

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **EASTCROFT COUNTY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Knowsley, Liverpool

LEA area: Knowsley

Unique reference number: 104447

Headteacher: Mrs C Hibbard

Reporting inspector: Mr Brian Griffiths  
2607

Dates of inspection: 17 - 20 June 2002

Inspection number: 192205

Full 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
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hollinghurst Road Tower Hill Kirkby Knowsley
Postcode:	L33 1EB
Telephone number:	0151 477 8210
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Frank Fitz-Gibbon
Date of previous inspection:	24 February 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

	Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2607	Brian Griffiths	Registered inspector	Mathematics	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19720	Deborah Granville-Hastings	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents and carers?
14591	Richard Perkin	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Art and design Equal opportunities	How well are pupils taught?
19874	Joe Fitzpatrick	Team inspector	English Religious education History English as an additional language	
8329	Gill Salter-Smith	Team inspector	Science Physical education Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
21024	Robert Robinson	Team inspector	Design and technology Foundation stage	
25431	Lesley Clark	Team inspector	Geography Music	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Eastcroft Park is a larger than average community primary school that serves part of Kirkby near Liverpool. It is attended by 367 boys and girls between the ages of four and eleven and a further 63 who attend the nursery, mainly half-time. Almost all pupils are of white United Kingdom background and none has English as an additional language. Over half of pupils have special educational needs, which is a very high proportion; the special needs are in the areas of behaviour, moderate learning difficulties and dyslexia, in roughly equal proportions. Over seventy per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals which is a very high proportion – less than one school in a hundred nationally having such a high percentage; the area served by the school is one of serious social and economic disadvantage. The school participates in a number of local and national initiatives that are designed to improve pupils' attainment and personal development. These include Excellence in Cities, Sure Start, Healthy Schools and the Early Literacy Strategy. On entry to the school, children's attainment overall is very low; whilst there are potentially high attainers, there is a much greater number of much lower attainers.

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

This is a very good school. From a very low base, pupils make good or better progress in all subjects. By the end of Year 6, standards are above nationally expected levels in information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education (PE); they are below average in English and mathematics and in line with nationally expected levels in all other subjects. Pupils develop very well as caring, responsible individuals because of the excellent provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Their very good rates of achievement are largely due to the very good teaching of a very well planned curriculum as well as the excellent relationships between adults and pupils. This high quality work is assured by the excellent leadership of the headteacher, very good management systems and the whole hearted and effective support of senior and all other staff and of the governing body. Whilst expenditure is well above the national average for primary schools, the pupils' very good rates of achievement ensure that it gives very good value for money.

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

- All pupils, including those who are gifted and talented, make very good progress.
- Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because of well-targeted support; their attitudes and behaviour are unusually good.
- Standards in ICT and physical education exceed the national expectation by Year 6.
- The overall provision for pupils' personal development is excellent, so that they behave well, form excellent relationships and become well-rounded young people with very positive attitudes.
- Teaching is very good.
- The headteacher's leadership is outstanding and she has strong and effective support from other staff and governors.

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

- Standards in English and mathematics.
- Pupils' attendance and punctuality.

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

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

The school was last inspected in February 1997. Since then the school has consolidated its good practice and improved at a very good pace in a number of significant areas. The proportion of pupils reaching the nationally expected levels in Year 6 tests in English has improved considerably, although attainment overall is below average. Attainment in information and communication technology has improved from below average to above average largely because of much improved facilities and teacher expertise. Standards reached by gifted and talented pupils are improving considerably as a result of extra teaching underpinned by local and national initiatives. The music curriculum now fully complies with national requirements and attainment has improved. Pupils' personal development was good and is now excellent. School leadership is excellent and management is very good, with staff of all kinds making substantial contributions to improvement. Assessment now makes its proper contribution to the planning of work for all pupils. The school is committed to, and well placed to make further improvements.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	E	D	E	B
mathematics	E	E	E	B
science	C	D	D	A

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

At the end of Key Stage 2, the well below average test scores in English and mathematics were similar to those of the last few years and the below average scores in science were in a range typical of the past few years. However, the scores in English and mathematics were better than those in similar schools and those in science were much better. Scores have improved at a rate that matches national improvements. The school sets demanding targets for pupils and usually reaches them. The unvalidated test scores for 2002 indicate that the very demanding targets set for this year have not been met, in spite of many pupils doing well. For example, almost one-half of the pupils identified as having learning difficulties reached the nationally expected standards in English, mathematics and science.

The standards reached in the 2001 national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 improved on previous years. However, this was from being in the bottom five per cent of schools nationally in many previous years to become well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. When compared with schools with similar proportions of free school meals, standards were average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. Assessments made of attainment in science also rose but none-the-less were below the national average.

The work of the current Year 6 is below average in English and mathematics but average in science. In ICT and physical education standards are above the nationally expected levels. In all other subjects, standards are in line with national expectations. This represents very good overall progress and good progress in relation to Year 2, at the end of which standards are well below average in English, below average in mathematics, science, geography and music and in line with the national expectation in all other subjects. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2: they enter Year 1 from the Foundation Stage with attainment that is at nationally expected levels in physical development and creative development but below expectations in personal and social development and well below expectations in communication, language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. However, nursery and reception children make good overall progress from their very low levels of attainment on entry to the school. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make very good progress, as do those who are gifted or talented. There is no significant difference between the standards reached by boys and girls.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils concentrate well and tackle the stimulating work prepared for them with gusto. They enjoy being at school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Behaviour is very good in lessons and good around school overall. Pupils understand and respond well to the high standards expected of them.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Relationships are excellent and pupils are confident and relaxed. They show great respect for each other's work and feelings, and for their school. They respond very well to opportunities to take responsibility and work very well independently.
Attendance	Poor. Attendance is well below the national average and unauthorised absence is very high.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Good	Very 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 and learning are very good overall. This is an improvement since the last inspection when they were good. In over a third of lessons, teaching was very good or better. Very little unsatisfactory teaching was seen and in almost all lessons teaching was satisfactory or better. The teaching of English and mathematics, including literacy and numeracy, is good overall and very good in Nursery, Reception and Years 3 to 6. The teaching of science, art and design, design and technology, history, music and PE is good, the teaching of religious education (RE) is sound and of ICT and geography is very good. Teaching caters very well for the needs of all pupils. It is very good for pupils with special educational needs, who are given very effective help by teachers, support staff and the learning mentor, and for those identified as gifted or talented.

The strengths of teaching and learning are in teachers' lesson planning; the management of pupils – building on excellent relationships and leading to very high work rates; very high expectations that result in very good levels of pupils' independence; pupils' very good levels of interest and concentration brought about by very stimulating teaching methods and very good use of meticulously prepared learning resources; the generally brisk pace of lessons. In the very few lessons where teaching and learning were unsatisfactory, time was wasted and there was too little challenge for pupils; class management in these lessons was unsatisfactory because pupils were insufficiently interested in the work.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. It is stimulating, varied and highly motivating, matching the needs of all pupils very well. The many excellent links with the local community and other schools enrich pupils' experiences. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is excellent. The strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are effective. The provision of extra-curricular activities is good, particularly in Years 3 to 6.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Support for pupils' learning and behavioural needs is imaginative and carefully targeted.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Excellent. The provision for spiritual and cultural development is very good and for moral and social development is excellent. The school creates a very supportive atmosphere in which pupils feel good about what they achieve. The many opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility are accepted maturely and enthusiastically.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. Pupils' all-round development is very carefully monitored and supported. Adults have a genuine concern for the welfare and progress of every child.
Partnership with parents and carers	Good. Parents receive good quality information and there is excellent informal communication between school and home. Parents' opinions are sought on important matters; they appreciate this and have very positive views of the school.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The outstandingly effective leadership of the headteacher, very ably supported by senior and all other staff, ensures that the school has a very clear sense of direction and purpose. This is translated into very effective action by clear and well-understood management systems of high quality.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Well. All statutory responsibilities are fully met. Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses, largely because in many cases they observe and help the school at work. They play a full part in moving the school forward.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. A systematic programme of monitoring teaching, learning and standards is used well to identify areas for further improvement and to set challenging targets.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Spending is carefully directed at well-chosen priorities that enhance the progress made by pupils. All pupils benefit appropriately from spending, including that on pupils with special educational needs and from national and local initiatives. Care is taken to ensure that the best available value is obtained from all expenditure, so that pupils receive maximum benefit.
Staffing, accommodation and learning resources	Much of the school's success stems from its very successful decision to make spending on and choice of staff a major priority. Whilst many classrooms are small, they are used well and many imaginative and very effective modifications have been made to the accommodation. Learning resources are usually of very high quality and many excellent resources are purpose-made by teachers and other staff.

## 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>• The progress that their children make</li> <li>• Standards of behaviour and the values promoted by the school</li> <li>• The quality of teaching</li> <li>• The quality of management</li> <li>• They feel comfortable about approaching the school with concerns</li> <li>• Children want to come to school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of homework</li> <li>• The information on their children's progress</li> <li>• The range of extra-curricular activities</li> </ul>

Many more parents expressed positive views than negative. Inspectors agree with the positive views expressed. The amount of homework given is reasonable bearing in mind children's ages; information on children's progress is generally good; the provision of extra-curricular activities is good for older children and, although at around the normal level, is about to be extended for younger ones.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

- 1 The standards reached by Year 6 pupils in the national tests of 2001 placed pupils at well below the national average in English and mathematics and below average in science. These scores were above the average of similar schools in English and mathematics and well above in science. In all three subjects, scores have been improving in recent years in step with the national rate of improvement. In English and science, the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels was similar to the national. The overall below average attainment was a reflection of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, many of whom did not reach the nationally expected level. The attainment of girls was higher than that of boys in English and science and boys did better in mathematics. This was not significantly different from the variations seen nationally. The currently unvalidated test scores for 2002 show similar standards in English and mathematics and lower standards in science. They fell short of the very challenging targets set for the year group. However, around sixty per cent of pupils reached the nationally expected levels in a year group that contains around seventy per cent of pupils with special educational needs; almost one-half of such pupils achieved very well and reached the nationally expected level. This feature, of pupils who find learning difficult making very good progress, is present throughout the school, in all subjects. Recent analyses of test scores show a clear statistical link between poor attendance and under-achievement.
- 2 The results of the national tests for Year 2 pupils in 2001 were an improvement on most previous years, including those reported at the last inspection. However, in the case of reading, writing and mathematics, the improvement was from very low standards to well below average. In comparison with schools with a similar proportion of free school meals (though many of them with 20 per cent fewer), attainment was average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. Over a third of pupils did not reach the nationally expected standard in writing and in all three areas very few pupils reached above the nationally expected level. Assessment made of attainment in science showed a similar rate of improvement although standards were also well below average.
- 3 The judgement of the inspection is that, from a very low base, pupils' overall standards improve at each stage. Children start school in the nursery with attainment that is very low. They achieve very well in the nursery and reception classes and so start in Year 1 with better attainment but still well below average. Progress is good in Years 1 and 2 and standards rise to be below average by the end of the stage. Progress is very good in Years 3 to 6, so that, by the time pupils leave the school, standards are below average in English and mathematics and average in science. This very good progress is due to the very good teaching of a very well-planned and resourced curriculum, with pupils' individual needs being responded to in ways that ensure that pupils with special educational needs and gifted and talented pupils make very good progress. For example, a significant minority of higher attainers have been set realistic targets to reach standards in English, mathematics and science in 2003 that are more typical of fourteen-year-olds.
- 4 At the end of the reception year, standards are on course to be well below average in communication, language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. However, children progress well in these areas during the nursery and reception years. Standards of personal, social and emotional development increase

even more, though they are on target to be below what is expected nationally. Standards in physical development and creative development improve substantially and are on course to be at nationally expected levels by the time that children start work on the National Curriculum in Year 1.

