

INSPECTION REPORT

**OUR LADY IMMACULATE CATHOLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Everton, Liverpool

LEA area: Liverpool

Unique reference number: 104638

Headteacher: Ms A Brodie

Reporting inspector: Mr I Pratt
13626

Dates of inspection: 5th – 9th June 2000

Inspection number: 192206

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary and Nursery School

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Northumberland Terrace
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Liverpool
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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Reverend Father T A Williams

Date of previous inspection: 18th November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr I Pratt	Registered inspector	Physical education Equal opportunities	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning Leadership and management What should the school do to improve further Key issues for action
Mr G Ellis	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
Ms R Webber	Team inspector	English Music Special educational needs	
Ms S Handford	Team inspector	Science Art Under-fives English as an additional language	
Ms H Sumner	Team inspector	Geography History	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
Mr L Garner	Team inspector	Mathematics Information technology Design and technology	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Primary is a mixed school of larger than average size, serving 332 pupils aged between four and eleven years of age. The school has slightly more boys than girls overall, but in Year 3, boys outnumber girls by two to one. In addition, 50 children attend the school's Nursery on a part-time basis. Children enter the Nursery after their third birthday, and they enter the Reception year in the September of the year in which they will be five. The majority of children entering the Reception classes have attended the school Nursery but a significant minority do not have any pre-school experience. Standards on entry to the Nursery are below those found in the previous inspection and are well below the levels expected for children of this age. Social skills, language and literacy and mathematics are very weak. At the age of five, attainment is generally below that expected of children of this age, and language skills remain particularly weak.

The school serves an exceptionally disadvantaged area of Liverpool that until very recently has not benefited from the regeneration work that has occurred in neighbouring wards. As a result, much of the original, stable population has left the area and there has been a significant deterioration in terms of housing, crime and services. The size of the school has not changed since the last inspection but its population has changed markedly. There is a trend of higher attaining pupils leaving the school, frequently being replaced by pupils with special educational needs. Many pupils leave or join during the year. Sixty-eight per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals; a very high proportion compared with primary schools nationally.

An overwhelming majority of pupils are white. Very few come from homes where English is an additional language and none are in need of language support. Thirty per cent of pupils have special educational needs, a figure above the national average. No pupils have a statement of special educational need, well below the national average. This figure does not accurately reflect the needs of the pupils in the school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Primary is an effective school. It provides a good, all round education for its pupils and serves its community very well. Whilst the standards attained by pupils when they leave the school are below the national averages, they achieve good standards in relation to their attainments on intake to the school. Pupils make good progress because of their good attitudes to learning and in response to generally good teaching. The headteacher provides very effective leadership and management for the school and is supported well by the governors in improving the work of the school. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching is good for pupils in the Reception classes and in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- The headteacher and other staff in management positions provide very good leadership and management for the school.
- The very good attitudes and behaviour of the pupils enable them to make good progress.
- The relationships between pupils and with adults are excellent and contribute strongly to the positive learning atmosphere.
- Opportunities for pupils' moral development are excellent, and for their spiritual and social development, provision is very good.
- The school provides very effective support and guidance for pupils; monitoring of their personal development is excellent.
- The school has very good links with its parents, and communicates with them very effectively.
- The school assesses the attainments of the pupils very well and uses this information to plan changes in the curriculum.

What could be improved

- The quality of teaching and overall provision in the Nursery is unsatisfactory and adversely affects the children's learning.
- Standards in English, mathematics and science are not high enough at the end of both key stages.
- Attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory and this adversely affects the progress of the pupils.
- There are insufficient classroom assistants to provide adequate support for pupils with special educational needs.
- The pupils' knowledge, understanding and use of English in speaking and writing is at a low level.
- Standards in information technology are not sufficiently high because the school is still in the process of implementing all aspects of the National Curriculum for the subject, using its recently installed computers.

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

This is a school with many significant strengths that outweigh its weaknesses.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has improved well since its last inspection in November 1996. The quality of teaching has improved markedly and is now of good quality overall. Assessment procedures have developed very well and the school uses assessment data effectively to analyse its strengths and weaknesses. The school has started to use assessment data to give differing challenges of work to pupils of different attainment levels in English and mathematics, but this is not consistent across all subjects. With the exception of the Nursery, the expectations of pupils are now appropriately high. Detailed schemes of work have been developed in all subjects. The school has been successful in involving its parents in the life and work of the school. Major changes in the school's population have resulted in a fall in standards in English, mathematics and science over the last three years, but work seen during the inspection shows that standards are now rising. The school has good capacity for further improvement.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	E	E	E	C
Mathematics	E	E	E	D
Science	E	D	E*	E

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

The attainments of children as they enter the Nursery at the age of three are well below the expectations for children of this age and are much lower than at the time of the last inspection.

Standards in language and literacy, mathematics and social development are particularly low and many have very poorly developed speech. At the age of five, attainments fall below the national expectation in most aspects of the children's development but their language skills remain particularly weak.

