for student teachers. Other staff, including the administrative staff and caretaker, make a positive contribution in supporting the headteacher and the school community.
55. The accommodation consists of two main buildings and a separate nursery. The school has suffered considerable disruption due to major building problems, which are not yet resolved. The uncertainty over the future of the buildings has resulted in planned projects being delayed. There is ample room within the school to meet the needs of the pupils, although additional space will be needed because the school has achieved 'Beacon' status. In addition, the anticipated start of the 'Sure Start' project will create extra demand. The nursery has very poor outside facilities and these are not available for the reception classes. This affects children's physical development. The nursery has fittings unsuitable for young children. For example, small children find difficulty in operating push down taps.
56. Many classrooms in both blocks do not have sinks, which creates organisational difficulties. The reception classes do not have their own toilet and hand washing facilities, which makes supervision of small children difficult. The entrance to the school is welcoming, with well-tended plants and trees. Vandalism to the school has caused continuing severe problems, which has resulted in the exterior of the school buildings being bare and in places uninviting. The quality of the school building does not enhance pupils' learning. Much of the interior is dilapidated due to water ingress and decorating has been delayed due to the uncertain future of the school buildings. The school is clean and tidy due to the considerable daily efforts of the caretaking staff. Spacious classrooms have displays which add to their attractiveness, but many areas of the school corridors and stairways are not used to celebrate the high achievements of pupils. The school has extensive grounds, both grassed and with sufficient hard surfaces. There are areas where pupils do not go because of unsafe paving and dangerous litter is thrown in nightly. A well-planned computer suite has recently been added.
57. Learning resources are insufficient in mathematics, information technology and music at Key Stage 2. Very good use is made of the library service, from which books and artefacts are loaned. The library in Key Stage 2 is well stocked with books and the library is well used, which is an improvement since the time of the last report. This does not apply to the library in Key Stage 1, which is under resourced. Good use is also made of the local area as a resource for fieldwork and for visits. Local residents are also used, for example when Armistice Day was studied as part of Remembrance Day. Resources for outdoor play for the under fives are inadequate. There is an absence of climbing and balancing equipment, the provision of which enables children to make progress in their physical skills. This is an important aspect of children's development. There are also poor and inadequate storage facilities in the nursery.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

58. Pupils achieve very well by the time they leave the school. Within this very favourable context the inspection team identified some areas for improvement. These issues match very closely areas for development identified by the school:
- to improve standards further in writing, mathematics and science by the end of Key Stage 1 the headteacher in conjunction with the governing body should increase the amount of classroom support available to class teachers (paragraphs 3, 4, 14, 53, 86, 95 and 102);
  - to raise attainment in information technology at both key stages the school should:
    - continue with the recently implemented good strategies for teaching the subject;
    - increase access by pupils to computers to support learning in lessons by having more computers available so pupils have more opportunity to practice;
    - have more opportunities for pupils to handle information, control, measure and model using information technology (paragraphs 5, 57 and 121 - 127);
  - the school should build on the current good practice to further improve pupils' attendance (paragraphs 12 and 36).
59. In addition to the key issues above, the following less important areas for development should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:
- improve outdoor play facilities for the under fives (paragraphs 57 and 62);
  - improve resources in mathematics, library provision in Key Stage 1 and music at Key Stage 2 (paragraph 57);
  - improve provision for multi-cultural education (paragraph 31);
  - put in place a teaching programme for raising the awareness of the dangers of drugs (paragraph 22).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	68
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
4	28	41	27	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)	24	230
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/A	179

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4	74

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	30

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	4.2
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	21	17	38

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	16	17
	Girls	15	14	14
	Total	32	30	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (77)	79 (86)	82 (84)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	16	16
	Girls	14	13	14
	Total	30	29	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (84)	76 (97)	79 (100)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	15	10	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	11	13
	Girls	8	7	8
	Total	19	18	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (71)	72 (48)	84 (55)
	National	70 (65)	69 (58)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	13	14
	Girls	8	7	8
	Total	18	20	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	72 (55)	80 (44)	88 (51)
	National	68 (63)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	185
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	25.6

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	56

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

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

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	33

Number of pupils per FTE adult	13.5
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	476,170
Total expenditure	459,580
Expenditure per pupil	1,775
Balance brought forward from previous year	36,457
Balance carried forward to next year	53,047

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 53.8%

Number of questionnaires sent out

277

Number of questionnaires returned

149

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	55	41	2	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	53	45	1	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	46	6	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	43	13	5	1
The teaching is good.	57	39	3	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	36	8	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	27	6	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	34	0	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	46	40	6	3	5
The school is well led and managed.	56	37	3	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	46	2	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	26	23	6	21

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**

60. The nursery admits children in their fourth year. It operates two sessions each day. Children transfer to the reception classes in their fifth year, full-time either in the autumn or the spring term according to age. There were 47 children in total in the nursery at the time of the inspection. It is staffed by a teacher and a nursery nurse, both of whom have extensive experience of working with this age group. They work extremely effectively as a team. The small size of the room prevents easy movement of pupils and does not provide sufficient quiet areas for children to look at books, to listen to taped stories or to make large constructions. The room provides an exciting and stimulating environment with vibrant colour used to enhance window displays. Children's work is given high status and is effectively displayed on all the walls and hung from the ceilings.
61. The reception classrooms are spacious but without their own toilet facilities and sinks. This hampers the development of good hygiene practices in young children. The rooms allow the development of children from the Desirable Learning Outcomes<sup>2</sup> to the full National Curriculum.
62. The nursery has a very small and inadequate outdoor area, which does not allow the full development of children's physical skills because there is no climbing or balancing equipment. Reception children who are still under five have no separate outdoor facilities and this does not allow children to make progress in this important area of their development.
63. Assessments carried out when children enter the nursery show that the levels of attainment in all areas of development are very poor, particularly in their social and personal development. When children enter the reception classes they have made good progress in all areas of development to reach levels of attainment that are still below or well below those expected for their age. There is a wide range of attainment in some groups and a very few children attain the expected levels. When children reach five years of age they are above the expected levels of development in reading and below in writing, speaking and listening. Children reach the expected level of development in their creative and mathematical development. Children are below the expected levels in other areas of development.
64. The quality of teaching of the under fives is consistently very good, with excellent planning detailing the activities and targeting specific pupils. Children's progress is assessed continuously and is used to plan future activities. Staff have excellent relationships with the children, which encourages children to attempt difficult tasks. The school's very good provision for these children successfully promotes children's personal and social development, as well as their language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. Provision for children's physical development is limited and progress in this area is unsatisfactory.
65. Parents are made very welcome and are involved at an early stage when they meet the nursery staff in the term before their children enter the nursery. Early learning packs to assist children with their learning are available to parents. Parents value this facility.