- 5 By the end of Year 2, standards are well below average in English. They are below average in mathematics, science, geography and music and they are at nationally expected levels in ICT art, design and technology, history, and PE; standards in religious education are at locally expected levels.
- 6 By the end of Year 6, standards are below average in English (including literacy) and mathematics (including numeracy); they are at nationally expected levels in science, art, design and technology, geography, history and music. In ICT and PE, standards are above nationally expected levels. Attainment in religious education is at the locally agreed level.
- 7 In English, a considerable amount of pupils' writing is characterised by powerful and emotive language, some of which provokes understandably emotional responses from the reader. Spelling and punctuation fall a good deal short of this standard. Some pupils are good readers but the success of others is limited by an insecure range of strategies, including phonics, when they meet new and unfamiliar words. The mental arithmetic skills of many pupils are well-developed although some have difficulty in recognising what process to use when they meet orally expressed problems whilst others have a limited mathematical vocabulary.
- 8 Standards in basic skills associated with English, mathematics and ICT are successfully developed in many other subjects and contribute to the standards reached by pupils.

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

- 9 The attitudes, values and personal development of pupils are very good and are a strength of the school - as they were at the last inspection. This is a considerable achievement in the light of the high proportion of pupils who are rightly identified as having special educational needs, including many who on arrival at the school have great difficulty in forming relationships and participating in school life.
- 10 Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. Pupils really enjoy coming to school and are very happy being there. They have complete trust and confidence in their teachers. In lessons, they show a desire to learn and are eager to ask and answer questions and share their experiences. They work hard and concentrate very well, enjoying the stimulating tasks prepared for them. For example, despite having just returned after a two week holiday, reception pupils worked very hard in their literacy lesson, displaying their knowledge of the differences between fiction and non-fiction and predicting the animals that might appear in their book about a day on a farm. In an ICT lesson, Year 6 pupils responded very well to the quick pace and change of task and environment as they moved between classroom and computer suite. Year 5 pupils took great delight in preparing their arguments for a debate about the rights of slaves to vote in Ancient Greece, enjoying the interesting and challenging task.
- 11 The behaviour of pupils around school and in lessons is good overall and is often very good. In lessons, pupils' behaviour ensures that learning takes place at a good rate and pupils achieve well as a result. Indeed, the way in which pupils live and work together overall is impressive. Breaks and lunchtimes are relaxed and comfortable, with pupils mostly playing easily together, although sometimes their play is boisterous and rough, resulting in names appearing in the detention book. However, pupils have a

clear understanding of the high standards expected of them and usually respond accordingly.

- 12 Relationships between staff and pupils, and between pupils themselves, are of a very high quality and create a supportive and caring atmosphere in which pupils flourish. These excellent relationships have a positive impact on pupils' response and attitudes in lessons and to school in general. They are valued both as individuals and for their contribution to school life and there is a feeling of harmony throughout the school. Pupils go through the school day happily and love having visitors to talk to. They are friendly and polite and very keen to talk about themselves, their work and their school. From the nursery onwards, all pupils quickly learn to live and work alongside others. They share resources and toys willingly, listen to each other in lessons and show great respect for property, resources and for each other. Pupils of all ability levels work together very well; when working on the computer, for example, higher attainers are generous in the help they give to less able pupils.
- 13 Pupils respond very well to the responsibilities given to them during the course of the week. Many pupils do various jobs for their teacher during lessons and in Years 3 to 6 pupils become monitors and make a real contribution to the running of the school. They help at lunchtime by answering the telephone and supporting the work of the lunchtime supervisors. One monitor from each class sits on the school council that meets regularly with the headteacher and discusses a range of issues raised by pupils. Issues are relevant, interesting and ideas are often implemented. Suggestions for the next agenda include displaying the school motto around the playground, removable goalposts and having a mural. Pupils feel their views are valued and that they really make a difference to school life. In many lessons, pupils are expected to work independently in groups and they do so in mature ways. They work quickly and with great effort, and are keen to show what they have achieved within a lesson. Their ability to work independently gives them confidence to try and not to be afraid to get things wrong. They are quick to tidy up and help set out resources for their lessons.
- 14 Although attendance has improved since the last inspection, it is still poor. The attendance rate is well below the national average and unauthorised absence is well above the national average. Poor attenders are under-achieving in literacy and numeracy. Punctuality is also unsatisfactory and a number of pupils regularly arrive late for the morning lessons. As the first lesson is either literacy or numeracy, these pupils are missing a significant amount of two very important lessons. The school constantly looks at ways to promote the message of regular attendance and good punctuality with parents but there are still a number of pupils whose attendance is poor and this has a significant impact on their own attainment and the overall attainment of the whole school. Registers are marked accurately and absences recorded correctly. All teachers use registration time well to create a purposeful and effective start for the day ahead.

#### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

- 15 Teaching and learning are very good overall and lead to very good achievement for pupils of all abilities; they also result in very positive attitudes to learning, very good levels of independence and excellent relationships. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Parents agree that the teaching in the school is good and that it helps to produce responsible and mature children. In over a half of lessons seen in the nursery and reception classes and in well over a third of lessons for pupils in Years 3 to 6, the teaching was very good or better. The teaching in Years 1 and 2 was good or better in half of the lessons. In only a very small number of lessons were teaching and learning unsatisfactory.

- 16 The teaching of English is based on a secure understanding of the school's literacy strategy. It is committed to the development of pupils' basic literacy skills but also to the development of positive attitudes to books and to language. In English, as in other subjects, the teachers' planning is a strength and enables lessons to benefit pupils of all abilities. Teaching is very successful in generating not only pupils' enthusiasm for language but also their confidence so that, particularly in the junior classes, they are not afraid to write poems and prose that reflect their own deepest feelings, knowing that both teachers and other pupils will respect and appreciate their efforts. This is the result of the extremely constructive relationships that teachers build with their pupils and their own appreciation of literature and language. All aspects of English are taught well. Most teachers encourage pupils to talk and plan in pairs or small groups before explaining their ideas to the whole class, thus building confidence and helping pupils to shape their contributions in a more articulate way. Reading skills are developed systematically through the use of a well-chosen reading scheme and, for older pupils and higher attainers, the provision of a range of good quality novels and other books. The technical skills of writing are supported by regular attention to spelling, punctuation and handwriting and the provision of helpful guides and structures to help with more extended writing. However, pupils' spelling and punctuation remain relatively weak and poorer readers do not have a proper grasp of phonics, indicating that more needs to be done in these areas. In the most effective English lessons, pupils respond with great energy and enthusiasm to the challenging but interesting tasks they are set, particularly when they relate to pupils' own experiences.
- 17 The very effective teaching of mathematics is firmly based on a good understanding and implementation of the school's numeracy strategy. Teachers maintain a good pace to the sessions on mental mathematics so that pupils enjoy the work and develop their skills at a good rate. The planning of lessons is thorough and work is provided that allows pupils of all levels of attainment to be challenged and achieve well. Many teachers use their computer and design skills very effectively to produce high quality learning resources that precisely match the learning that is planned and these are then used very well in lessons. On a few occasions, explanations are not fully understood, particularly by lower attaining pupils, whose mathematical vocabulary is limited. Both numeracy and literacy lessons often take place at the beginning of the school day. A significant minority of latecomers are very well integrated into lessons by teachers but none-the-less some pace is lost.
- 18 Science is taught well, with an appropriate emphasis on investigation and the use of pupils' own experiences; for example, Year 4 pupils visited a local pond for the very productive study of the creatures that live in it. The teaching of information and communication technology is very good. Teachers have confident knowledge of the subject and ensure that pupils' independence is nurtured very well; consequently, pupils of all abilities are able to respond very positively to the challenging tasks set. Teaching and learning are significantly enhanced by an excellent Internet link with schools in New Zealand and Australia. Other subjects are taught well and the teaching makes imaginative use of cross-curricular links; for example, pupils' learning about Henry VIII and his wives is enhanced by their work on painting and framing portraits of the king and his wives.
- 19 The teaching caters very well for pupils of all levels of ability. Very good planning takes account of the needs of particular groups of pupils and is often based on careful assessments and geared towards set targets. For pupils with special educational needs, planning relates appropriately to their good quality individual education plans and very effective support is provided by teachers, support staff and the learning mentor. Pupils identified as gifted and talented are also well supported, in particular by the Excel project where they learn alongside higher attainers from other schools.

- 20 In almost all lessons, the management of pupils, built upon excellent relationships, leads to good and often very good behaviour and high pupil work rates. The teachers' very high expectations in the most successful lessons lead to high levels of independence and often imaginative work – and not only from the high attainers. The very good levels of pupils' interest are brought about by very stimulating teaching methods and very good use of learning resources. For example, in a lower attaining group in Years 3 and 4, the teacher wrote carefully considered individual letters to each pupil so that all wanted – and were able – to write a letter back answering the interesting and personally targeted questions asked. Time is used very well in most lessons, which move at a brisk pace, often with frequent changes of activity to allow pupils to recharge their batteries. In the very few lessons where teaching and learning were unsatisfactory, time was wasted and there was too little challenge; class management was unsatisfactory in these lessons largely because pupils were insufficiently interested in the lesson.

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

- 21 The quality and range of the learning opportunities provided for pupils are very good. The curriculum fully meets statutory requirements and there is very good equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. This is an improvement since the last inspection, especially in music and ICT.
- 22 Pupils experience a rich, stimulating and varied curriculum and consequently pupils are highly motivated and have very positive attitudes towards their work. The full breadth of required National Curriculum subjects is included together with religious education and an excellent programme of personal, social and health education. Teachers ensure that the content of what pupils learn and the activities they undertake are relevant to pupils' interests. Consequently they become very involved in what they are doing and want to learn. The many excellent links with the local community and other schools enrich pupils' experiences. Educational visits include a residential trip to Paris, scientific visits to the local nature reserves, visits to local historical sites, visits to the Tate Gallery in Liverpool and performances with the Liverpool Philharmonic choir and orchestra. Many visitors provide exciting educational experiences for pupils and these include visiting artists, dance groups, the local police woman who talks to pupils about keeping safe and the "Bug Man" who introduces pupils to a wide variety of insects. The links with the local secondary school are very well established. Across many subjects, teachers work in partnership to enhance and support learning in both schools. For example, fifteen- and sixteen-year-old pupils organise sporting events for large numbers of pupils; science teachers from the secondary school contribute subject expertise and in turn benefit from gaining a good perspective on pupils' learning and achievement up to the age of eleven.
- 23 The curriculum matches the individual needs of pupils very well. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Pupils' needs are identified from a very early age and additional support from class teachers, learning support assistants, visiting teachers and outside agencies is carefully targeted so that pupils receive the right sort of help early on in their school lives. All pupils so identified have individual educational plans that guide the work of class teachers and specialist support in the areas of literacy, numeracy and behaviour. Pupils identified as having special educational needs work with experienced learning support assistants and visiting specialist teachers both in class and in small withdrawal groups. Those pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties benefit considerably from the support given by a learning mentor both alongside pupils in class and in small groups following special courses designed to meet their needs. This imaginative appointment is having a

substantial impact not only on attainment but also on pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development.