The 1999 National Curriculum assessments for seven-year-olds show standards in reading are well below the national average but above the average of similar schools. The writing and mathematics results are well below the national average but in line with the average for similar schools. In science, standards are well below both national and similar schools averages. Standards in reading and writing rose in 1999 and this trend is confirmed by the results of the 2000 assessments which show a strong improvement in standards in writing, mathematics and science, whilst reading standards fell slightly. Results in the 1999 National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds indicate that standards are well below the national average in mathematics and very low in science. When compared to similar schools, standards are below average in mathematics and well below in science. The results in English show that whilst attainments are well below the national picture, they are in line with those found in similar schools. Key Stage 2 results for 2000 show very great improvements in English and science but little change in mathematics.

Following the last inspection, standards at the end of both key stages generally fell due to the significant changes in the school's population. This fall started to be reversed in 1999 and the work seen during the inspection confirms that standards are continuing to rise in English, mathematics and science at the end of both key stages. At the end of both key stages, standards in information technology are below expected levels because the school has only recently provided sufficient up-to-date equipment.

Overall, pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 make good progress in their learning and they achieve well in relation to their attainments on intake and their language and learning difficulties. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall but are restricted by the shortage of classroom assistants. At both key stages, high attainers are not consistently given sufficient challenge to enable them to attain the standards of which they are capable. Boys and girls attain broadly similar standards.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good; pupils like school and want to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good; pupils can be relied upon to behave very well in lessons and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good personal development and excellent relationships between pupils and with adults in the school.
Attendance	Poor attendance and much lateness impede the pupils' learning.

The pupils' very positive attitudes to the school create a most pleasant atmosphere and purposeful climate for learning. The school is a calm, orderly and friendly community, free from oppressive behaviour. The relationships between pupils and with adults are excellent. Year 6 pupils show mature and responsible attitudes.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good overall and has improved significantly since the last inspection. During the inspection, teaching was satisfactory or better in 95 per cent of lessons, good or better in 66 per cent of lessons and very good or excellent in 26 per cent. Unsatisfactory teaching occurred in five per cent of lessons. The teaching of children in the Nursery is unsatisfactory because it is ineffective in developing the language and other skills that the children need. Teaching throughout the rest of the school is predominantly good. The quality of teaching in English, mathematics and science is good at both key stages. Literacy and numeracy are taught well across the subjects of the curriculum. Lessons are planned carefully and pupils are managed and organised particularly well so that very little time is wasted. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils, use time and resources effectively and use homework consistently well. Assessment information is not used consistently well to plan what the pupils will learn next and this results in high attainers being under-challenged.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall; promotes the pupils' learning soundly, with the exception of children in the Nursery.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory; good quality support from classroom assistants but insufficient support is available to meet the needs of all pupils.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good provision made for the few pupils involved.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall; excellent opportunities for moral development, very good for spiritual and social, and good for cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good care and guidance provided. Weakness in procedures for improving attendance and punctuality.

Strengths in the school's curriculum include the implementation of the literacy strategy, provision for personal, spiritual, social, moral and cultural education and the enrichment of the pupils' learning opportunities by visits and visitors to the school. The curriculum for information technology does not meet requirements because the school is just starting to use its new equipment to cover all aspects of the subject. The school works in very close partnership with parents. Communication with parents is excellent. The range of extra-curricular activities is narrow. Although the school has improved the attendance of some pupils, overall it has not been sufficiently effective in improving the rates of attendance or punctuality of pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good; the headteacher provides highly effective all round leadership and management for the school and is ably supported by other staff with posts of responsibility.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors provide good support for the school and meet almost all statutory requirements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The monitoring and evaluation of the school's work are very good, enabling it to identify accurately its strengths and weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	Effective identification of priorities and very good development planning enable the school to allocate resources efficiently.

The headteacher gives the school clear educational direction, focused on improving standards and the quality of education and maintaining the strongly Christian ethos of the school. The governors are very supportive of the school. The monitoring of teaching and development planning are particularly strong. Through the diligent and effective work of the school administrator, goods and services are purchased at competitive rates. Office staff, the caretaker and cleaners make a good contribution to the day-to-day running of the school. The school has sufficient teaching staff, accommodation and resources to promote the pupils' learning well but there are insufficient classroom assistants to support pupils with special educational needs.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The caring attitude of all staff to pupils and the parents. • The 'open door' policy, where parents can approach the school with questions or issues. • The pupils like the school. • The good behaviour of the pupils. • The good quality of the teaching. • The good quality of information they receive. • The high expectations of pupils to work hard. • The school is well led and managed. • The school helps children to be mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The access to the school is difficult, particularly for people using pushchairs, prams and wheelchairs. • The lack of sporting activities available.