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<sup>2</sup> These are goals for learning for children by the time they enter compulsory education at the age of five. They mainly refer to literacy, numeracy and personal and social skills.

## **Personal and social development**

66. Children, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress in this area of their development. The aims of the nursery class strongly emphasise personal and social development and there is good provision for this area of learning. There are very good opportunities for children to begin to co-operate with one another such as in the travel agent corner. They confidently join in activities that are organised for them. They form good relationships with others in the class and with adults. Children develop a caring attitude to each other and this is seen when a child helps another to put his coat on. A few children show a satisfactory level of concentration when playing with others or by themselves. Some find it difficult to stay with one activity without an adult and the children have low levels of perseverance. Their levels of co-operative play are poor unless activities are initiated by an adult.
67. The teachers and other adults provide a secure and caring environment in which children learn. Staff successfully provide opportunities for children to join in class activities and encourage children to take responsibility, such as putting their coats on in the nursery and changing for physical education in the reception classes. Joining in school assemblies in the summer term develops children's awareness of the expected standards of behaviour across the school. Ensuring that children understand the importance of washing their hands before handling food develops good standards of personal hygiene. Staff develop good manners in the children through gentle reminders such as how to ask for a turn on a tricycle. A few children show some independence. They organise themselves in the painting area. Through daily prayers children gain an awareness of the needs of others.

## **Language and Literacy**

68. Provision for this area of learning is excellent. The introduction of the 'Learning to Listen' programme in the nursery emphasises the need for listening as a necessary prerequisite for children learning letter sounds. Not all children remember instructions accurately but most select the three different items requested. All the children gather on the carpet to listen to a story at some time during the day. Every opportunity is taken to involve the children and to encourage them to speak. For example, when listening to 'Morning Beach' they were asked why the girl and her mother wanted to go down a path. When talking about the prayers that they would say they use words such as juicy and crunchy to describe the apples they eat. Children in the nursery know that words contain meaning and that books are read left to right. They enjoy books. This was seen when they acted the story of 'The Bear, The Mouse and The Strawberry'. Children recognise their names through the good system of self-registration. They quickly gain confidence in making marks to show writing and start to copy letters in the nursery. Print is used in the rooms wherever possible to assist in children's learning. By the time that children reach five years of age the majority read simple texts with understanding, copy words and some write sentences unaided. This is to a level above that expected for children of this age. Attainment in speaking and listening is well below that expected because of the limited vocabulary of the children and their generally poor communication skills on entry to the nursery. Children, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress by the time they are five.

## **Mathematical development**

69. Children make good progress to reach the levels of attainment expected for children when they reach five years. Teachers use every opportunity to develop children's skills in this area of learning. For example, when playing instruments different sized triangular shapes were used to denote loud and soft sounds. Mathematical language such as 'symmetry' was also used when making patterns on drawn butterflies. Counting is

constantly reinforced. For example, a child was asked how many flags she had put on her sandcastle. Children use the green bottles display in the nursery and the teddies in the reception class to count. The majority in the nursery are unable to count objects accurately to five, although they know the number sequence. The variety of activities in the reception class reinforces difficult concepts such as adding on one. This maintains pupils' interests and allows some children to move on to adding two or three. When provided with a variety of shells most nursery children sort them into sensible sets. The majority also understand mathematical language such as 'bigger than'.

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

70. Children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress, although they do not reach the expected standard for children when they reach five years of age. They gain an understanding of weather features through a daily discussion about the day, although few nursery children talked with understanding about the effect of the wind. Through painting rainbows nursery children learn the primary colours and the shape of a rainbow. Staff take every opportunity to reinforce colours, for example when they build models and through the window displays. Children learn the names of parts of their bodies through songs. They know apples grow on trees and that pips when planted may grow into apple trees. Using the theme of holidays and 'Scruffy Bear' nursery children learn what to take to the seaside. This work is again from a very low base where many could not select appropriately from a collection of objects. Few in reception identify a windmill accurately although there is one close to the school.

### **Physical development**

71. The nursery and reception classes provide many opportunities for children to develop their skills of cutting, sticking and using construction kits. Nursery children go outside to play on wheeled toys whenever the weather is suitable. They develop their throwing and catching skills with beanbags. Their development is limited because of the unsatisfactory outdoor facilities available for nursery children. In reception children use space with an awareness of others and travel around the hall, changing positions as instructed. Progress, including that of pupils with special educational needs, is satisfactory.

### **Creative development**

72. This area of children's development is very good. Children attain in line with national expectations for children by the time that they reach five years of age. They make very good progress, including children with special educational needs. This is from a very low base as few have an understanding of colour and sound on entry to the nursery. Their development is enhanced in the nursery by the displays of colours and the children's paintings. Staff encourage the children to use paint to represent what they see or imagine. Most children paint pictures of people to varying degrees of accuracy and all paintings are recognisable attempts to convey ideas. By the use of rhyme and song children develop a sense of pitch. Through the use of instruments, children in reception classes learn about the different sounds that can be made. For example, a tambourine can be hit or shaken. They also produce loud and soft sounds with and without instruments. Through painting and modelling children explore shape and texture. For example, the imaginative weaving on sticks using a variety of materials by reception children shows clearly the development of their creativity.