- 24 Gifted and talented pupils are identified in Years 3 to 6 and they are very well catered for. Pupils work alongside gifted and talented pupils from other schools for a day each week and benefit from specialist teaching. They are highly challenged in these sessions and they produce outstanding work across the subjects. For example, Year 4 pupils produced an excellent children's story of great imagination and expression. The art work was very good and clearly targeted towards the audience for the story. ICT had been used very well to produce the "Big Book" for use with younger children. Class teachers are very aware of the needs of this group of pupils and they continue to make challenging demands of them when they are working in their usual classes.
- 25 The curriculum is carefully planned to ensure that pupils, most of whom arrive at the school with very weak literacy and numeracy skills, spend plenty of time learning these basic skills. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are well established and are making a good contribution to pupils' progress in their learning of basic skills. Classes are organised into ability groups for most literacy and numeracy lessons and this is helpful to the teaching and consequently pupils' progress. Across subjects, teachers pay good attention to developing basic skills, especially in speaking and listening. However, in some subjects there is not enough emphasis on the correct spelling of technical language and so pupils continue to spell terms incorrectly.
- 26 Personal, social and health education is excellent and pervades the whole school. It makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development. Extra-curricular activities are good, especially for pupils in Years 3 to 6. A good range of sporting, musical and dramatic activities is well attended by older pupils. Pupils have very good access to computers out of lesson time. Local sports clubs contribute to the learning programme and provide good quality coaching. The school involves high numbers of pupils in musical and dramatic productions.
- 27 The provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is excellent and pupils make outstanding progress in their personal development. The school has created a very positive atmosphere in which pupils enjoy learning, want to do well and mature into caring and responsible young people.
- 28 The attention the school pays to helping pupils to develop spiritual understanding results in children who are sensitive and thoughtful and have very good levels of self-esteem. The school values all its pupils highly so that they feel good about themselves and what they are achieving. Relationships between pupils and adults within the school are excellent and all their day-to-day contact is underpinned by a mutual respect. Teachers give pupils a great deal of praise and rewards where they are deserved. The school encourages pupils to value each other. For example, in work produced in personal, social and health education lessons, pupils recognise what is important about friends and friendship. Teachers encourage pupils to express their feelings and they write very sensitively about the situations of others less fortunate than themselves. For example, Year 4 pupils have written about those affected by the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> with great empathy and Year 6 pupils wrote poems that expressed the unhappiness of individuals very well.
- 29 Teachers encourage pupils to recognise the very special nature of much of what surrounds them. For example, in a science lesson, children in reception had a real sense of wonder and enchantment as they watched baby chicks. They were fascinated by the way they cheeped and drank water. In a science lesson held at the local pond,

Year 4 pupils were amazed by the number and the strange nature of the creatures they found.

- 30 Assemblies are well planned. They promote the ethos of the school well and they provide a collective act of worship of a broadly Christian nature. They give pupils the opportunity to pray and reflect and teachers ensure that pupils take an active part in them.
- 31 The school's strong emphasis on personal responsibility and clear expectations of good behaviour help pupils to understand right and wrong and results in good levels of behaviour. The school does a great deal to help pupils work out for themselves what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and consequently they develop a good understanding of right and wrong. For example, pupils have all been involved in deciding their own classroom's code of conduct. Any incidents out on the playground are handled very well by the welfare assistants who ensure that pupils talk through what happened and why and solutions to problems are sorted out amicably.
- 32 Pupils take on the many opportunities for responsibility in a mature and responsible manner and they develop a very good understanding of citizenship. The school council has a real influence on the life of the school. For example, they are helping to plan a new playground area and they are organising toast to be served to pupils in the mornings, once a week. From an early age, pupils take responsibility for keeping their own classrooms tidy. Monitors expect high standards of their fellow pupils. For example, pupils responsible for keeping the lunch boxes tidy display assertive yet humorous notices reminding pupils of what is expected of them.
- 33 In lessons throughout the school pupils are encouraged to work together. Teachers plan partnerships and group work in class to encourage a wider interaction between pupils. They ensure that there are many opportunities for pupils to talk to each other about their work. The programme of personal, social and health education is excellent. Clear aims to develop pupils' personal and social responsibility and enhance pupils' self esteem and confidence are well met. The programme pervades the work of the school and includes specific lessons. Some lessons, called Circle Time, include many opportunities for pupils to talk about their experiences and feelings to each other in a structured way as a whole class. There is very good emphasis on understanding and developing a healthy lifestyle, and for older pupils there are very good opportunities to take part in sport and drama activities.
- 34 Pupils gain a very good understanding of their own culture and a good awareness of how people from other cultures live, through the very good range of visits, visitors to the school and activities planned in lessons. Many visits to local places of culture and interest ensure that pupils' horizons are broadened and that they appreciate the culture in their own area. Pupils' work in Year 4, after a visit to the "Book Boat" docked in Liverpool, reflects the interest in and curiosity about the journeys the boat had taken across the world that the visit stimulated in the pupils. Visits to the Tate Gallery in Liverpool stimulate a greater variety of art work and appreciation of outstanding work. Pupils' awareness of how people from other cultures live is developed well by work in religious education. Local visitors from Sikh, Buddhist and Jewish communities have added to pupils' experiences as have the links developed through the Internet with schools in Australia and New Zealand.
- 35 As a result of the many and varied opportunities pupils have to develop personally, they become well-motivated confident learners who communicate well with each other, are sensitive to each others' needs and make decisions responsibly.



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

- 36 The school provides a very good level of care for its pupils which is highly appreciated by parents. The overall well-being and development of each pupil is of paramount importance and evident throughout the school.
- 37 The school pays very good attention to the physical care of its pupils. There is an effective child protection policy that follows the local authority procedures. The headteacher is the designated officer and ensures that all staff are aware of the procedure and that guidelines are followed correctly. Good use is made of medical support and other outside agencies to provide specialist support, and lines of communication are clear. There are very effective arrangements for dealing with first aid and sickness. Regular fire drills and safety checks on equipment are carried out. The health and safety policy is clear, and the approach to health and safety checks and risk assessments is well controlled and effective.
- 38 The school is an exceptionally caring place where pupils feel safe and confident. Staff (including the very effective lunch-time team, administrative staff and site manager) have an in-depth knowledge of all their pupils and a genuine concern for and interest in their welfare and progress. The excellent relationships are the basis upon which much of the personal support is built and this contributes to pupils' ability to get the most out of every day. The school is a very happy place and pupils, staff and visitors enjoy being there.
- 39 The school has developed a climate of high expectations, honesty and trust and through this they monitor and promote good behaviour very well. All incidents of unacceptable behaviour are logged and monitored and the number of more serious incidents is reducing. Furthermore, pupils involved in any incident record their own part in it, why they reacted the way they did, the effect this had and how they should react in the future. In this way, pupils quickly understand the consequences and effect of their actions which helps them to grow emotionally and socially. The school takes a strong stance on bullying and values the importance of the individual. All staff act as excellent role models for children, treating everyone with respect and friendliness. Personal and social education underpins the day-to-day work of the school and permeates every lesson. The first three days of every term concentrate on personal and social development which settles pupils back into school life quickly and reinforces the attitudes expected of them. This dedication to raising pupils' confidence, self-esteem and aspirations is a strength of the school and is instrumental in the progress pupils make. Behaviour problems are dealt with imaginatively and on an individual basis and the learning mentor is used well and effectively to help all pupils get the most out of their lessons and the school day. All staff in the school – teaching and non-teaching – work as a close team which ensures that pupils always encounter the same approach, standards and philosophy.
- 40 The procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are good. Attendance and punctuality have been a main focus for the school since the last inspection and the attendance rate is improving slowly. Current strategies to improve attendance include daily meetings for selected pupils with the learning mentor, attendance card incentives, weekly meetings with the Education Welfare Officer, the Mayor's award presentations for full attendance and the "Well Done" award scheme operating in school. Attendance data is evaluated regularly and priority cases are constantly checked by the learning mentor, education welfare officer and headteacher based on the carefully collected data provided by the office staff.

- 41 Since the last inspection the school has developed good procedures for monitoring and tracking the academic development of pupils and is constantly looking at how they can review and improve even further. They use an effective mixture of standard tests (such as baseline assessments, national tests and reading tests) and school-based methods to give detailed and accurate information on pupils' attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science. Assessment procedures in most foundation subjects are also good but are less well developed in art and design and technology. Similarly, assessment within the foundation stage also needs reviewing to ensure consistency and to provide a detailed picture of progress leading into the National Curriculum. Assessment procedures, overall, clearly identify those pupils who are performing at a high level as well as those pupils having problems. This information is used directly when planning the curriculum and lessons and to determine the best course of support for all pupils. Target setting is now an established part of school life and used to evaluate the performance of groups and the whole school. Target setting is clearly linked to the assessment procedures, building up a cumulative picture of progress for all pupils.

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

- 42 The school enjoys a good partnership with parents and considers this an essential basis for the work of the school. This area has continued to improve since the last inspection.
- 43 Parents' views of the school are very positive. At the pre-inspection meeting and through the questionnaire, they showed great appreciation for the work of the school. Parents are particularly confident that the school will deal with any problems or concerns quickly and sensitively. Their children are very happy at the school and parents appreciate the quality of teaching and leadership, and the values and behaviour that the school promotes. Parents are less happy with the amount of homework provided and a few parents do not feel well informed about the progress their child is making.
- 44 Parents receive good quality information about the school, its philosophy and approach. The annual report from governors gives a really good account of the school year and rightly celebrates the school's achievements and activities. The weekly newsletters keep parents up-to-date with events and activities, and is used to send messages relating to specific aspects of school life. Noticeboards and displays around the school give parents an abundance of information on the school's life and the work of their children.
- 45 Parents are kept very well informed about their children's progress through two formal parent consultation evenings, a full written report and the excellent on-going two-way communication that operates between home and school. Parents are genuinely welcomed by all staff to raise problems or queries whenever they wish, and parents feel very comfortable in talking to teachers. Through the good on-going assessment and tracking of each pupil, teachers are well-prepared to give detailed feedback to parents at the consultation meetings and throughout the year. The attendance at these meetings has improved greatly and now over 70 per cent of parents attend. The written reports at the end of the year clearly detail what pupils can do within each subject and are very personal to the pupil.
- 46 The school works extremely hard to involve parents in school life and the education of their child. From before children start in the nursery, parents are invited and encouraged to come into school. A crèche is available to allow parents time to see teachers and also to give some families and mothers a short break. The school is constantly seeking more ways to have members of the community in and around school

to break down the barriers and change people's view of education to one of interest and understanding. A summer school planned for pupils in the summer holidays will also provide some training and short courses relevant for parents. Workshops have been run for parents to introduce particular issues and new approaches such as the literacy and numeracy hours. Curriculum information is regularly sent to parents and they are actively encouraged to help with homework and reading. The reading record suggests ways in which parents can effectively support reading by giving a check list of things to look for. Parents' views are actively sought through questionnaires, suggestion boxes and general conversation. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are consulted and informed regularly about their children's individual education plans and their progress. A small number of parents do not send their children to school on time and a smaller number have children who are poor attenders. The poorest attenders underachieve in their school work.

- 47 There is a very busy parent/teacher/friends association (PTFA) which not only raises significant money but also acts as a real link between home and school. The PTFA is largely responsible for funding the mini-bus which plays an important part in the school day by providing a bus run into school for many pupils who live a good walk away. Social events such as the popular bingo also helps break the barriers down between home and school and allows the school to meet parents in a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere.
- 48 The school values parental support and is constantly looking for ways in which they can encourage parents to work with them for the benefit of their children.