The inspection findings strongly confirm all of the positive views of parents. Inspectors also agree that access to the school is difficult and does not provide equality of opportunity to visit the school. Sporting activities have reduced in recent years.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Children enter the Nursery at the age of three with skills, knowledge and understanding well below the expectations for children of this age and significantly lower than at the time of the last inspection. Their skills in language and literacy, mathematics and social development are particularly low. Many of the children entering the Nursery have very poorly developed speech. Their progress in the early years of their education is uneven, being unsatisfactory in the Nursery but good in the Reception classes. At the age of five, attainments fall below the national expectations in most aspects of the children's development but their language skills remain particularly weak.
2. In judging the standards attained by pupils in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, the school's average National Curriculum points scores are used. These provide a more accurate picture of the pupils' attainments than simply calculating the proportion of pupils attaining the expected Level 2 and Level 4.
3. The 1999 National Curriculum assessments for seven-year-olds show that the standards achieved in reading are well below the national average although they are above average when compared with similar schools. In writing and mathematics, the results are well below the national average but in line with the average for similar schools. In science, standards are well below both national and similar schools' averages. Standards generally fell following the last inspection due to significant changes in the attainment level of pupils entering the school. This fall in standards was reversed in 1999 in reading and writing and the results of the 2000 National Curriculum assessments show a strong improvement in standards in writing, mathematics and science, whilst reading standards fell slightly.
4. The work seen during the inspection confirms that standards throughout Key Stage 1 are rising, not only in reading and writing, but also in mathematics and science. There is good evidence that the successful implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies is starting to improve standards steadily. In work seen at the end of the key stage, standards in English, mathematics and science are a little below the national expectation. The attainments of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 are in line with expectations for their age in art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education.
5. Results in the 1999 national tests for eleven-year-olds are acknowledged by the school to be disappointing in mathematics and science. They indicate that standards are well below the national average in mathematics and very low in science. When compared to similar schools, standards are below average in mathematics and well below in science. The results in English show that whilst attainments are well below the national picture, they are in line with those found in similar schools. The 2000 test results show a very significant improvement in standards in English and science but little change in mathematics. Work seen during the inspection indicates that standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have risen since last year and whilst they remain below the national expectation in English, mathematics and science, they are getting close to it. The literacy and numeracy strategies have contributed to these improvements and following the analysis of last year's results, the school has also been very successful in increasing the quantity and quality of work in experimental and investigative aspects of science and this has improved standards significantly. Boys and girls attain broadly similar standards in the tests, and work seen during the inspection confirms this picture. Work seen in other subjects indicates that at the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils attain standards that

are appropriate for their age in art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education.

6. Pupils at the end of both key stages attain below expected standards in information technology because the school has only recently provided sufficient, up-to-date equipment to cover all aspects of the curriculum.
7. Standards in literacy and numeracy remain below expected levels but are improving, largely because of the improvements in teaching and curriculum planning that have stemmed from the implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies. Literacy standards are promoted effectively across the subjects of the curriculum. Writing is used effectively in many subjects, although the content and standards achieved are hindered by the pupils' lack of understanding and use of a rich and interesting vocabulary. Reading standards are below expectations due to the difficulties experienced by many pupils in understanding the language used. Speaking skills are similarly hindered by the lack of sufficiently well developed language skills which results in pupils finding it difficult to express themselves accurately, fluently and confidently. Numeracy skills are promoted well in science and geography through the use of tables and graphs.
8. In both key stages, the pupils' achievements are good in relation to their previous learning and in relation to the language and learning difficulties of many. This is brought about by good teaching and the pupils' very positive attitudes to learning. High attaining pupils are not always consistently challenged to enable them to make the progress of which they are capable. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainment when they receive support from classroom assistants. However, there is not enough of this type of support so progress is satisfactory overall. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress in their learning because of the good quality support that is provided.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are both very good. They are very well motivated towards their work and their personal development is very good. All relationships within the school are excellent. Parents consider that the school is very successful in achieving good standards of behaviour. Attendance is poor.
10. The headteacher and staff have successfully established and maintained in the school a very positive learning environment characterised by a strong and concrete spirit of community. Founded and continually building on the mutual trust between staff and pupils, this creates a strong and committed sense of ownership in the school by pupils. This in turn successfully permeates attitudes, values, behaviour and relationships. Pupils are very keen and happy at school. They are enthusiastic, enjoy their activities and talk positively about their experiences. At both key stages they have very good attitudes to learning with most of them making good progress.
11. Teachers have good class management skills and set appropriately high expectations for pupils' work and behaviour. They work hard to provide very good support and sustained development of pupils' confidence and self-esteem. The success of this, in significantly enhancing the pupils' attitudes, is shown by how well they are motivated towards their learning and how they tackle their work industriously with sustained interest, vigour and enthusiasm. Their maturity and social skills are developed well during their school life. Most are outgoing and lively with a keenness to present their ideas and engage in conversation. Many older pupils express themselves ebulliently, fully describing their activities.
12. The overwhelming majority of pupils display high levels of concentration, pay attention to their teachers and readily contribute to class discussions. They enthusiastically join in activities, are

able to explain what they are doing and engage in considered dialogue. Many, when invited, ask thoughtful and inquiring questions. Pupils' self confidence is good and they carry- out their activities with a satisfactory degree of independence for their age, displaying good self-discipline and working well when unsupervised.

13. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to their work, sustain concentration and make satisfactory progress in both key stages. They are well integrated and work well with other pupils.
14. The previous inspection report indicated that behaviour was very good and that continues to be the case. The school's approach to developing and improving behaviour is implemented and reinforced conscientiously by staff, thereby maintaining a disciplined yet harmonious and sensitive environment for learning. The school's requirements for behaviour are well understood by pupils who are therefore very aware of what is expected of them and respond well to very good standards. For example, on formal occasions such as assemblies, they arrive, wait patiently and conduct themselves in an orderly and respectful manner. During the inspection, no aggressive bullying or sexist behaviour was observed. Boys and girls play well together. There has been one recent permanent exclusion but that was an exceptional case and is not typical of behaviour standards in the school.
15. Standards of behaviour in class are generally very good. Pupils are smart, friendly and welcoming to visitors. They are courteous and considerate of each other. There are few instances of inattention but these are well handled with firmness and tact by teachers. On the very few occasions when pupils display inappropriate behaviour, this is as a result of insufficiently focused activities being set for them. Pupils move around the school sensibly and carefully and lessons during the day are able to start promptly. For example, at lunchtime and breaktimes, they line up in a patient and orderly manner, requiring minimal supervision. Standards of behaviour in the playground and around the school are very good.
16. Pupils feel valued by teachers, trust them and respond accordingly. They are proud of their school and are careful with equipment and resources which they willingly and politely share. They spontaneously show respect for property and their classroom environments. The previous inspection report stated that relationships were generally good. Since then, they have further improved, and relationships between pupils and between pupils and all adults are excellent. These relationships are very major strengths of the school. Pupils relate well to each other. They work together harmoniously and will assist each other in their activities. For example, Year 6 pupils working in the computer suite were quick to help their colleagues, despite being excited and concentrating on their own activities. They talk enthusiastically and learn well from each other, adopting a naturally co-operative approach, ensuring good collaboration in group work. They are trustworthy, thoughtful and considerate. They respect the feelings, values and beliefs of others. In lessons, they listen patiently to the contributions of others and applaud their successes. Pupils respond well to opportunities to exercise responsibility and independence. They willingly undertake a number of helpful duties in all classes, and demonstrate good capacities for initiative and personal responsibility. Pupils in all classes undertake various duties as monitors and older pupils exercise greater responsibility. For example, they help with the organisation of the computer club and escort visitors and parents around the school on open days.

17. Attendance is poor. In the previous inspection report, attendance was below average, but it has deteriorated further and is currently well below the national average. Unauthorised absence is below the national average. Registers are completed promptly and efficiently. A significant number of pupils are unpunctual in their attendance at the start of the day, although lessons at other times generally are able to start on time. However, the poor attendance and significant levels of lateness are major impediments to learning and progress.
18. With the exception of attendance, the attitudes, behaviour and personal development of pupils are major strengths which make a very good contribution to the very positive learning environment, pupils' progress and the quality of life in the school. Comments from parents, both in the questionnaires and the meeting prior to the inspection, strongly support this view.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The quality of teaching is good overall and has improved significantly since the last inspection. During the inspection, teaching was satisfactory or better in 95 per cent of lessons, good or better in 66 per cent of lessons and very good or excellent in 26 per cent. Unsatisfactory teaching occurred in five per cent of lessons.
20. The teaching of children in the Nursery is unsatisfactory because weaknesses in planning result in much unfocused work that is ineffective in developing the language and other skills that the children need. Learning objectives are not clearly defined. Planning tends to start with an outline of activities rather than a notion of what children need to learn next in order to make progress. A further serious weakness in teaching in the Nursery is that teachers and support staff do not effectively interact with the children to ensure that key language and concepts are successfully taught. Adult intervention in the activities provided is not satisfactorily providing models of correct speech and vocabulary or successfully prompting children to respond.
21. Teaching in the Reception classes is of good quality and is sometimes very good or excellent. Clear learning aims form the basis for all planning and are closely linked to the children's learning needs and the planned curriculum.
22. Teaching at Key Stages 1 and 2 is of good quality. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting expressed their satisfaction at the quality of teaching that occurs and inspection findings support their positive views. The predominantly good quality of teaching contributes well to the pupils' learning and their levels of attainment. Teachers use effective methods and strategies for teaching the pupils. For example, in many mathematics lessons, the lively mental sessions at the start of most lessons engage all pupils in thinking, answering questions and practising their numeracy skills. Other effective methods used across the curriculum are clear explanations and demonstrations and good use of the board to organise ideas. Teachers use whole-class teaching effectively in most subjects. However, the use of short spells of small group tuition to teach a particular point whilst the rest of the class is engaged in independent work is mainly confined to literacy, numeracy and science lessons, and is not used as fully as it might be in other subjects.
23. Teachers settle their classes quickly, have clear and appropriately high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and, by their calm and efficient manner, consistently set a positive atmosphere in which learning can take place effectively. Because of the invariably very good management of pupils, little time is lost, pupils concentrate well and maintain interest in their work. Teachers have suitably high expectations of pupils' academic work although not enough is expected of high attaining pupils across all subjects of the curriculum. Teachers have mainly good knowledge of the subjects they teach, and this, linked with their enthusiasm, results in interesting and lively lessons in which pupils make good gains in knowledge, understanding and