## ENGLISH

73. In Key Stage 1 standards of attainment in English are in line with the national average overall. They are above the national average in reading and below the national average in writing and in speaking and listening.
74. The 1999 national tests for seven year olds indicated that pupils' performance was below the national average in reading. The percentage reaching the expected Level 2 or above was close to the national average and the percentage reaching Level 3 or above was well below the national average. Pupils' performance in writing was close to the national average. The percentage reaching Level 2 was below the national average whilst the percentage reaching Level 3 was well above the national average. In comparison with similar schools their performance in reading and in writing was well above average. Inspection findings indicate that for the current year there has been an increase in the number of pupils achieving Level 2 in reading and a decrease in the number reaching Level 3 in writing. Standards in reading and writing have risen steadily in line with national trends over a four year period and have become closer to national averages despite a decline in writing standards in 1997. Inspection findings broadly reflect this picture of continuing improvement. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress.
75. By the end of Key Stage 2 standards in English are above the national average overall. They are above the national average in reading and writing and in line with the national average in speaking and listening. By the time pupils, including those with special educational needs, leave the school at 11 years of age they make very good progress.
76. In 1999 national tests for 11 year olds indicated that pupils attained well above the national average based on average points scores. The percentage reaching Level 4<sup>3</sup> or above was close to the national average, while the percentage reaching Level 5 was well above average. In comparison with similar schools standards in English were very high. There has been significant improvement in standards over a four year period. Test scores have risen from well below average in 1996 and climbed much more steeply than the national trend in 1998 and 1999. The inspection findings reflect this pattern of rising standards.
77. By the age of seven standards in speaking and listening are below the national average. Many pupils are becoming competent speakers and listeners. They use these skills in discussion, in response to questions and in group activities. For example, they discuss confidently the moving vehicles they make in design and technology. They explain clearly how they work and name accurately the important features. They speak with enthusiasm about the poems they read and offer suggestions as to how they are written. For example, a Year 2 pupil explained "the writer keeps repeating the same sound". However, a significant number of pupils have difficulty in listening attentively to adults and each other for extended periods. Many lack confidence in supplying answers or suggestions and limit replies to single words or short phrases.
78. Standards in reading are above the national average by the end of Key Stage 1. A high proportion of pupils of all abilities read accurately from appropriate texts at Level 2. Some of these pupils are fluent and read expressively. They recognise a range of complex words and have well-developed skills for reading new words they come across. They understand their stories and answer questions about the book they are reading. Their reading at home comprises mostly fiction, whilst a small minority read non-fiction for pleasure. All pupils particularly enjoy poetry and, during whole class sessions read

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<sup>3</sup> At Key Stage 2 the nationally expected level for pupils to reach by the end of Year 6 is Level 4. If a pupil attains Level 5 then he or she is reaching standards above that expected for a child of his or her age.

poems aloud with great enthusiasm and expression. Most know that storybooks have an author, an illustrator and a contents page. Some higher attaining pupils are familiar with the index and glossary in non-fiction and know they are arranged alphabetically. Otherwise, wider reading skills are not yet well developed. Pupils do not use a library regularly and are not becoming familiar with the names of different authors and their story titles.

78. Standards in writing are below the national average by the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils' handwriting is adequately developed by the age of seven. The range of handwriting indicates that most pupils are ready to begin joining letters, having successfully achieved accuracy of letter formation. Some lower attaining pupils still have difficulty with the shape and positioning of letters and words at this stage. Higher attaining pupils write clear sentences with correct spelling and accurate use of capital letters and full stops. They write for a range of purposes, for instance, to describe a trip to New Brighton, and are developing an awareness of their audience. Events are written in the correct order and ideas are logically developed. Lower ability pupils are beginning to convey meaning through their writing but do not yet use punctuation. They retell events from favourite stories and write them in order with adult support.
80. Standards in speaking and listening are in line with the national average by the end of Key Stage 2. By age 11 pupils listen carefully to one another and their teachers. They analyse text carefully and give articulate answers to such questions as "What is your initial response to the poem?" They use appropriate and accurate language in their replies referring, for example, to alliteration and personification. The majority of pupils are confident when asked to speak to the rest of the class and speak clearly to the best of their ability. A minority, although confident, still have restricted fluency in their speech, are hesitant and confine answers or suggestions to short phrases.
81. Standards in reading are above the national average by the end of Key Stage 2. The majority of pupils are competent readers. They read aloud clearly and with understanding and confidently discuss the characters and plot of stories. Higher attaining pupils are very fluent and expressive. They read widely and explain their views clearly. They speak knowledgeably about *their favourite books*, identify a wide range of children's authors and make good use of non-fiction. They have well developed reference skills and skim text to gain information quickly. All pupils are confident in the use of dictionaries and use these regularly and independently in their day-to-day work. Wider research skills are less well developed since opportunities to use a library for this purpose are limited.
82. Standards in writing are above the national average by the end of Key Stage 2. The quality and style of pupils' handwriting are very good. The vast majority produce clear, uniform and attractive joined script in all of their work in English and other subjects. Additionally, writing is organised, clear and well adapted for a number of purposes. For example, they modify language for use in formal and informal letter writing or to emulate the style of authors such as Walter De La Mare. A small number of higher attaining pupils write emotive or imaginative prose which reflects standards well above the national average. Most pupils make good use of punctuation and are secure with spelling. They plan work carefully and make good use of parts of speech such as adjectives and adverbs. Lower attaining pupils are less consistent with spelling, punctuation and the use of descriptive or imaginative language.
83. The overall quality of teaching is good and there is no unsatisfactory teaching. In Key Stage 1 four fifths of teaching is good or better, a third is very good or better and on one occasion it was excellent. In Key Stage 2 teaching is very good. There is a higher proportion, nearly three fifths of lessons, where teaching is very good or better, also including one excellent lesson. The strategies for teaching literacy throughout the school

are very effective. The teaching of basic skills such as spelling and phonics are sound in Key Stage 1 and very good in Key Stage 2. There has been a significant improvement in the teaching of English throughout the school since the last inspection. This is having a very positive impact on the standards which pupils achieve and their attitudes to the subject.