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

- 49 Under the outstanding leadership of the headteacher, the school has developed a very clear sense of direction and purpose. Every pupil is regarded as important; their self-esteem is fostered with great care, partly for its own sake and partly to ensure that each pupil is enabled to give of his or her best. The school's motto of 'Never settle for less than your best' is at the centre of all that it does. This vision for the school is not only widely shared by all groups connected with and working for the school but many of them contribute very positively to both leadership and management and thus to the school's success and to pupils' very high achievements. Whilst the headteacher is the driving force, very powerful contributions are made by senior and other staff (especially by the deputy who not only contributes substantially to the leadership and management of the school but who also sets a very good example as a teacher). Governors are a powerful force for good; they share a strong commitment to children's learning and well-being and to the success of the school; they work hard and successfully on its behalf. A management/leadership team works very effectively. Membership includes relatively junior as well as senior members of the teaching staff, and support, administrative and caretaking staff. The shaping of the school's priorities therefore taps into a wide range of understandings and ensures that they are very appropriate and fully consistent with the school's aims and values. Priorities for improvement are clearly set out in a very good school development plan. This is carefully costed and supported financially at appropriate levels. In many cases, the plan includes targets that indicate how success will be measured, although some of these give too little indication of the intended impact on pupils' achievements. There are clearly defined management systems that ensure that areas identified in the school improvement plan are well-managed and run to time. Teachers with co-ordinator roles play a very effective part in this.
- 50 Governors know the school well, often because they observe and help the school in a voluntary capacity. Their good understanding of its strengths and relative weaknesses

ensures that their role in shaping the direction of the school is valuable and effective. All statutory duties are fully met.

- 51 A rigorous programme of monitoring and evaluating teaching ensures that strengths are consolidated and spread and areas for improvement are quickly identified and worked on. This process plays a major part in ensuring that teaching is of a high or very high standard throughout the school. The school's strategy for the performance management of teachers plays a full and effective part in this. Pupils' attainment is carefully monitored in order to direct resources and energy in the most appropriate directions and to measure the success of changes made. Recent analyses have quantified a link between poor attendance and lower achievement. Analyses of test results have resulted in greater attention being given to aspects of English, mathematics and science.
- 52 Finances are managed confidently with full and successful use being made of computerised financial management systems. Auditors' reports are positive and any suggestions made are quickly acted on. In recent years, financial balances have been eroded by the need for high spending on cover for absent teachers but plans are in place to build a reasonable financial reserve. Funds made available for pupils with special educational needs and for specific projects such as Sure Start and Excellence in Cities are spent wisely and for the intended purposes; they have positive impacts on pupils' achievements. The school administrator and her team make substantial contributions to its success. Day-to-day administration runs very smoothly and confidently. Parents and other visitors are made to feel valued and comfortable.
- 53 A better than average ratio of adults (teachers and support staff) to pupils and the high levels of expertise thus available have substantial positive influences on pupils' learning. The accommodation is very well cared for and imaginatively adapted so that it fully meets the needs of pupils and staff. Learning resources are of high quality, many of them made by members of staff. These include not only classroom materials but also valuable, high quality play areas for younger pupils designed and made in school, largely by the site manager who, together with his staff, ensures that the learning environment is spotlessly clean and attractively presented.
- 54 The last inspection reported that overall leadership and management were very good. Those foundations have been built upon exceedingly well. Curriculum management was inconsistent largely because the role lacked clarity. This is no longer the case; almost all co-ordinators make major contributions not only to their subjects and other areas but also to the work of the whole school.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 55 Raise standards in English. In particular:
- ◆ extend the already good analyses made of the attainment of different groups of pupils in order to identify and consolidate areas of strength, and areas of weakness so as to improve them;
  - ◆ ensure that all pupils are present at the start of morning sessions;
  - ◆ in reading, ensure that pupils fully develop a good grasp of phonics and other reading strategies in order to cope with new and unfamiliar words;
  - ◆ in writing, improve pupils' grasp and control of spelling and punctuation.

(See paragraphs 7, 16, 25, 51, 73 – 80)

- 56 Raise standards in mathematics. In particular:
- ◆ develop pupils' mathematical vocabulary so that it is adequate for the learning intended;
  - ◆ give consistently clear and sufficiently detailed explanations to pupils who find the work difficult;
  - ◆ extend the already good analyses made of the attainment of different groups of pupils in order to identify and consolidate areas of strength, and areas of weakness so as to improve them;
  - ◆ ensure that all pupils are present at the start of the morning numeracy lesson.

(See paragraphs 17, 51, 59, 85 – 87)

- 57 Improve the attendance and punctuality of the substantial minority of pupils who are poor attenders by:
- ◆ refining and developing strategies to improve attendance and punctuality;
  - ◆ demonstrating to parents the clear link between their children's attendance and achievement.

(See paragraphs 1, 14, 46, 71, 83)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	63
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	37

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	22	23	14	2	0	0
Percentage	2	35	37	22	3	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

### 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)	31.5	277
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	n/a	198

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR - Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	11	125

#### English as an additional language

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

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	4.1
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 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	19	21	40

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	9	15
	Girls	17	15	17
	Total	29	24	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	73 (49)	60 (47)	80 (60)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	15	11
	Girls	17	14	14
	Total	27	29	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	68 (53)	73 (56)	63 (49)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	20	25	45

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	11	17
	Girls	17	15	21
	Total	27	26	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	60 (67)	58 (63)	84 (74)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	11	13
	Girls	17	15	19
	Total	27	26	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	60 (56)	58 (61)	71 (66)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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	0
White	277
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	4	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)	13
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.8
Average class size	23.7

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

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	100

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	39
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	66
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	866035
Total expenditure	848244
Expenditure per pupil	2431
Balance brought forward from previous year	-9881
Balance carried forward to next year	7910

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.4

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*



## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	430
Number of questionnaires returned	78

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	35	3	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	71	28	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	70	28	3	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	41	13	1	1
The teaching is good.	74	22	4	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	62	26	9	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	85	13	1	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	88	10	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	65	23	5	4	3
The school is well led and managed.	77	17	3	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	82	15	3	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	54	32	8	1	5

### **Summary of parents' and carers' responses**

The great majority of parents have a high regard for the school and value the work that it does for and with them and their children.

## **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**

58 Standards on entry to the nursery are low in all areas of learning apart from some aspects of physical development. By the end of the reception year, standards are in line with those expected nationally in physical development and in creative development because of the high standard of teaching and the individual help that children receive from teachers and classroom assistants in the nursery and reception classes. The very good provision and organisation of teaching and learning in these classes enables children to achieve very well. Standards in personal, social and emotional development and knowledge and understanding of the world, although below average, reflect the considerable progress that children have made in learning to work with others and in absorbing new learning. In communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development, standards are well below those expected by the end of the reception year because there are very few higher attainers at this stage of their education. The vast majority of children enter school with low skills in speaking and listening; all, including children with special educational needs, achieve very well and a minority attain close to average standards. The children are very well prepared for the next stage of their education in English and mathematics. The leadership and management of the school have successfully introduced many new initiatives recently; however, the revised assessment procedures and the tracking of the progress of individual and groups of children are at an early stage of development. The policy for Early Years does not completely reflect the present practice. The very good teaching of all aspects of children's learning ensures that children make very good progress. Overall provision, including the management of the nursery and reception stage, teaching and the curriculum has improved since the last inspection and pupils make even better progress - it was good and is now very good.

#### *Personal, social and emotional development*

59 The children enter the nursery with poor listening skills and with levels of concentration that are very low for their age. They quickly respond to the calm friendliness of staff and to well-ordered routines of the nursery. Initially, many find it hard to sit still for very long or, alternatively, sit quietly but without registering what is happening around them. They soon understand that the beginning of each session is a special listening time and try hard to join in. The adults know the children very well and questions and references to parents and brothers and sisters encourage children to feel at home. The majority begin by shouting out and expecting to receive instant attention but the consistently calm reassurance, and very good use of praise, offered by all adults, soon teaches the children to modify their demands. They know that they have to take turns and that if they are not chosen on one occasion then they will have a turn the next. Most children find listening to instructions difficult and the teachers and support assistants have to explain simply and clearly so the children understand what to do. This is very effective and is often mirrored in children's play as they use actions and simple words to communicate with each other. Initially the children move to their activities in 'family' groups which allows the adults to settle each child individually and so they learn to use their time productively and to concentrate for longer stretches of time. As a result of this very good teaching, the children begin to learn to co-operate with each other and to play together as in the 'underwater world' where children put on diving goggles and carried out an imaginary rescue at sea, hauling a boy into the rubber dinghy, shouting 'Watch out!' with great realism.

60 By the end of the reception year, pupils are well used to working and playing together and, although a minority of pupils still prefer to play alone or alongside others, most relish the times they have to choose their activities. The teaching is very good and follows similar routines to those in the nursery. This provides good stability and helps to develop children's confidence and independence. Average attainers work with a fair degree of independence though they find it hard to develop their play without adult assistance and often go back and forth from the teacher or classroom assistant to 'show' or to 'tell' something because they want to share the excitement. A significant minority of lower attaining pupils still feel more comfortable with an adult nearby; this reflects their relative immaturity at this stage. Because their spoken language is still simple, this is reflected in their dealings with each other which are often at the simple stage of 'I want...' or 'Look!' or 'Let's do...'. The teaching enables higher attainers to begin to empathise with others; for example, after listening to a Bible story, pupils commented that 'Jesus helped his mates'. The work is very well matched to children's individual needs and opportunities are given to children to use their initiative. For instance, a higher attainer was given a large piece of card to draw a boat which she did with great success, selecting Noah's Ark as a model and using pen, crayons, scissors and sticky tape entirely independently and to good effect.

### *Communication, language and literacy*

61 In the nursery, teachers provide interesting opportunities to help children to communicate orally through discussion and through answering teachers' questions both in whole class groups and when working individually or in small groups. The response of most pupils is limited and some find communicating with friends orally difficult. For example, several children played in the sand with a good range of plastic toys but did not talk to each other. By contrast, in reception, children chat to each other - though their sentence constructions are insecure. Teachers introduce new language well and remind children to listen carefully to instructions. They engage children in discussion - for example, when children are playing in the playground. Members of staff encourage children to communicate with each other through the singing and acting out of traditional songs such as 'The Farmer's in the Den'.

62 In the nursery, teachers read stories very well with lots of expression and humour. In one lesson, the majority of children were captivated by the reading of 'The Crunching Munching Caterpillar'. A minority of children, however, needed to be cajoled by staff to listen carefully. In the reception, teachers select books carefully to interest children, though a significant minority fidget and find sitting down together and listening to a story difficult. Classroom assistants work alongside children with special educational needs to provide them with very good help to enable them to make brisk progress. Teachers check children's progress and challenge them to read words and to work out words using letter sounds; for example, higher attainers read correctly words such as 'some', most children recognised initial letter sounds and a pupil with hearing difficulties read 'hatch' correctly by breaking the word up into sounds and then combining them.

63 Teachers ask searching questions to ensure pupils understand what has been read and are sensitive to pupils' well below average communication skills. This happened when children were questioned about similarities and differences between a duck and a goose after studying text and pictures in a book about animals. Children could spot similarities but it appeared that some had difficulties in identifying differences. A child stated that the birds were different because of 'feathers' which initially appear to be an incorrect answer; however, the teacher realised that child's limited explanation was unclear and, through further questioning, drew out from the child that the difference was 'brown feathers and white feathers'. In both the nursery and reception classes, teachers encourage pupils to 'write'. The children enjoy working in the 'writing' areas;

for example, in the nursery children made marks for words to describe a Chinese food dish. During the reception year, children begin to write strings of words and higher attainers correctly write their own names.