skill. Expertise and confidence in information technology and music at Key Stage 2 are the only exceptions to teachers' secure command of the subjects.

24. The quality of the teachers' planning is consistently good. Teachers are very clear about the learning objectives for each lesson and frequently share this information with the pupils to enable them to understand what they are trying to achieve. In the best lessons, teachers refer to the learning aims at the end of the lesson to enable the pupils to evaluate how much they have learned.
25. Whilst teachers often identify in their planning how they will meet the needs of lower attaining pupils, they are not sufficiently clear about how the needs of high attaining pupils will be met, and as a result, these pupils are not sufficiently challenged and therefore do not make the progress of which they are capable.
26. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting and those returning the questionnaire expressed a good degree of satisfaction with the quantity and quality of homework set. The inspection finds that homework makes a consistently good contribution to the pupils' learning by setting tasks that extend and enhance what the pupils have done in class.
27. The quality of teaching is good overall in English, mathematics, science, art, geography, history and physical education. Teaching is satisfactory overall in information technology, design and technology and music.
28. The teaching of literacy is effective. The school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy well but still needs to place greater emphasis on developing the pupils' understanding and use of a wide and rich vocabulary across all aspects of the curriculum. The teaching of numeracy is also effective. The school has implemented all parts of the National Numeracy Strategy and the quick-fire questions and other mental mathematics tasks are helping to give the pupils more confidence with numbers.
29. Pupils with special educational needs receive good quality support from classroom assistants but too frequently, this support is not available. Teachers plan for the needs of these pupils in English and mathematics lessons but matching work to the pupils' needs is not well developed in other areas of the curriculum.

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

30. The school's curriculum is sound overall. Though it has a few weaknesses, it also has a number of significant strengths. It meets statutory requirements with the single exception of the National Curriculum Programme of Study for information technology which is not yet fully addressed.
31. The provision for children under five in the two Reception classes is good. It provides children with a well planned curriculum which gives them good access to the Desirable Learning Outcomes for children of this age and effectively prepares them for entry to the National Curriculum. Nursery provision is unsatisfactory because the scheme of work and provision are not effectively linked to the children's learning needs.

32. The allocations of teaching time to the curriculum in Key Stages 1 and 2 are in line with national recommendations and time is appropriately distributed between the different subjects. The above average allocation of time to religious education reflects the school's religious foundation and is used well to strengthen the school's provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
33. The school's literacy programme is firmly established and of good quality. That for numeracy is developing well. Following careful analysis of the 1999 National Curriculum tests, the science curriculum has been significantly improved to include an appropriate emphasis on investigational and experimental aspects of the subject and this has been very effective in raising standards. Good policies and schemes of work are now in place for these subjects. The good medium- and short-term planning which results provides a firm basis for progress in pupils' learning, including the sharpening of learning objectives in lessons. This focus has led to improvements in the identification of learning objectives across the curriculum but the increased emphasis on literacy and numeracy has also required the re-design of the curriculum in other subjects because of the re-allocation of available time. The school is addressing this issue with national guidelines in mind and subject co-ordinators are in the process of discussing revised priorities and their implications for new schemes of work. Planning for the pupils' progression in the basic skills and understanding required in each subject has already been identified as the basis for future schemes of work by subject co-ordinators, who now await further national guidance.
34. The school is strongly committed to equality of opportunity for all its pupils and has satisfactory arrangements in place. The work provided in English and mathematics is usually effectively matched to the needs of pupils with differing levels of previous attainment, although in other subjects, this is not the case. High attaining pupils are not consistently challenged by the work they are given, and consequently, do not make the progress of which they are capable. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the support they receive from classroom assistants and much of their work in literacy and numeracy is based on the learning targets in their individual learning plans. The amount of extra support is, however, insufficient to consistently meet the needs of these pupils. Good support and appropriate learning opportunities are provided for those pupils for whom English is an additional language.
35. The overall curriculum is broad and balanced and it is significantly enriched by an impressive programme of associated opportunities for learning. These are closely tied into the curriculum and are especially appropriate to the particular educational needs of the pupils in the school. All year groups benefit in their turn from such activities as visits to the local park, a farm, pantomime, toy museum, local secondary schools and fieldwork on historical and geographical aspects of the city. Trips have included those to the theatre in Stratford, Theatre Clwyd, an electricity show and an orchestral concert. A wide range of specialists visits the school to contribute to its curriculum. These have included the Archbishop of Liverpool, a theatre company, an archaeologist and a community artist. These links with the local community, including other schools, make a good contribution to the quality of the curriculum. Activities available to pupils outside of teaching hours have been reduced in recent years, though some sporting activities are still available. While older pupils have expressed regret about this loss, they are very appreciative of the broad and exciting range of learning opportunities provided in the context of lessons. The great majority of parents feel that the school provides an interesting range of activities but are disappointed by the limited provision for sport out of school hours.
36. The school has good, wide-ranging provision for pupils' personal development. An up-to-date set of policies guides the implementation of learning opportunities concerned with personal relationships, health, drugs and sex education. These, and provision for equal opportunities for all pupils, together with the school's collective worship and behaviour policies, are all explicitly