84. Teachers throughout the school plan lessons well in accordance with the national literacy strategy. This ensures well-balanced lessons which include sharply focused question and answer sessions, written activities and a review of what has been learned. Learning objectives are consistently met and this enables pupils to make at least sound progress in all lessons. The features of the most successful teaching are very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and performance and often excellent relationships between teachers and their class. This regularly results in an academic atmosphere in which pupils have high self-esteem and a mature attitude to their own learning. In a Year 4 lesson seen, for example, the teacher created a very intimate atmosphere where pupils of all abilities were proud of their work and keen to read it out to the class and watching parents. This resulted in some of the poetry based on the London plague reaching high standards. For instance, one pupil wrote "Light breathing of candle light that trickles wax into patterns, which are, unknown". Teaching is occasionally less successful where the management of pupils' behaviour is inconsistent. This results in restlessness particularly during introductory settings and slows the pace of some lessons. Teachers make appropriate use of information and communication technology for enabling pupils to process, edit and print their work.
85. Pupils have a good attitude to the subject. They enjoy the literacy hour. Younger pupils particularly enjoy reading the 'big book' together. Pupils throughout the school work conscientiously during the writing sessions and are keen to make contributions in discussions. A minority become restless or uncooperative on occasions and are unwilling to listen to others or follow instructions first time. As a result of the very good relationships and high expectations which exist in some lessons most pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2, become totally absorbed by activities which teachers provide for them. On these occasions behaviour and attitudes are often very good and sometimes exemplary.
86. The school has taken a number of steps to improve standards since the last inspection. The co-ordinator leads the subject very well and sets high standards through her own expertise and teaching. The systems for assessing pupils' progress have improved and the school makes very effective use of these to support individuals and groups of pupils. This has led to the addition of a reading support teacher in Key Stage 1 which has proved very successful and has had a positive impact on standards of reading. There are, however, some further areas requiring development. The library in Key Stage 1 is inadequate for its purpose and is poorly equipped. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop reading skills and interests more widely and this affects their progress. As a result, too few pupils are able to reach the higher level, Level 3, in reading. In addition, there are too few support staff in Key Stage 1 to ensure that pupils of all abilities make good progress in writing. The organisation of groups within the literacy hour makes it difficult for teachers to devote time to all members of the class. Consequently, the same work is sometimes set for all abilities. Higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged and the number of pupils reaching Level 3 in writing has decreased. Progress through the Key Stage is, therefore, satisfactory but could be better in these areas.
87. In Key Stage 2 the introduction of 'Additional Literacy Support' and 'booster' classes are having a significant impact on standards. The school has made very effective use of assessment data for setting pupils by ability and this is contributing further to their

achievement. Progress in reading is also well supported by the reading partnership. This is well managed by committed parents who have voluntarily taken part in training. These improvements in provision in Key Stage 2 enable pupils of all abilities to make very good progress.

## **MATHEMATICS**

88. In the 1999 Key Stage 2 national test pupils attained standards that were in line with the national average. In comparison with similar schools standards were well above average. This represents an improvement over the previous three years when standards were below average. Current inspection evidence indicates the improvement of 1999 has been maintained and standards are in line with the national average by the end of Key Stage 2. Standards are higher than at the time of the last inspection. The good and very good teaching across the key stage have brought about the improvement. There is very thorough monitoring and evaluation of pupils' progress so that teachers meet effectively the varying needs of pupils. The setting of pupils in groups according to their prior attainment also positively affects standards. The low pupil/teacher ratio ensures individual needs are met well. The very effective use of numeracy targets in individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs contributes significantly to the very good progress these pupils make. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well by the time they are 11 years of age in relation to their prior attainment. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
89. In the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 national tests standards of attainment were well below the national average. They were average in comparison with similar schools. Inspection evidence indicates that standards have improved this year and by the end of the key stage standards are below average. The improvement in standards have been brought by the good implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and extra teaching support provided during part of the Summer term. There is also a significant amount of good teaching that is helping to raise standards. Pupils' progress is satisfactory overall, but the progress of pupils in Year 1 is good. It slows because there is insufficient in-class support for Year 2 pupils. The wide range of pupil attainment in Year 2 means that not all pupils, particularly the higher attainers, receive appropriate support. This is reflected in the national test results. The percentage of pupils attaining above national expectations in 1999 was well below the national average. This remains the case this year.
90. By the end of Key Stage 1 about three quarters of pupils confidently count, add and subtract accurately numbers to 20, are beginning to understand the place value of each digit in a number and have sound mental calculation skills for their age. They name and know the properties of two- and three- dimensional shapes. Pupils understand which are symmetrical patterns and where to place the line of symmetry. They have a sound knowledge and understanding of how to interpret graphs. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils understand the value of a digit in numbers to 1000. They have a good understanding of percentages and probability. They draw plans to scale. They recognise and know the properties of a triangular prism and square, and triangular and pentagonal pyramids. Teachers use mathematics well to develop pupils' literacy skills. They use a range of mathematical language correctly. In a Years 5/6 lesson there was a good discussion about the meaning of the word 'probability' and also about how the words 'impossible', 'unlikely', 'likely' and 'certain' are used in a mathematical context. Pupils use numeracy skills satisfactorily across the curriculum.
91. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2. They enjoy their lessons, are interested and are generally enthusiastic when doing their work. They listen carefully and answer questions in whole class discussions. They work hard to

complete tasks and work with sustained concentration at Key Stage 2 but less so at Key Stage 1. They work co-operatively and collaboratively when required.