### *Mathematical development*

64 In the nursery, teachers take every opportunity to encourage children's mathematical development and understanding of mathematical language; for example, children recognised and named circles, squares and triangles when they made pictures from coloured shapes. All children recognised the number 1 but many became confused when shown numbers 2, 3, 4 and 5. Older nursery children know the order and names of days of the week by learning a song. Higher attainers know which day was yesterday and name the next day correctly.

65 By the end of the reception year, children have made very good progress in their mathematical understanding because teachers plan activities very carefully to challenge children appropriately to their level of attainment. Resources are used very well and are of high quality. The resources are used very well to develop number recognition and addition of number, for example. This happened in a very good lesson. A variety of resources were used very well to stimulate children's interest in counting and adding up to eight. Lower attainers counted five fluffy eggs and placed them in a nest on an attractive three-dimensional board and then selected the corresponding number to label the number of eggs. Average attainers, helped by a classroom assistant, put two groups of tractors on a white board and then wrote a corresponding addition equation such as  $5 + 2$  before counting and totalling accurately. Higher attainers placed different combinations of eight small 'creatures' on a spider's web and recorded the different numbers that added up to eight. In all their tasks, pupils worked very productively and behaved very well.

### *Knowledge and understanding of the world*

66 In the nursery, children's knowledge and understanding of the world was considerably broadened when a visiting Sikh introduced them to different types of food and taught them to say 'hello' in another language. On another occasion, the children made Chinese food and tried eating with chopsticks. The teaching encourages strong cultural and creative elements to stimulate the children's verbal responses and to encourage them to question what they observe. When making biscuits, the children measure the sugar, butter and flour on the scales and watch carefully, ready to tell the adult when there is enough. The quality of teachers' questioning is very good as it asks children to think what will happen and whether the oven will be hot or cold. The children are fascinated by the texture and hold out their hands, saying 'This!' The very good teaching captures their interest; for example, by telling the children that something exciting has happened, the children are enthused to see that the caterpillars in the special box have become butterflies. Three higher attainers remember the word 'cocoon' and periodically children peer intently into the box to see and to comment on the change for themselves.

67 In the reception class, children continue to develop their understanding of different cultures. For example, they dress themselves in saris and know how to decorate their foreheads appropriately. They discover very interesting facts about water as they try to fish for plastic fish and crabs using different implements. The very good quality of teaching challenges children to learn; for example, higher attainers began to work out with their teacher's help which methods were the most efficient at catching fish. Average attainers correctly sequence pictures that tell the story of a hen's life. The very good teaching encourages them to talk and suggests words to go with the pictures. Lower attainers discuss the different types of animals to be found on a farm. The

teaching is very imaginative and children quickly become enthused, walking round with giant magnets, for example, pretending to be 'metal detectives', while others quietly find 'buried treasure' in the sand, exclaiming in wonder as paperclips attach themselves to the magnet. The teaching encourages children to discover for themselves and to ask questions which further develop their capacity to express their new-found knowledge. By the end of the reception year, standards are below average overall because a substantial minority need help to talk about what they have learnt but children have achieved very well.

### *Physical Development*

- 68 In the nursery, children enter school with the ability to play confidently on, for example, large wheeled bikes, although their manipulative skills – for example, holding and using pencils and paintbrushes - are limited, as seen when they 'painted' as though they were using sticks rather than brushes. The children enjoy physical education lessons in the hall although most need a lot of direction from teachers. Many of the youngest children lack confidence in new situations and find working together difficult. Teachers have a very structured approach and ensure that children know what they are to do. The members of staff work well together to encourage all children to take part in energetic exercise that will also develop their skills of working with others; for example, children worked hard as a group to lift and lower a large circular parachute. Teachers then extended the activity to enable children to make a mushroom shape and to sit inside the parachute. The children chattered to one another with obvious joy.
- 69 By the end of the reception year, the children play well together in outdoor activities. Teachers work alongside children at playtime and encourage children to develop their skills. Most children can skip extremely well and enjoy spinning the rope for other children whilst singing traditional skipping rhymes such as 'Jelly on the Plate'. They run around a track and stop to let others cross the track at pedestrian crossings. Higher attainers organise games of football and penalty shoot-outs for other children. In physical education lessons, children dress independently though few have changes of clothing. They find a safe space to work and skip around to music. They move in different directions and most dodge each other well. Teachers have a lovely rapport with children, who respond by working energetically and behaving very sensibly. Children use equipment very well. They throw bean bags into the air and catch. They work well with partners though a few are rather self-centred and find difficulties working with others. Teachers stress safety points when working with equipment such as bats and balls. They celebrate excellent performance of individual children; for example, the skills of a child who could keep the ball up in the air for at least five hits with a bat followed by heading the ball. By the end of the reception year, children have improved their fine manipulative skills and this is seen in their handling of equipment in creative work as well as in their writing and using the mouse on the computer proficiently.

### *Creative development*

- 70 The nursery offers children a very wide range of activities to foster their creative development. Colourful displays of children's collages based on the themes of green, red and yellow reinforce their knowledge of colour as well as their dexterity in cutting and sticking different types of materials. They clearly enjoy creative tasks and concentrate for a good length of time. They like talking to adults and are not shy with visitors. Higher attainers scrunch up coloured tissue paper and take care to stick it in specific places; average attainers stick small pieces indiscriminately but enjoy the mix of colours. The very good co-operation between the teacher and classroom assistants enables the children to join in with songs very well, and as a result they do the actions and smile all the time. When singing, 'The wheels on the bus', most children predict the

next verse and make suggestions for others. The children proudly take their paintings and collages to show their parents as they are given out at the end of the session.

- 71 By the end of the reception year, children have achieved very well and attain the standards expected nationally of their age. They are adept at selecting materials to make animal masks. Higher attainers cut out equally sized triangular shaped ears for horses and average attainers cut strips of thin wool skilfully which they then carefully place on a patch of glue. The quality of teaching is very good and encourages children to talk about what they are doing. The children respond with great interest and concentrate for long periods of time. Lower attainers and children with special educational needs learn to understand number through creative activities. They laughed and said 'tickles' as their feet were painted and then marvelled at the colourful pairs of footprints they produced. The teaching encourages children to use their imaginations. When constructing a farm, for instance, children used wooden clothes pegs for the fences. The children show some dexterity with scissors and help themselves to resources in order to stick lolly sticks on the back of animals they have drawn to go into Noah's Ark. Average attainers said, 'We can pretend the carpet is the sea.' They sing very well for their age and with clear diction as they imitate their teacher. They have many favourite songs which they sing rhythmically and in tune and adapt their voices to sing loudly or softly very well for their age.

## ENGLISH

- 72 The standards of attainment are well below the national average by the end of Year 2 and below the national average by the end of Year 6. National test results for 2001 indicate that in comparison with the results in similar schools the standards of the seven-year-old pupils were in line with the average and the standards of the eleven-year-olds were above the average. The proportion of eleven-year-olds who attained the higher level in national tests was in line with the national average. There is no significant difference in the standards attained by boys and girls. Poorer attainers reach lower standards. Given the low level of attainment of pupils entering the infants, pupils achieve soundly in the infants and well in the juniors. The proportion of Year 6 pupils reaching nationally expected levels has risen from 16 per cent in 1996, at the time of the last inspection, to 60 per cent in 2001.
- 73 By the end of Year 2, standards in reading and writing are well below average; standards in speaking and listening are below average. By and large pupils listen with sound levels of attention and follow instructions. They are keen to do well and willingly take part in classroom activities and discussions. Some of these younger pupils, however, speak very quietly. Teachers are skilful at repeating what they have said so that everyone can hear. Lower attaining pupils and the large proportion of those with special educational needs are often slow in understanding what has been said and their ability to recall accurately information and knowledge imparted in recent previous lessons is weak. Although most pupils can express what they want to say, the range of their vocabulary is relatively narrow.
- 74 There is a good match of books from the reading scheme with pupils' needs and ability in reading. Most pupils cope successfully with their reading book but an unusually large proportion can cope only with relatively simple texts which contain many repetitions. They experience problems of comprehension when dealing with straightforward wording in worksheets and textbooks and fairly basic terms have to be explained with care. Most are acquiring some knowledge of the blending of letter sounds to make simple words and skill in breaking down unfamiliar words to assist their pronunciation and understanding. Weaker readers often read one word at a time and some fail to apply the knowledge and strategies they have been taught when they get stuck: as a result,

the pace of their reading is often slow and their understanding of what they read is insecure. The limited vocabulary of many pupils also impedes their understanding of what they read – for example, an average pupil in Year 2 did not understand the meaning of the word “gloomy”. Some need to be heard to read more frequently in order to develop their reading skills and to build up their vocabulary.

- 75 Pupils are encouraged to write in their own words in a range of styles. Only the higher attaining pupils, however, succeed in producing writing of a reasonable length. Despite the careful preparations made for writing activities and the “scaffolding” that teachers put in place to help them, many pupils succeed in producing only a few sentences which are marred by many errors of spelling and punctuation. Standards of presentation vary but the general standard is weak. There is a marked tendency among many pupils to spell even common words in ways which are phonetically plausible but wrong. For example, an able pupil in Year 2, re-telling the story of the Three Bears, wrote, “Hoow has bin sitg in my bed?” This remains a feature as pupils move through the school.
- 76 By the time they reach the end of the juniors, pupils have gained considerably in confidence and most speak out confidently in lessons. They volunteer in good numbers to answer the teacher’s questions. Many, however, rush into answers and fail to check if their answer is likely to be correct. In order to be first with the answer, some make wild and implausible guesses, repeating, for example, a random word or line from the passage they have just read in the hope that this might prove to be the answer the teacher wants to hear. Pupils’ answers tend to be more accurate or reasonable when they have been given an opportunity to discuss it with a speaking partner or with a small group of their peers.
- 77 By this stage, more able pupils are coping with long and demanding texts with confidence and good levels of understanding. Several, for example, can read the Harry Potter novels accurately and at a good pace. They have a good knowledge of the various characters and an accurate grasp of the intricacies of the plot. There remain, however, an exceptionally large proportion of pupils who hesitate, pause and get stuck when reading relatively undemanding texts. One Year 5 pupil stopped completely when he encountered the phrase, “Even though”. Some have a tendency to overcome difficulties by the simple expedient of inserting a word of their own invention for the word on the page. Most average and above average Year 6 pupils can use an index and a contents page, know how to find information in the library by consulting the catalogue and some can suggest some of their favourite authors. This work is considerably enhanced by the use of the good school library, that has been developed very well since the last inspection, when facilities were not adequate.
- 78 Many Year 6 pupils produce a good volume of writing in their own words in a range of styles: stories, play-scripts, letters, diary entries, poems, book reviews and notes. Writing tends still to be characterised, however, by a plethora of mis-spellings such as “uster” for “used to”, “ider” for “idea” or “uslus” for “useless”. One average Year 5 pupil wrote “slavire” for “slavery”. Pupils rarely consult dictionaries to check their spelling. Although teachers enforce a common handwriting policy right through the school and there are examples of well presented writing both in pupils’ books and in displays, the general standard of handwriting is below average. The combination of frequent mis-spellings and poor handwriting detracts from the content of pupils’ writing, which is often of sound or good quality. In some of their writing, pupils made good use of bullet points to marshal their arguments for and against a point of view. Pupils use ICT well to develop their writing skills, producing, for example, interesting articles for their class newspaper.’