based on the school's fundamental Christian values, as expressed in the school's mission statement. Together, they form a well-integrated set of guidelines for pupils' personal education. The school uses a good and effective range of strategies to promote pupils' personal development. They include specially organised, informal sessions on personal relationships and good quality contributions within the context of religious education and acts of worship, as well as specialist visitors such as the police and a drama expert who work with the pupils to challenge attitudes to violence.

37. The curriculum development process is well led and organised. It is effectively linked to the school's annual development plan through the school's systems for monitoring curriculum planning and teaching as well as the quality of pupils' work and test results. Priorities for further development of the curriculum are identified appropriately. For example, those for the current year include enhancement of the already established links between literacy, numeracy and other subjects, and an increase in links between other subjects such as those that are already in place between history and art.

Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

38. The school's provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall and excellent in part. It provides the foundation upon which all other aspects of pupils' progress rest. This being a school of religious foundation, the school's work rests on a well-defined set of beliefs and values but they do so in a pervasive way which supports the work of the school rather than dominating it. In order to keep the vision fresh, all staff meet together every two years to discuss the implications of the school's values and beliefs for all aspects of its work. The result is a caring, friendly and relaxed atmosphere which has a very positive effect on the pupils' all-round development. Discussion with older pupils shows that they recognise this.
39. Opportunities for the pupils' spiritual development are very good. Acts of worship and school assemblies emphasise the beliefs and values which are central to life in the school. These occasions combine with religious education to provide pupils with an understanding of the spiritual basis for their lives. This includes the role of prayer, which older pupils identified as an important factor in their spiritual development. They welcome the fact that opportunities for prayer occur several times during each school day. Inspection showed that pupils respond warmly to these opportunities and regularly ask for prayers for others in need. One younger pupil, for example, asked for a prayer for the youths that have bullied her on the way to school. Others ask for those who have been hurt in various ways to be remembered in prayer.
40. Provision for the pupils' moral development is excellent and is closely linked to that for their spiritual development. Daily worship, religious education and prayer opportunities provide the spiritual basis for pupils' moral development. Direct teaching and caring responses to the needs of individual pupils combine with the attitudes and examples of all members of staff to influence pupils' behaviour towards other people. The example of their teachers was the first thing that pupils mentioned when asked about how they were learning to treat others. Experiences during the day-to-day life in the school are reinforced by well-structured lessons and group sessions on personal relationships. These focus on responsibility for others' well-being, the sharing of feelings and on the development of empathy. Care for others is also demonstrated in the school's mentoring system which allows for pupils in need of emotional support to choose an adult in the school with whom their most pressing problems can be discussed. A Rainbow programme of support, which includes in-service training for teachers, is in process of being set up for pupils suffering grief and other serious anxieties. These demonstrations of care by the school have a significant, if unspoken, influence on pupils' attitudes towards others.

41. Arrangements for the pupils' social development are very good. They draw on the spiritual and moral aspects of pupils' development and include specific teaching on personal relationships within religious education and through informal group sessions. Opportunities to refine social skills occur in the context of lessons, during which pupils learn to work with each other in pairs and small groups. Appropriate social skills are consistently modelled by teachers as they carry out their work with the pupils. Pupils have opportunities to develop responsibility for a range of jobs in classrooms and, later, within the wider school. Occasions within the school and links with the locality contribute well to pupils' sense of community. A school council is being developed. It includes the election of representatives from across the school, surveying pupil opinion and making recommendations for school improvement. The idea of a wildlife garden has already been taken up. Citizenship skills are sometimes developed within lessons. For example, a debate in a literacy lesson on the pros and cons of a local building development was observed during the inspection.
42. Cultural development opportunities for pupils are good. There is a strong contribution from the curriculum enrichment programme which includes a range of cultural events. Dance and drama within the curriculum also enhance pupils' cultural awareness. The cultural development of younger pupils is promoted through such activities as the weekly singing session in which pupils participate enthusiastically in traditional action songs. The school is strongly committed to respect for people from other cultures. Lessons in art, music, geography and history introduce pupils to the beliefs and traditions of other cultures, past and present. During the last year, the school has held an African Week, has celebrated the Chinese New Year and made a visit to the China Town area of the city. Religious education includes learning about the beliefs and customs of people belonging to the world's main religious communities.
43. The success of the school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is based on its cohesiveness-all aspects are under-pinned by the central beliefs and values which stem from the school's religious foundation. Measurement of the success of this provision is indicated by the pupils' responses. Their attitudes, behaviour and personal relationships are all very good.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