92. The quality of teaching is good overall at both key stages (58 per cent of lessons). There is a significant amount of very good teaching at Key Stage 2 (38 per cent of lessons). Pupils' learning extends across the same range. This too is good overall. The quality of teaching is significantly better than at the time of the last inspection. Teachers' lesson planning is better and the use of pupils' assessment to set appropriate work is more effective. Work is set to meet the varying needs of pupils. Teachers' use of time is better and there is a brisk pace to the teaching and learning.
93. In a good lesson with Years 1/2 pupils they extended their understanding of symmetry and increased the rate at which they completed mental calculations. They used their previous learning well to calculate accurately the addition of three numbers to make 20. The teacher planned the lesson well to ensure pupils built on their previous learning effectively and covered the necessary work to achieve what they set out to learn. The very good relationships meant pupils were happy and they enjoyed the work. Thus, their learning was both effective and enjoyable. Pupils behaved well so no time was wasted and a brisk pace to the lesson was maintained. They listened carefully and then used the information given by the teacher to make accurate calculations. The presentation of the pupils' work was good. This reflected the high expectations of the teacher.
94. A Year 5 teacher made very good use of the chalkboard to record and develop pupils' ideas. It was a very good visual aid that pupils could use to make decisions about the degree of probability of various scenarios. The teacher had very secure subject knowledge. This was clearly demonstrated in her explanation of how numbers become 10 times bigger. There was an excellent ethos for learning; pupils' behaviour was very good so they listened carefully and responded by working quickly and accurately.
95. The subject is well led by the co-ordinators. They have a very good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and what to do to remedy the weaknesses. They have successfully introduced the National Numeracy Strategy. To bring about even further improvements there should be an increase in the amount of in-class support at Key Stage 1.

## **SCIENCE**

96. In the teacher assessments of seven –year olds in 1999 the proportion of pupils attaining the national expectation was well below the national average. Attainment at the higher Level 3 was in line with the national average. The attainment of 11 year old pupils in the 1999 national tests was in line with the national average, but well above average when compared with pupils from similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 was below average.
97. Inspection findings confirm that recent improvements in provision including a new scheme of work, more efficient use of assessment data and more sharply focused specialist teaching at the end of Key Stage 2 have brought about a discernible improvement in standards. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 now attain below the national average. The attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 is above average, with an increased number of pupils reaching Level 5. By the time pupils leave the school at 11 years of age they make very good progress. This includes pupils identified as having special educational needs.
98. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have a basic understanding of electricity and higher attaining pupils know how to construct a simple circuit. They investigate and classify

objects made from different materials and sort them into groups. Pupils identify and name the major parts of plants. Pupils learn that they need exercise and a good diet to stay healthy. The majority of pupils develop an understanding about fair testing and say when a test might be unfair. By the end of the key stage the majority of pupils understand that different plants grow in different environments and have adapted in different ways. They examine a collection of wheeled toys noting similarities and differences. They discover which forces are involved in making them move and how they might be made to move more quickly. They speculate on which materials it would be sensible to use when building a house and which would not. They record their observations and opinions and communicate their understanding in drawings through talking about what they have done and in simple sentences. Pupils collect data and display information in charts and in pictures. However, many pupils lack a sufficiently well developed scientific vocabulary and find it difficult to articulate exactly what they mean.

99. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils carry out investigations planned by the teacher and also demonstrate ideas of their own. They make predictions, carry out a fair test and know how to change one variable. Pupils identify and name the key parts of plants such as a stigma and an anther. By Year 6 pupils name and locate organs of the body and describe their functions. They know that all animals and plants eat, breathe, grow and reproduce. They name bones in the skeleton and the muscles surrounding them. Pupils describe the differences between solids, liquids and gases. They separate mixtures through filtering, dissolving and evaporation. Pupils use equipment well and select equipment appropriate for different tasks. They observe carefully and make accurate measurements as they carry out investigations and record their findings. Higher attaining pupils suggest reasons for their findings and draw conclusions. Older pupils have a good understanding of the investigation process and record their results in a variety of ways. They take opportunities to select the method they consider to be the most effective in conveying their results.
100. Pupils in both key stages experience a good range of experimental work and have opportunities to devise their own experiments. They use literacy and numeracy skills well to record the results of investigations in writing and charts. Lower attaining pupils are well supported in science lessons in Key Stage 2 and record their work and make good progress. In Key Stage 1 where they are less well supported lower attaining pupils find it difficult to record their work. Pupils in Key Stage 2 use mathematical skills to record results and present data. By the end of the key stage pupils use reference books to seek information and begin to use information technology for research and to present information.
101. The quality of science teaching is good overall with some very good teaching observed at the end of Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 1 teaching is good in 66 per cent of lessons and at Key Stage 2 it is very good in 66 per cent of lessons. In the most effective lessons the teaching is lively and there is good pupil participation and motivation. The teacher shares the target for the lesson with the class and this provides a focus. The teacher is aware of all the pupils and assesses their understanding through effective questioning. Pupils are actively drawn into discussions and investigations. Their opinions are listened to and valued. This builds their confidence. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. Lesson planning is generally good. It is detailed and identifies what the pupils will learn in the lesson. Materials are well prepared, the pace of the lessons is brisk and all pupils are involved. Pupils are supported where appropriate and given positive feedback. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to report back to the class what they have learned and this reinforces the understanding and confidence of the whole class. Homework in science is used well to extend classroom teaching and learning at the end of the key stage.