- 79 The quality of teaching is good throughout the school; in Years 3 to 6 there is a high proportion of very good teaching. In both the infants and the juniors, teachers are well versed in putting the National Literacy Strategy into practice. In the infants, teachers skilfully draw the pupils - many of whom have a natural shyness or diffidence - into the lesson, encouraging them to answer questions and making them feel that it is their lesson by presenting them with choices and praising them when they make good efforts or produce good quality work. Basic skills are consistently reinforced and there is good management of time. For example, in one good lesson in which pupils were learning about elephants, the teacher conducted a brisk session on some letter patterns, helping pupils to strengthen their grasp of "oo", "ue" and "ew" words. In the same lesson, tasks of different degrees of difficulty were set for groups of pupils with different levels of ability with each task challenging and stretching the relevant group. The pupils' interest was maintained for the length of the lesson because of the teacher's skill in motivating the pupils and helping them overcome difficulties. Lessons have clear and relevant learning objectives and are well structured and organised to achieve those objectives. Teachers sometimes review the objectives with the pupils at the end of the lesson to see if they have been achieved.
- 80 In Years 3 to 6, teachers combine good subject knowledge with good management of pupils. Lessons are taught in well-managed phases and teachers have appropriate expectations of different groups of pupils. High expectations of more able pupils help them to make progress in keeping with their ability. In one very good, well organised lesson on *The Iron Man*, for example, average and more able Year 6 pupils were able to find examples of metaphor, simile and onomatopoeia and one more able pupil noted how at one point the author used short sentences to convey a sense of panic. Teachers of pupils in Years 3 and 4 check the understanding of the pupils very carefully and clearly explain any words or phrases which lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs have difficulty in understanding. Classroom assistants help pupils with special educational needs to keep abreast of the lesson and to cope with the tasks they are given. Teachers frequently enter key words on the flipchart or the board, building up words and ideas which pupils can use later in their own writing activities. They are careful to ensure that the activities set are well matched to the interests and attainment levels of the different groups of pupils. In question and answer sessions, they are skilled at providing lower attaining pupils with prompts and clues which help them to achieve an appropriate answer. Teachers have good knowledge of the previous attainment of different groups of pupils and make good use of this in planning their teaching and in setting tasks for different groups. They mark pupils' writing with considerable care, praising effort and good work and often making useful suggestions on how improvements could be made. It is not clear that any check is made to see if pupils make use of the suggestions that are offered. Pupils are well motivated to work well. On some occasions, their wish to do well outstrips their understanding and they volunteer answers that are wide of the mark. Some lower attaining and average pupils have too little regard for precision and accuracy. On a few occasions, teachers do not check pupils' understanding thoroughly enough to see how much pupils have truly internalised the skills that have been covered. Teachers develop strong positive relationships with their pupils and this is a major factor in their ability to motivate pupils and keep them on task till the end of the lesson. Homework is regularly set.
- 81 The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and provides good support for her colleagues by scrutinising planning and through many formal and informal contacts and meetings. In recent years, several initiatives have been launched and these are helping to raise pupils' standards of attainment. This year and last year there has been a strong school-wide focus on improving writing and a consultant was recently employed in the infants; this is helping to develop pupils' skills in speaking and listening. Booster classes are raising the standards of selected pupils closer to the national average and additional



classes are stretching more able pupils. These strategies are supported well by careful assessment of each pupil's achievements and by setting demanding targets for the future. The school is successfully making a considerable investment in improving the quality of its provision in literacy and there is a strong commitment to raising standards of attainment. The consequence is that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and gifted and talented, are now making very good progress.

## MATHEMATICS

- 82 Whilst test scores in the 2001 national tests were well below average at the end of both key stages, the overall judgement of the inspection is that attainment is below average - better than test scores indicate. This represents very good overall progress, as children start school in the nursery with attainment that is very low. The very good progress is largely due to the good teaching in Years 1 and 2 and the very good teaching in Years 3 to 6; particularly, the very effective implementation of a daily lesson in mathematics and the increasing impact of extra teaching given to pupils of all levels of attainment, including pupils with special needs and to potentially high attainers. This good work is facilitated by the setting of demanding targets for every pupil in school, which the majority of pupils regularly exceed. Good examples of this include:
- the high proportion of pupils in the current Year 6 who are working at the nationally expected level even though they have special educational needs; over two-thirds of the year group are identified as having special educational needs and almost one half of them are working at the nationally expected Level 4;
  - five per cent of pupils in the current Year 5 are on track to reach very high standards in next year's tests and a further 20 per cent to reach above average standards.
- 83 However, overall attainment is depressed because of the underachievement of a minority of pupils whose attendance is poor. In a typical recent year, five of the eight pupils whose attendance was well below average reached levels that were more typical of pupils two years younger than they. By the end of Year 2, many pupils are developing a reasonable facility with number. Almost all pupils count confidently in tens and can mentally subtract ten from numbers ending in zero; for example, they know that  $50 - 10 = 40$  although many then have difficulty in recognising that  $50 - 40 = 10$ . Higher attainers recognise that because  $20 + 20 = 40$ , then so does  $19 + 21$ . The recent emphasis on teaching how to solve problems that are expressed in words is resulting in pupils making better progress, although some still find difficulties in working out whether they should add or subtract when, for example, asked how much more you have than a friend if you have 30 pence and they have 25 pence. A small minority have difficulty in remembering the appropriate vocabulary and therefore struggle with 'multiply' when they can handle 'times by'. Many pupils recognise fractions such as halves and quarters but many are not able to identify a quarter of 12 sweets. Almost all pupils recognise coins and can confidently make 58 pence from a mixed pile of coins. Telling the time with both analogue and digital clocks is at around average levels. The good progress that is made is illustrated well by the pupils in Year 2, who at the beginning of the year worked slowly through questions such as  $8 - 2$  and  $12 - 3$  and who knew the names of two-dimensional shapes. By June, they could accurately take 19 from 42 and knew the names and key characteristics of, for example, hexagons and pentagons.
- 84 By the end of Year 6, attainment is below average overall, although higher attainers make good progress to reach above average standards. Number skills are close to average levels but a substantial minority can not reliably apply their skills when faced with problems expressed in words ('Do I add or subtract, sir?', was one pupil's response to such a question). When working with fractions, most pupils understand the idea of

equivalence and can cancel, for example,  $90/72$  to reach  $45/36$ , but only higher attainers see that further cancelling is possible. As in Years 1 and 2, the work of a substantial minority is restricted by their mathematical vocabulary and spelling in books is poor, even for pupils whose mathematical standards are above average. In most lessons, pupils make good progress because work is carefully and accurately matched to their needs and teachers make learning enjoyable. In a minority of lessons, teachers' explanations are not properly understood by pupils and opportunities are missed to extend pupils' vocabularies by using new words alongside known words that mean the same, or have similar meanings. For example, some pupils needed to have the word 'operation' explained carefully before they chose whether to add or subtract two numbers.

- 85 In Years 1 to 6, the bulk of teaching is good or very good. The best teaching is characterised by the caring approach of teachers and the immense good nature and hard work of pupils. Lessons move at a very good pace and are supported by excellent learning materials that are often made by teachers and suit the learning admirably. Teachers have a very good grasp of the subject and understand their pupils well. The planning of learning is very good and, for example, supports teachers who are relatively new to the school or who need help with the subject. Teachers are skilled at integrating into the lesson the minority of pupils who arrive late for school for the morning numeracy lesson but nonetheless this slows the progress pupils make.
- 86 Since the last inspection the proportion of Year 6 pupils reaching nationally expected levels in tests has increased (from 24 per cent in 1996 to 58 per cent in 2001). Teaching is now more reliably good or better. Much of the improvement stems from the careful adoption of the National Numeracy Strategy, its modification to suit the needs of the school and the associated staff training. Leadership is vigorous and expert. The monitoring by senior staff of teaching, learning and standards has resulted in the identification of strengths and their consolidation, and of weaknesses and related modifications to the curriculum and to teaching. Pupils' achievements are carefully assessed using a good range of methods; challenging targets are then set for further improvements. The use of computer based systems of storing and analysing assessments made of pupils' attainment is improving the school's capacity to do this even more effectively and its plans to use this in more sophisticated ways is well timed. The school is well placed to continue to improve both provision for mathematics and pupils' attainment in the subject.

## SCIENCE

- 87 Standards of work seen in Year 2 are below the national average and, in Year 6, are in line with the national average. These standards represent good progress from well below average standards at the start of Year 1 and so pupils' achievement is good throughout the school. These standards are reached because the teaching is good and pupils enjoy science lessons that give them plenty of first-hand practical activity and investigative experience.
- 88 In Year 2, the small number of higher attaining pupils know that tests need to be fair. They explain how to keep healthy and they use scientific terms such as carbohydrate correctly. They describe changes to materials and display the results of an investigation clearly in a table. They explain how an electric circuit works. However, the vast majority of pupils do not reach these levels. Although the many lower attaining pupils may understand the work at the time they carry it out in class, their weak literacy skills mean that they have difficulty recording what they have learnt and they have trouble recalling information. However, they carry out a good range of investigations. They recognise major features in animals and use these features as the basis for classification. They

describe everyday objects that use electricity and, with help, they recognise when a circuit will work. These standards represent good progress and consequently achievement, for pupils who start in Year 1 with little understanding of the world around them.

- 89 In Year 6, pupils have made good progress and they currently reach average standards overall. These standards reflect the results in the 2001 national tests, which were only just below average. Results for the higher levels were above average when compared with similar schools and this reflects the standards among higher attaining pupils who are currently achieving well. Higher attaining and average pupils have a good understanding of investigation. They make predictions based on scientific principles and they can work out how to make a test fair. Lower attaining pupils are not always as secure in their use of scientific principles in predicting and explaining the outcomes of investigations. Pupils have a good understanding of life processes and living things. They can label the major parts of plants and humans and they can explain plant and human reproduction. Lower attaining pupils are not so secure on the differences between liquids, solids and gases. All pupils have a secure understanding of how electricity works. Lower attaining pupils, who are in the majority, continue to have weak literacy skills and struggle to record their work clearly, even when they understand the content. These weaknesses have a significant effect on their performance in written tests.
- 90 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because teachers are very aware of their specific learning needs, which are clearly identified in individual educational plans. These enable teachers to match the tasks and resources to individuals and provide support where it is needed. There are no significant differences between the achievement of girls and boys. Gifted and talented pupils make very good progress in Years 3 to 6 because they receive specialist teaching that ensures that they apply thinking skills to their work in science.
- 91 The quality of the teaching and pupils' learning across the school is good. Just one lesson was unsatisfactory because of the teacher's limited knowledge of the subject. The well-structured approach to investigative work helps pupils to develop enquiring minds and to ask the right questions. Teachers ensure that pupils develop their basic skills of literacy and numeracy well in their science work. The emphasis on speaking and listening, when pupils talk to each other in pairs about what they are finding out, develops confidence in themselves and in what they are learning. However, not enough attention is paid to helping pupils to learn the correct spellings for technical terms. ICT is used frequently as part of science lessons and pupils broaden their understanding of its use. For example, in an investigation of sound with Years 3 and 4, pupils became familiar with using a remote sensor to test sound levels and they logged their findings in a database.
- 92 Teachers manage pupils very well and have excellent relationships with pupils based on mutual respect. Teachers value pupils' contributions and consequently pupils enjoy science lessons, work hard and want to do well. Teachers make sure that pupils appreciate the wonder of the natural world. For example, pupils investigating pond life were in awe of the tiny frog-like tadpoles and the gruesome nature and behaviour of the water scorpion. Pupils' work is carefully marked. Teachers make useful comments on their work that help pupils to understand how well they are doing and to understand the work better.
- 93 Science is well led and managed and is temporarily co-ordinated by the head teacher. Schemes of work are in place that support teachers in their planning. Resources are very well organised, accessible and used often to give pupils good practical

experiences. The results of national tests are carefully analysed and the information is used to help to develop aspects of the teaching and learning, as well as to set challenging targets for individual pupils and for each year group. Well focused monitoring of teaching and learning has resulted in improvements in the teaching of investigative work. All of this is contributing well to improved standards. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. The quality of the teaching has improved and pupils are making better progress overall.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

- 94 Standards of attainment by the ages of seven and eleven are in line with the national average; at the last inspection, standards were judged to be above average. The achievement of pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and those who are higher attainers, is satisfactory. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils produce good quality landscape paintings based on a number of works of famous artists such as Monet and Constable; these show a good sense of style and a willingness to experiment. Pupils use sketch books well to practise their skills, which build on their earlier experience of observational drawing and painting. As part of their work in science, for example, pupils in Year 2 carefully examined plants and drew them, showing good observation of detail. Pupils in Year 6 know about different styles of portraits, building upon work done in previous years based on portraits of themselves in Years 1 and 2 and framed pictures of Henry VIII and his wives in Years 3 and 4. The versions of a Picasso picture of a woman by Year 3 and 4 pupils showed a good understanding of his multi-dimensional style. The work on portraits in Year 6 culminated in a visit to an art gallery to see the portrait of Marilyn Monroe by Andy Warhol after pupils had looked at the idea of the pin-up and created their own versions from magazine illustrations. Pupils develop their knowledge of the language of art as part of their studies and are therefore able to discuss their art work sensibly.
- 95 Pupils produce satisfactory work in a variety of forms using a range of media. For example, pupils in Year 2 create fabric collages in the style of William Morris or Matisse, make clay sculptures related to their science topic and produce three-dimensional work using willow and fabric. Older pupils produce pleasing paintings of their 'special places' in the style of the Australian Aborigines and, in Year 5, use string to make prints in African style. Pupils with special educational needs are enabled to make sound progress and pupils identified as being talented work with talented pupils from other local schools and produce, for example, very impressive sketches and illustrations for a book on tigers.
- 96 No judgement is made about teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2, as too little was seen to do so. The teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good and sometimes better. Lessons are well planned and care is taken to ensure that pupils of all levels of ability are involved successfully. Effective teaching of skills and techniques, based on good teacher knowledge, ensures that pupils can relate their own work to that of major artists and to styles from around the world. Very constructive relationships and a stimulating choice of materials lead to good levels of behaviour and positive attitudes to the subject; pupils take pride in their work and enjoy talking about it to adults. Learning is effectively supported by good quality displays, particularly in Years 3 to 6; these extend pupils' learning by including questions and pointers to further information.
- 97 The subject is well resourced and the curriculum is well supported by visits and visitors. It makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (including multi-cultural) development. While teachers in each year teach interesting material and there is a satisfactory development of skills and knowledge, pupils' and teachers' performance in the subject is not monitored and, consequently, the subject is not led

and managed satisfactorily, with the consequence that standards are not as high as they could be.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 98 Standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 are in line with national expectations. Pupils achieve well because the teaching is good. Standards remain similar to those at the last inspection; however, the quality of teaching has improved and there is now good guidance for teachers based on national recommendations. The interim management of the subject is satisfactory; but the formal monitoring of standards is limited and priorities for the future development of the subject are not detailed in the school development plan.
- 99 There were no opportunities to observe teaching in Years 1 and 2; however, the work pupils have done recently shows that pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations. The range of skills was seen in a recent piece of work undertaken by seven-year-olds. Pupils designed a puppet of the 'Gingerbread Man' to help consolidate their learning in literacy. They carefully cut a shape in hessian to form two sides for a puppet. They used pins to hold the fabric together and then sewed around the edges in a running stitch before decorating it attractively by sticking different colours of fabrics on to the shape. In another project, pupils used different materials such as fabrics, yarn and paint, to interlace a pattern onto a circular warp to produce spectacular representations for a display entitled 'under the sea'. Pupils made 'monsters' built upon a washing-up bottle using materials such as tissue paper and string. They represented spiders well using recycled egg boxes, paint and foil on a simulated web.
- 100 The quality of teaching and learning is good overall in Years 3 to 6. Teachers plan lessons very well, building on pupils' previous learning. Lessons are introduced well so that pupils understand what they should learn. Pupils draw detailed designs, label the drawings well and include accurate measurements. Teachers stress safety factors and pupils use scissors responsibly. Teachers instruct at a brisk pace and this enables pupils to have plenty of time for practical work. Very occasionally, the teacher's management of pupils is insecure and pupils call out and become over-excited; however, even in lessons like this, pupils learn new vocabulary and give their opinions clearly – for example, about the musical instruments they have made. Pupils have frequent opportunities to practise measuring skills and teachers help lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, very well to improve their basic skills – for example, in using a ruler. Pupils work productively and behave very well. Most pupils are able to measure accurately to produce, for instance, a picture frame made from card. They improve their picture frames by covering the structures with brightly coloured ribbon and coloured shapes.
- 101 The good planning of lessons ensures that the needs of all groups of pupils are catered for. In one lesson, pupils showed interest in the subject and gave their views on the construction of various percussion instruments. Even though some pupils could not contain their excitement and began to call out, the teacher ensured that pupils learnt new language such as 'annotated'. A good worksheet focused pupils' attention on what they were to learn. Pupils gave their opinions on how a wide range of musical instruments were made and suggested whether the appearance of the instrument was attractive. Most pupils completed the worksheets appropriately and drew very detailed drawings though the written descriptions were limited.

## GEOGRAPHY

- 102 Standards are broadly average by the end of Year 6 and below average at the end of Year 2. These are similar to standards reported at the last inspection. However, there have been good improvements since then in the planning of the curriculum and in the resources for learning which contribute to interesting and well planned teaching throughout the school.
- 103 Although only one lesson was seen, it is quite clear from examining pupils' work over the course of a year that they are well taught and that the work is well matched to different levels of attainment within each class. This means that pupils are able to work at a level and pace that suits them and contributes well to their good achievement. By the end of Year 2, pupils draw maps of their local area competently, showing features of interest. The teaching indicates a very thoughtful approach to geography. For example, pupils are asked to consider how their local area has changed and to offer ideas as to how they would improve an area they know well. The quality of pupils' spelling and the clarity of their expression are below average overall and have a negative effect on the way in which they record their learning. For example, an average attainer drew a graphic diagram of a local stream, explaining that 'it is recked with a trolly and hover in it'. The observation of lower attainers is less detailed and diagrams less clear. Higher attaining pupils give good reasons why they think a local traffic scheme is unsuccessful, explaining "when bollards are smashed up none of the drivers can see" whereas average attainers conclude the traffic system is good 'because it slows cars down'.
- 104 By the end of Year 6, pupils are achieving well and attain broadly average standards; although the quality of their written work is below average, their knowledge and their understanding of the subject are above average. Pupils cover a wide range of work and the subject is linked very well to elements of mathematics, science and ICT so that lower attainers or those with below average skills in literacy nonetheless can express what they understand clearly in diagrammatic form using charts and tables. The work is suitably different for different levels of attainment so, for example, higher attainers have plentiful opportunities to research information, by consulting books or the Internet. Much of the work is practical; this benefits lower attaining pupils who, for example, produce clear charts of the amount of rainfall over the course of a week. Higher attainers work out that, in the lower stretches of the course of a river, 'there are better means of transport and the forests and woods have disappeared.' There is some imaginative teaching, such as extracting information from a newspaper report to show the effects of a storm or flood on the local area. Higher attainers are challenged to use their knowledge of geography to work out from an ordnance survey map which is the best site to place a bridge, taking tourism and the local economy into account. Pupils find it hard to express this though in terms of the problems that traffic and people can cause to environments.
- 105 The quality of teaching is good and excellent teaching was seen in Year 6. In an excellent lesson pupils' attention was riveted by the simple experiment of blowing across water to see how the effect of wind caused the sediment at the bottom to combine with the waves. Pupils had a very good understanding of how headlands and bays are formed, explaining how 'stacks' differ from 'arches', and pointed out that it would be futile to build a large mansion on a cliff top; 'It would never last because of coastal erosion'. What lifted the lesson out of the ordinary was the high level of involvement by all pupils, the extremely good links with ICT and literacy whereby pupils imported pictures into newspaper accounts of a cliff top disaster and the expectation that pupils should work out why such things happened. The quality of pupils' replies

revealed their extensive understanding as they suggested 'global warming' and 'erosion of paths by too many people walking on them'.

106 The co-ordination of work in the subject is sound; good use is made of assessment in order to set high expectations for pupils. Suitable plans are in place to improve further the school's teaching and the school is reasonably placed to make further improvements.

## **HISTORY**

107 Standards are in line with national expectations for both seven- and eleven-year-olds. Pupils' achievements are good as they move through the school. They develop a sense of chronology and some knowledge of the events which have made a deep impact on life in Britain as well as an understanding of why and how things have changed.

108 Pupils progress well because they experience a rich and varied curriculum. They compare toys from the past with their own toys today, noting differences and similarities. They also compare homes in the early twentieth century with modern homes and household gadgets and explore the lives of famous people like Florence Nightingale. In Years 3 and 4, they study the Romans and the Vikings, Henry VIII and the Second World War, and, in Years 5 and 6, they move on to study ancient civilizations and the Victorians. They also study how Britain has changed since 1948. In all of these, standards are at the nationally expected levels.

109 Good teaching helps to bring the subject to life. For example, the study of the Second World War is enlivened by a rich display of artefacts from the period, including photographs, posters, letters, ration books, identity cards, gas masks and medals. Pupils have watched video films on the war, including "Good Night, Mr Tom", as part of their study of the theme of evacuation. Someone who remembered being evacuated from Liverpool has also visited the school and spoken with the pupils. During the inspection, pupils watched a real life Punch and Judy show as part of their study of the Victorian period. In another lesson, Year 5 pupils took part in a debate on whether or not the slaves in ancient Greek society should have the vote. They worked co-operatively and enthusiastically in small groups, drawing up their arguments for and against the proposal, and those who recounted their group's argument to the rest of the class wore an olive wreath on their heads while their contributions were timed with a water clock. At the end of the session, all of the pupils cast a vote for one or other side in the debate, using different disks in the style of the ancient Greeks. In addition to developing their knowledge of an ancient people, the pupils developed their skills in speaking and writing as well as developing a better understanding of how democracy works. Pupils are helped to understand changes in Britain since 1948 through a study of the Beatles, a subject they readily identify with, and the changes that took place in the life and career of John Lennon. Teachers show much skill in involving pupils in their learning. They enter key words on the board and are careful to check that pupils understand what has been said or read in class.

110 Pupils have produced some interesting writing, such as an account of their visit to a local Tudor house, but the writing produced in lessons was marred by a great many spelling errors including errors in the spelling of common words. In other pieces of work, pupils showed they were capable of collecting information and drawing conclusions. One class used biographical materials to find out about conditions in which children worked and lived in Victorian times. Some younger pupils produced writing of reasonable length and quality on Florence Nightingale.