102. In the less effective lessons the work is over-directed and lacks challenge. Questioning is used less effectively and pupils are given few opportunities to offer suggestions as to how they could investigate or record results. The pace is slow and time is not well used. This results in pupils being off task. There is scope for greater use to be made of information technology to support teaching and learning. Where the learning is less effective teachers do not mark pupils' work in such a way as to show pupils how they might improve. Assessment information is satisfactory although it is not used sufficiently to plan activities for pupils of differing attainments. In lessons in Key Stage 1 pupils lack the support of classroom assistants and this impedes their progress.

## **ART**

103. Pupils' attainment in art is above national expectations at the end of both key stages. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection. Through both key stages pupils follow a structured programme of activities covering all the essential elements including painting, drawing, printing and collage. This ensures that pupils develop their skills progressively and produce several examples of high quality work by the end of both key stages.
104. Younger Key Stage 1 pupils learn to mix colour, print a T-shirt and experiment with simple weaving techniques. They paint pictures of trees and make puppets. Older pupils examine toys with wheels. They notice the patterns on the tyres and teeth on cogs. They then produce examples of tyre treads using black pens, pencils and crayons on white paper. They then explore the possibility of the opposite effects, using white crayons and chalk on black paper. Pupils show close attention to detail when they produce textured tiles. They print by rolling a series of objects. Then they print using a clay tile and represent a variety of tyre treads in a pattern. Pupils develop their skills in line drawings. They work hard to produce good line only drawings and the more gifted artists also complete mirror images. They extend their learning by considering the work of famous artists and try their hand at still-life pictures.
105. Pupils in Key Stage 2 use pencils of differing hardness and explore their effects in drawings. They produce a variety of effects using dark and light shading and use these in pictures of cylinders. Then they draw spheres and planets using coloured chalk, using tones in the shading to show form. Higher attaining pupils draw figures and portraits with good attention to form, texture and tone. Older pupils study seascapes and examine paintings by Van Gogh and Turner. They paint pictures of Tudor monarchs, study designs for Victorian wallpaper. They focus their attention on line tone and colour when examining some of the work of L.S. Lowry. Pupils at the end of the key stage extend this technique when drawing hands and other parts of the human figure. They focus on accurate detail when using shading techniques. They draw still life pictures of leaves and plants and select materials for a collage picture of a fish. They study the work of Picasso and Matisse and attempt to copy their styles stressing colour, shape, form and space with the emphasis on brush strokes. Pupils experiment with the effects produced by a variety of materials and emphasise the key elements of line and texture in producing examples of above average quality.
106. The teaching of art is very much improved since the last inspection and is good overall, with two very good lessons observed at the end of Key Stage 2. In the best lessons teachers have very good skills and subject knowledge. This enables them to demonstrate and to give pupils confidence. They set a good example and this stimulates the pupils to work hard. Teachers manage the lessons very well and have a wide range of materials and resources readily available to make best use of the time available. They use assessment very well, encouraging pupils to evaluate their own work honestly and then offering suggestions as to how pupils can improve their work. They always have

harder work available for the more able and this ensures high quality learning for pupils of all attainments. Teachers have very high expectations of the effort and performance of their pupils and they share these expectations with the pupils. Any potential behaviour problems are dealt with by means of a variety of well-thought out strategies and all pupils are encouraged to find success and make good progress at their own level. Teachers discuss samples of pupils' artwork at half-termly intervals and this provides the basis for further improvements in pupils' learning, in standards of work and in teachers' expectations.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

107. No lessons were inspected in Key Stage 2. Judgements are made from discussions with pupils, scrutiny of work both past and present and from discussions with teachers. Standards at the end of both key stages are in line with national expectations. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
108. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have a firm understanding of the design process. They regularly have opportunities to use their designs for making a range of interesting objects. They gain an understanding of the use of cogs, gears, levers and hinges by examining a range of moving toys. They are given tasks to develop their skills, for example by constructing a vehicle to carry a carton of milk.
109. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have a sound understanding of the subject because they have had regular, well structured tasks to develop their skills. They continue to develop their knowledge of how levers and pulleys work by designing and making machines for lifting objects. These demonstrate sound techniques in joining materials such as wood. By the end of the key stage they understand the need to evaluate and improve the quality of their work. They put this to effective use, for instance, when designing reflective safety fastenings. They use kits and natural materials to make a range of vehicles powered by electric motors.
110. Teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and was good in one lesson seen. No direct teaching was observed in Key Stage 2. The quality of teachers' planning and of the examples of work seen indicate that they have a clear understanding of what is required to teach the curriculum effectively. They ensure that the design aspect of the subject is carefully combined with the making and plan work carefully to develop skills and understanding. This leads to sound progress throughout the school. Teachers provide exciting projects that capture pupils' imagination and result in good attitudes to the subject. For example, Year 6 pupils collaborated very well in groups to produce electrically powered vehicles. Pupils throughout the school are proud of their work and enjoy seeing it on display. Teachers are developing good systems for assessing the quality of pupils' work. They use a digital camera for recording work of good quality and add this to the school portfolio. This is having a positive impact on the standards being achieved. Computers are not currently used as a means of enabling pupils to control and direct their models.
111. There has been good improvement in the subject since the last inspection when standards were judged to be unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator has been in place for only a short time and provides very good leadership. She provides good guidance for colleagues, which has resulted in better planning, assessment and continuity in pupils' learning throughout the school. Consequently, there is good capacity for raising standards further.
112. The subject makes a good contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills. They develop new vocabulary and use labelling and extended writing to illustrate their designs.

There are good opportunities for them to develop speaking and listening skills by discussing and evaluating their products and explaining them to the rest of the class.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

113. It was not possible to see any geography lessons during the inspection. Through discussions with pupils and looking at their work they are achieving what is expected for their age at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils describe their local area with views on its attractiveness. They describe the local play areas and say there was too much litter and broken glass for these areas to be safe. They say that more litterbins and people to look after the area would make it safer. Pupils are aware of areas other than their own such as Southport and Wales. Through the travels of 'Barnaby Bear' pupils point out places in the world such as Canada, Florida and Paris. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have a sound knowledge of themes studied such as rivers. They describe those that they studied such as the River Conway in Wales and features within it such as waterfalls. They know the importance of rivers for the development of industry such as the oil refinery at Ellesmere Port. Through their study of the environment pupils devise questions relating to rubbish collected in the school. These questions are based on their own knowledge and understanding. They use the information that they have gained to explore the importance of recycling. Pupils have a sound awareness of their own neighbourhood, the River Mersey and Liverpool. They have sound mapwork skills and have a good knowledge of the causes of different weather features.
114. All pupils, including those with special educational needs make good progress to reach the expected levels at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 from a poor understanding of the world on their entry to Key stage 1. Pupils talk with interest about topics that they have studied and places that they have visited. They take care with the written work and produce accurate drawings and diagrams. The written work helps pupils to develop their literacy skills.
115. The school has a committed co-ordinator who has produced a good scheme of work for geography with relevant and interesting fieldwork at all stages. Assessment is not yet fully developed to promote attainment of a high level. This was noted in the last report.

## **HISTORY**

116. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is in line with those expected for pupils of these ages. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are aware of the differences between the past and the present. For example, they know that washing machines are used today and people washed by hand in the past. They use resources to distinguish between the past and the present. For example, when looking at photographs of the seaside over time they notice differences in clothes, cars and buildings. Pupils also know details of famous people from the past such as Guy Fawkes. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have a clear understanding of known periods in history such as the Ancient Egyptians. They explain how society was organised with the Pharaoh at the top and the servants and labourers at the bottom. They know why the Nile was so important to farming and give a good explanation of why the Egyptians used their gods to explain everyday actions. They give reasons for and the results of major events such as the development of the Anglican Church in the time of Henry VIII. Pupils know how aspects of the past are represented and evaluate these to a good level.
117. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. They develop a clear understanding of time and know that the past can be divided into periods such as the Tudors. Through gaining knowledge about the past they understand why

things occurred. Resources and artefacts are used effectively to add to this understanding.

118. Pupils enjoy history and are curious about past events. They tackle tasks with enthusiasm and their interest is enlivened by visits. For example, when looking at the school logbook a pupil pointed out that a headteacher had lived next to the cemetery they had studied. Pupils use information technology effectively to find out questions that they had asked. This was seen when they searched for information on Henry VIII's wives. They make sensible deductions. For example, a pupil suggested that a suitcase with a variety of objects could have belonged to a child who had run away.
119. The quality of teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and very good in Key Stage 2, with one in two lessons excellent. The variety of the very good resources are used well to stimulate pupils' imaginations. For example, the photographs of the seaside extended pupils' study of the sea. In Key Stage 2 the theme of 'Children in World War II' started with Chamberlain's speech, which set the scene and made children thoughtful and totally focused on the topic. Questioning is used effectively to make pupils think. For example, pupils were asked if there was any difference between buckets and spades in the past and now. This led to a discussion of changes in materials used. Questioning on the 60 and 70 –year old artefacts was sensitive and developed pupils' curiosity. Pupils answering questions that they have posed is a feature of good and excellent lessons and leads to pupils' involvement in the topic.
120. The school has a committed co-ordinator who has produced a good scheme of work for history, with a good variety of visits at all stages. Assessment is not yet fully developed. This was noted in the last report.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

121. Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology has improved significantly since the last inspection, particularly over the last year. Although pupils in both key stages attain appropriately, the majority do not have sufficient regular access to computers to develop satisfactory information and communication technology skills. Few pupils have access to computers at home. Standards of attainment by the end of both key stages are below national expectations.
122. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils enter text and use a mouse to move icons correctly. Pupils demonstrated these skills in a Year 2 history lesson when making lists of the differences between seaside holidays long ago and present day. Year 1 pupils produce labelled pictures using information technology. Pupils produce graphs to represent a road survey. Pupils have too little opportunity to program robotic toys. They are not confident in their use of adventure games when finding out the consequences of different decisions.
123. At Key Stage 2 pupils enter, amend and save text and graphics properly. Some cut and paste work correctly. Pupils enter data accurately to produce graphs. Good work was completed when pupils used a program to produce a picture showing different lines and texture. Year 6 pupils use a CD-ROM competently to access information in a science lesson on the heart. However, pupils have little experience of control technology. Little use is made of information technology to measure. They are not confident in the use of spreadsheets.
124. Pupils make good progress in lessons at both key stages, including pupils with special educational needs. Progress over time is unsatisfactory for the majority of pupils at both key stages. This is because until the last few months the school did not have sufficient

resources for pupils to practise their skills. Despite significant investment in technology there are not enough computers to ensure all pupils have regular and frequent access to develop their skills at a satisfactory rate. The school is aware of this and is planning to increase provision.

125. Pupils show interest and enjoyment when using computers and quickly settle to the task in hand. During their work in pairs they co-operate well, sharing out activities fairly. Pupils show encouraging signs of persistence when they encounter new software. Equipment is handled with care and respect.
126. The quality of teaching and learning is good and is better than at the time of the last inspection. Teachers have secure subject knowledge that results in clear explanations and instructions. There is correct use of subject specific language. Teachers circulate around the class to support and monitor the pupils' work. They are then in a position quickly to identify errors or offer help when pupils are hesitant. They make good use of ongoing assessment to ensure pupils build satisfactorily on previous learning. There is good, firm yet friendly management of pupils' behaviour resulting in good behaviour and no interruption in the pupils' learning. Pupils are interested, concentrate well and follow instructions promptly because of the good quality teaching. They are motivated by the work and are keen to experiment. This extends computing skills and builds up their confidence in the subject.
127. The subject is well led by the subject co-ordinator who provides valued expertise and support. The leadership is a significant factor in the rising standards. The school meets National Curriculum requirements for the teaching of information technology. The school has a good development plan for the subject and is well placed to bring about further improvement.