111 The subject is supported by national subject guidelines which the co-ordinator has adapted to the needs of the school as well as by a good range of book resources, including specialist collections borrowed from the schools' library service to support the study of certain themes or events. These positive features contribute well to pupils' progress. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and is enthusiastic and keen to see standards rise. There are realistic plans to strengthen the curricular links between geography and history in the near future, to the benefit of both subjects. While there has been an improvement in the teachers' understanding of historical skills and concepts in recent years, pupils' work is not yet assessed with sufficient rigour against the criteria contained in National Curriculum level descriptors. Since the last inspection, pupils have continued to make good progress and teaching has improved further. The school is well placed to continue to improve.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

112 Standards are in line with the national average by the age of seven and by eleven they are above average across all areas of the ICT curriculum. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and higher attainers, achieve very well.

113 By the time they leave the school, pupils have a very well-developed understanding of the uses of ICT in the business world and in school, partly as a result of a visit to a local firm that allowed them to use a wide range of its computer controlled operations. They use the computer keyboard and mouse with good facility and use the technical language of computing with understanding. Younger pupils with special educational needs practise on a large sized keyboard to help them with letter and number recognition and with the navigation of the keyboard. By the time they are in Year 1, pupils can boot the computer up, log on independently by typing their name and load the correct program. Year 2 pupils log on to the school folder using their own password confidently, find the program they need and load it. By Year 3, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, can go into Internet Explorer, find the local educational authority's homepage, then the school's homepage from a drop-down menu, log on with another user name and password, upload an e-mail and a file attached to it, open the attachment in Word, edit it, save and print it, go to the address book, write an e-mail, add an attachment, send it, log off, exit Word and close down the computer – all with a good degree of independence. Pupils with special educational needs complete the process but take longer than the others and sometimes need some help when things go wrong.

114 An extremely rich Internet link with schools in Australia provides regular and frequent practice in using e-mail for all the older pupils and motivates the development of the school Web site. Higher attaining pupils have skills in designing Web pages, with embedded sounds and links to other pages and sites. Pupils are adept at searching the World Wide Web for information. This helped, for example, their lesson about coastal erosion. Year 6 pupils have a good working knowledge of standard adult programs for word-processing and desktop publishing, for example, writing 'eye-witness' reports for their newspaper and inserting pictures from an Internet site. Higher attainers have advanced skills for their age in using the desktop publishing program. They use a multi-media authoring program to organise, refine and present information in different forms for a specific audience. These skills build on secure learning from previous years, where pupils draft their writing, re-draft it and produce a fair copy, often incorporating photographs or clip-art, sometimes re-sized and edited; passports that Year 3 and 4 pupils produced were extremely convincing.



- 115 Older pupils set up and interrogate a spreadsheet database using simple and complex searches and record their findings in a complex graph; pupils with special educational needs complete the same work but with fewer entries in the database – they are still able to use simple and complex searches. The security system that Year 6 pupils set up for a model house was very impressive and used a variety of control technology to set off the burglar alarms in several different ways. Younger pupils developed their skills in control technology by making a clown's face light up or running a set of traffic lights to a pattern that they determined. These skills built on the experiences of programming a floor robot in Year 1. Pupils in Year 4 used a simple programming language to create patterns of beautiful crystal flowers, which they could rotate and adjust. They compose simple tunes, using electronic keyboards, and use computer art programs to good effect, building on the skills they developed in the infant classes.
- 116 The quality of teaching and learning is very good throughout the school. Teachers plan and prepare very thoroughly and have secure subject knowledge, being able to recover confidently when the technology lets them down. They are particularly strong at teaching the basic skills of the subject systematically and in promoting pupils' independence and confidence. Consequently, pupils have very positive attitudes to the subject and work with very high levels of confidence and independence. Teachers use particularly stimulating methods and materials; the doll's house, for example, that has to be made secure, stimulates very high levels of creative effort. The good number of computers are used to good effect, though teachers sometimes have to split their attention between computers in two separate areas; the pupils' good levels of behaviour and their very good level of independent skills mean that this is very rarely a problem. Skilled and experienced support staff have a considerable impact on pupils' learning, particularly when they take a group of pupils while the teacher is occupied with pupils on another task. Pupils with special educational needs benefit greatly from the extra support they receive from classroom assistants and from the learning mentor. Higher attainers as well as other pupils are very well challenged by the teachers' very high levels of expectation. Because of this, pupils are generous in providing other pupils with help and support and they share resources with very good levels of co-operation.
- 117 The subject is very well resourced and the school has developed a very good curriculum that benefits learning in other subjects very effectively. The subject makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' progress is carefully assessed so that successes are built on and misunderstandings are remedied; this ensures that teachers set realistic and demanding targets for future learning. A very committed and effective co-ordinator has an excellent vision for the subject and the role it can play in the lives of these children and the school is therefore very well placed to maintain and further improve its very good standards and quality of education.

## **MUSIC**

- 118 Standards are in line with those expected by the end of Year 6 and in singing by the end of Year 2 (though below in other aspects of music at this stage). They reflect the considerable effort that has gone into organising the curriculum, the teaching and the provision for this subject since the last inspection when standards were a key issue. The subject is very well led and managed by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator who has successfully integrated music into many aspects of school life and pupils make very good progress.
- 119 Only a small number of lessons were seen. From these, it is clear that the quality of teaching is at least sound and that the co-ordinator's very good teaching gives a clear lead to others. Lessons often take place in the music room which is a good

environment for learning with attractive displays of musical instruments. In singing lessons, suitable warm-up sessions loosen pupils' voices and are used as a good means of settling to serious work as well as being enjoyable. By the end of Year 2, pupils are able to sing tunefully and softly and begin to understand that a melody is made up of phrases. They can sort instruments into different categories according to how they are played. However, sometimes the slow pace and limited time given to discussion mean that the pupils get limited time to touch, feel and play the instruments.

120 The resources for learning have improved greatly and now encompass instruments from different cultures. The co-ordinator recognised that many of the instruments were too large for the very small children in reception and Year 1 and 2 classes and accordingly these classes now have a range of suitably sized instruments which are much easier to handle and to play. The staff have received additional training and have attended workshops run by the local education authority and the performing arts group and so have gained in confidence as well as in skill. Underpinning the teaching and learning in music is the strong belief that music should be accessible to all, regardless of special talent and this is reflected in the large numbers who regularly attend the choir and musical theatre groups after school.

121 By the end of Year 6, most pupils are able to hear and to play an octave on a tuned instrument and to explore ways of recording rhythms physically and pictorially before recording using formal notation. Pupils become adept at writing music in this way. In Year 5, for example, a lower attaining group suggested some very expressive symbols to indicate graphically the movement of a comet. Although they found listening to music quite taxing, pupils were quick to point out similarities between Holst's depiction of Uranus as a magician with *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* which they remembered as 'Mickey Mouse'. They were also quick to hear the anger in the portrayal of Mars which again they linked to something more familiar – *Star Trek*. The teaching invites pupils to respond and to use their voices. As a result, pupils are imaginative and take part in productions confidently and unselfconsciously. Their singing and percussion accompaniments are at expected levels for eleven-year-olds.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

122 Standards of pupils' work at age seven are average and at age eleven are above average. These standards represent steady progress from an average starting point at age five to the age of seven, whilst between ages seven and eleven, pupils make good progress and achieve well. These achievements are due to teaching and learning that are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. Pupils' very good behaviour and positive attitudes to lessons contribute to their overall good achievement and progress, as does the very good range of extra-curricular activities offered to pupils, especially in Years 3 to 6.

123 At age seven, pupils know how to warm up and they know what they need to do to keep healthy. At playtimes, many pupils skip with confidence and their daily play with balls and hoops means that their throwing and catching skills are satisfactory. Most pupils move with confidence around the playground. Pupils describe what you need to do to successfully catch a ball. Pupils make satisfactory progress in improving their skills and knowledge and understanding in Years 1 and 2, but limited time in some lessons restricts the time available for evaluating and analysing performances, in order to improve further.

124 At age eleven, pupils play football and basketball on the playground and they use a good range of tactics to keep possession of the ball and work the ball down towards the goals. Many pupils have good levels of catching, throwing and dribbling skills. Pupils

have a very good knowledge and understanding of how to prepare for exercise and what happens to your body during exercise and they use terms such as “stamina” correctly. Most pupils meet the national expectations for swimming and a small number are very talented and have the opportunity to do well in out of school clubs. Pupils plan and perform dances and they describe the good features of dance. The school achieves success in cross-country running and football competitions. Pupils are not confident in evaluating performance because there are not regular opportunities to do so.

125 Pupils make good progress in lessons and from year to year because much of the teaching is good and there is plenty of opportunity for extra activity during lunchtimes and after school. This extra time makes up for the limited time available for physical education during the school day.

126 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school because teachers are aware of the pupils who need extra help or who need to use different equipment. There is no significant difference between the achievements of girls and boys and gifted and talented pupils make very good progress because of the extra opportunities they are offered.

127 Lessons move at a good pace, pupils are active throughout and they have plenty of chance to practise and improve. Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent and pupils behave well, want to work hard and do well. In Years 1 and 2, lessons are sometimes very short and there is not enough time to include activities that involve pupils observing each other and evaluating performance. Lessons are well planned and organised and targets for learning and improvement are made clear to pupils. Pupils work very well in groups without the direct supervision of the teacher. Pupils are clearly used to playing games in a positive spirit of co-operation and fair play. Teachers give clear demonstrations which help pupils know what techniques to use but sometimes they do not make enough reference to these in the activities which follow and consequently pupils repeat errors.

128 The subject is co-ordinated with commitment and enthusiasm. Links with the local secondary school are well established and fifteen- and sixteen-year-old pupils from the secondary school organise a good range of activities for pupils from Eastcroft Park. The co-ordinator has worked hard to bring in a number of different coaches and sports clubs to ensure that pupils have a broad range of experiences and that talented pupils have the chance to do well. Schemes of work are currently being upgraded as are systems for assessment and recording. Since the previous inspection the school has done well to maintain the high standards seen at that time.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

129 Standards attained by seven- and eleven-year-olds are in line with those in the Agreed Syllabus. Pupils’ achievements are good and the subject contributes well to the pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils develop sound factual knowledge of some of the major stories and events of Christianity and also learn about the customs and beliefs of other world faiths such as Hinduism, Sikhism and Islam.

130 There was not enough evidence to form a judgement about the teaching in Years 1 and 2 but that in Years 3 to 6 is sound. Pupils enjoy hearing about the adventures of Rama and Sita and they gain some knowledge of other customs by attempting to make a rakhi or friendship bracelet like those that sisters make for their brothers in Hinduism. They produce short but accurate pieces of writing on such Christian events as the nativity and the resurrection and learn something of their religious significance for believers. Their understanding of Christianity is supported by visits to the local church of St Chad’s and

their study of features such as the altar, candles, baptismal font and pulpit. They also study the religious significance of Buddhist symbols. Lessons seen and the scrutiny of pupils' work indicate that the subject is making a useful contribution to the development of pupils' language skills. Work in the subject is helped by the contributions of a member of the Scripture Union who often takes lessons and has supported the subject by contributing to the school's collection of bibles and resources for Christianity.

- 131 The subject is well supported by an Agreed Syllabus which has been recently adopted by the local education authority. It provides the long term and the medium term planning on which teachers base their planning of lessons. There is an adequate supply of books and artefacts. These factors contribute to the quality of teaching and ensure that pupils' progress is good. The subject co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and is keen to raise the subject's profile and improve the quality of education provided. She enthusiastically supports the teaching throughout the school and provides staff with ideas and resources for different topics. She has a sound overview of what is being taught throughout the school. However, pupils' work is not yet assessed with sufficient rigour against criteria shared by all members of staff. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and the school is well placed to make improvements.