## **MUSIC**

128. Pupils at the end of both key stages meet the expectations for their age. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils sing songs with a sense of rhythm and with confidence and enjoyment. They know the names of the many tuned and untuned instruments and the sounds that they make. Pupils use this knowledge to create sound patterns. This was seen when pupils used the triangles to make bright sounds in their seaside composition to represent the sun. In this they used dynamics to good effect. For example, the cymbals were used to represent the crashing waves. There was no evidence of pupils listening and appraising music. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils perform accurately. They sing songs and rounds in two parts, holding their own tune but with an awareness of others. This was seen in the hymn practice when the pupils sang with a satisfactory sense of pitch when performing the 'Jubilee' song. In other hymns they sang with enjoyment and a sound awareness of rhythm. In a lesson where pupils learnt good breath control all sang clear notes with length to a good level. Pupils use effectively musical structures such as the rondo form. For example, they performed with good effect a school chant to their own devised patterns. With reference to the listening and appraising attainment target pupils identified the rhythm associated with calypso music and the instruments used such as in steel bands.
129. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in music in the performing and composing element. They gain experience in making music and in using tuned and untuned instruments. Progress in singing with a good sense of pitch is patchy, with too little emphasis put on pupils listening to their own singing, although there was evidence that pupils can perform well. There was insufficient evidence to show the same level of progress in the listening and composing element.

130. Pupils enjoy music lessons, particularly where high standards are expected and pupils gain a sense of achievement. For example, Key Stage 1 pupils were totally involved when following sound patterns from symbols. Pupils take care of instruments and use them correctly. For example, they show that triangles make different sounds when held or placed on a surface. They are very ready to offer ideas and to answer questions. They work hard at given tasks. A few pupils in Key Stage 1 found it difficult to follow instructions carefully.
131. The quality of teaching is good, with one out of two lessons good in Key Stage 1 and three out of six lessons good in Key Stage 2, with one very good. The good lessons show thorough planning with clear learning objectives that are discussed with the pupils at the end of the lesson. The pace is brisk and no time is wasted so pupils move on in their learning. An over reliance on a published scheme results in satisfactory lessons restricting pupils' learning to satisfactory levels. In the brass and a class lesson the emphasis on pupils listening to themselves producing a given note led to high standards. The use of specialist teachers also made a positive contribution to high standards. This was seen where a lesson was devoted to breath control. The practical method of teaching and the demonstration and involvement by the teacher led to good progress by the pupils.
132. There is a good scheme in use for Key Stage 1, but decisions have not yet been made on a suitable scheme for Key Stage 2. The present scheme in use does not extend pupils' learning. Resources are inadequate for Key Stage 2. Assessment has not been fully developed, which is an important factor in raising standards. The listening and appraising element of the curriculum could be enhanced by the introduction of recorded music in assemblies. The instrumental lessons in brass, cello, guitar and violin considerably enhance music in the school.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

133. By the end of both key stages standards are in line with national expectations and the school has maintained the standards reported in the last inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. There were no opportunities to observe direct teaching of Key Stage 1 pupils. Judgements are based on the performance of older pupils in reception class and younger pupils in Year 3. In Key Stage 2 lessons were observed in Years 3 and 4. Standards achieved by the end of Year 4 were judged to be in line with those achieved by pupils of similar age in other schools. There were a number of opportunities to observe the majority of the older pupils taking part in extra-curricular games such as netball and rounders. These indicated that pupils are achieving standards in line with expectations by the end of the key stage. There is appropriate emphasis on the development of games and athletics skills during the summer term. The school's schemes of work ensure that there is good attention to all areas of the curriculum throughout the school year, including the development of swimming, gymnastics and dance skills.
134. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils show increased confidence and improve the co-ordination of their movements. They control a ball competently on the move with feet or hands and aim it accurately towards a partner or target. They show a good awareness of space and use it safely. They are becoming increasingly aware of the benefits of exercise and the need for co-operation with a partner.
135. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils demonstrate a more sophisticated approach to team games. Younger pupils learn to co-operate as a member of a team through activities such as relay racing. Older pupils understand the need for tactics and positional play in invasion games such as netball and football. They develop accurate passing and

receiving skills and learn the importance of following rules in competitive sports. Through regular playing of small-sided games such as cricket they acquire confidence in striking and catching a small ball. A significant minority have better than expected hand-eye co-ordination. The majority of pupils are competent swimmers by the time they are aged 11.

136. Pupils' response to physical education is good overall. They enjoy the activities planned for them, participate with enthusiasm and generally behave well. This is reflected in the very good attendance at extra-curricular sports and dance clubs. They develop responsibility and self-control and they learn to participate with a sense of fair play. A small minority, however, are uncooperative when not closely supervised and interrupt the progress of lessons.
137. The quality of teaching is sound. Teachers plan appropriate activities for all areas of the curriculum using the guidelines in the scheme of work. They follow lesson plans carefully and this ensures that the lesson objectives are satisfactorily met. Teaching is enthusiastic and this is reflected in pupils' response. Teaching is less effective where teachers do not make sure that the whole class is listening when they are giving instructions. This results in some lack of co-operation and slows the pace of lessons. The organisation of the timetable results in some lessons being too short and teachers have difficulty in achieving all of the lesson objectives. In physical education lessons as a whole teachers use time and resources well.
138. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal and social education. This is achieved through the commitment of the co-ordinator and colleagues to providing a good range of physical extra-curricular activities, including a residential outdoor activities week.