44. The school provides a very caring working environment which is well supervised. The headteacher and staff have very good knowledge of pupils and give them very good personal support and guidance. This is acknowledged and valued by parents. The previous inspection report stated that support and guidance were good. These are now very good.
45. The quality of guidance and support for pupils with special educational needs is good, although there is not enough support to consistently meet their learning needs. They are supported well and integrated in all areas of the school. External agencies are used effectively to the benefit of the pupils.

46. Arrangements for child protection are very good. The school has a detailed child protection policy containing good guidance and procedures. There is a designated staff co-ordinator who is experienced and has received the appropriate training. All staff have been thoroughly briefed in the policy and are fully aware of the relevant procedures to be followed.
47. The school has adopted a good health and safety policy, and responsibilities are well defined and understood. There is thorough and frequent monitoring of health and safety requirements and effective risk assessment arrangements. There are very good arrangements for the care and support of pupils who are taken ill at school, first aid and appropriately maintained accident records. The arrangements for the supervision of pupils at break times and lunch periods are well organised and carried out with care. The school building and grounds provide a safe and healthy environment although the paved outside play area for the under-fives has a very hard surface and is liable to tripping hazards.
48. All the teaching and non-teaching staff work hard as a united and integrated team, promoting a consciously inclusive 'family' atmosphere in the school. The result is a consistent approach which provides positive direction for all pupils. This is quickly recognisable as a key characteristic of the school, permeating all activities and is absorbed by pupils who respond appropriately. A firm foundation is thus provided for encouraging high standards of behaviour, developing commitment, self-esteem and enthusiasm for learning. The staff provide good role models whose protective, nurturing style ensures a balance between consistently firm procedures and sensitive care. Its success in motivating pupils to act responsibly is well demonstrated by their good behaviour in and around the school and their very good attitudes to learning.
49. The school's comprehensive approach to behaviour and discipline, founded on extensive understanding of pupils, is well understood and consistently implemented by all staff, who use every opportunity to promote and reinforce acceptable standards of behaviour. There are very good procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline, good behaviour and for eliminating oppressive behaviour. There are very good arrangements for dealing with bullying and incidents that arise are resolved quickly before becoming serious. No oppressive behaviour or bullying was observed during the inspection.
50. There is excellent support for and monitoring of the pupils' personal and social development. Utilising extensive knowledge of pupils and their backgrounds, staff provide intuitive, timely and practically based support and guidance. The detailed knowledge of individual pupils by particular staff is used to ensure comprehensive, whole-school support. Pupils' successes in their work, however minor, are always encouraged and praised. Monitoring is carried out informally throughout the year and this is augmented by further information in records of achievement and annual reports.
51. Overall pastoral arrangements, guidance and support are very good and provide major impacts on developing improved self-reliance and social skills by pupils. They are therefore well prepared with increased maturity and personal development for their next stage of education.
52. Attendance and punctuality are both poor. There is accurate provision of attendance information on a regular basis and the school has effective liaison with the education welfare service. However, in view of the deterioration of attendance since the previous inspection report, and the significantly deleterious effect on standards of poor attendance and punctuality, current procedures for improving attendance are unsatisfactory. Follow-up action is not sufficiently prompt and procedures for improving punctuality are inadequate.

53. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to exercise responsibility. They are regularly involved in supporting charities and often organise fundraising events themselves, for example in support of the Blue Peter appeal and the Mozambique floods appeal. In all classes, they carry out various regular duties and older pupils also undertake more responsible positions. There is an active school council involving pupils from Year 2 to Year 6. This provides opportunities to develop self-discipline and expression and to become familiar with representative procedures. Its extensive election arrangements were administered by pupils themselves. There is an annual 'Good Citizenship' award, the winner of which is chosen anonymously by a children's panel from nominations submitted by pupils themselves.
54. The school's arrangements for the welfare of pupils are significant strengths and provide a very good caring and protective environment.
55. The assessment systems used by the school have improved greatly since the last inspection and are now very good. Pupils are tested regularly to identify the levels at which they are learning. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, for example, teachers compare the pupils' work against the levels of the National Curriculum. Careful records are kept and the information obtained from assessments and tests is analysed thoroughly. This analysis is used in different ways to improve standards. For example, the school adopted a daily mental mathematics session before the National Numeracy Strategy requirements due to identified weaknesses in the manipulation of number. In science, an emphasis has been placed on experimental aspects, following the poor test results in 1999. Information about results achieved in particular subject areas is used to identify where teaching needs to be improved or where extra teacher training is needed. The assessment procedures are now used to produce targets for individual pupils to achieve by the end of a key stage. This has enabled the school to identify groups of pupils who need additional help. For example, pupils whose anticipated test results are on the borderline between Levels 3 and 4 of the National Curriculum are targeted for extra help to enable them to achieve the higher level. When each block of work is assessed, results are reviewed to identify which areas need to be covered again. This assessment is also used on a weekly basis so that class teachers identify which lessons have not achieved their expected results for some pupils and future work is planned to cover this. The quality of the marking of pupils' work varies. It is always thorough but when it is at its best, gives pupils clear indications of what they need to do in the future. For example, very good marking in a Year 6 class led to a dialogue between the pupil and the teacher which identified what was needed to make further progress. Information about individual pupils is used to plan work to meet their needs in English and mathematics but is not used consistently in other subjects.
56. The learning needs of pupils with special educational needs are assessed well. Individual education plans contain specific and attainable targets and guide the support for these pupils well.
57. Assessment procedures for children under the age of five are unduly variable. In the Reception classes, they are good, with children's attainments being constantly compared to the nationally agreed standards for children of this age. The next steps in learning are identified well and are provided to help the children make progress. In the Nursery, however, assessment procedures are unsatisfactory and the assessment that does occur is not used effectively to identify what individual children need to learn next.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

58. The school's links with parents are very good. Parents provide very good general support to the school. They hold very positive views about what the school provides and achieves. The school greatly values its strong partnership with parents and has put a great deal of work into enhancing and maintaining a successful relationship with them. The quality of information

provided to parents is excellent. There is good involvement of parents in the school and parents' contribution to their children's learning is satisfactory.

59. The school communicates frequently with parents and overall, the quality of information is excellent. The governing body's annual report to parents is good although it does not contain information on special educational needs. The current prospectus is well produced and informative. There are frequent, general newsletters which are produced in an attractive style and provide a useful, regular source of information for parents. This general information is supplemented by the continuous contact between parents and class teachers. Parents also receive well-produced and readable curriculum and topic information each term for each class.
60. The annual reports to parents on the pupils' progress are very good. They provide comprehensive information on the areas of work that pupils have covered. Although they are not routinely related to National Curriculum levels, they do provide clear, unambiguous and detailed information on what pupils know, understand and can do. Areas for future development are also sometimes identified. Additionally, annual reports are supplemented by mid-year reports which contain targets for improvement. Information for parents about their children is frequently broadened by discussions with staff throughout the year. There are three opportunities for formal consultation during the year, including one following the issuing of pupils' annual reports in the summer term. These are very well supported by parents. The school also arranges frequent, informative curriculum related meetings for parents on subjects such as literacy and numeracy. Recently, parents have been consulted on the home/school agreement.
61. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed about their children's progress and about the stage on the special needs register at which their child should be placed. They are invited to attend and participate in meetings with school staff and outside agencies.
62. There is a homework policy and there are effective homework arrangements in place for all classes, including homework records. This provides parents with valuable opportunities for good involvement enabling them to make a significant impact on their children's education. However, parents are variable in their response. Some make good use of this opportunity but there are significant numbers who do not.
63. Parents' perceptions of the school are very good and they hold high opinions of the headteacher and staff. Parents are appreciative of the warm, caring and supportive environment that the school provides for their children. They feel that the school staff are approachable and welcoming. This is a key element in the very good relationships and links that have been forged between parents and the school.
64. The contribution of parents to their children's learning at school and at home is variable, but overall is satisfactory. There is good, direct parental involvement in school by a number of parents who actively provide help in lessons, for example by hearing pupils read. The school consistently encourages parents to take an active part in the life of the school and has been successful in improving this aspect of its work since the last inspection. There is good support for the specific practical courses the school arranges for parents which are designed to equip them to better help in their children's education, for example in literacy, numeracy and computer skills. However, there are significant numbers of parents who are unresponsive and therefore play no active part in their children's education.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

65. The quality of management and leadership in the school as a whole are very good. The headteacher provides highly effective all-round leadership and is ably supported by other staff in posts of responsibility. The headteacher has been very successful in establishing a clear educational direction and vision for the school that is firmly focused on raising standards, improving the quality of education provided and maintaining the strongly Christian ethos in line with the school's foundation and mission statement. The headteacher has also been very successful in gaining shared commitment for her vision from all staff and governors, and this creates a sense of cohesion and purpose in the work of the school as a whole. The school achieved a high degree of success in meeting its declared aims, although those associated with the attainment of high academic standards are not yet achieved.
66. The headteacher, senior staff and governors responded positively to the last inspection report and over the last three and a half years, have made good progress in improving the areas of the school that were deemed to have weaknesses. Good improvements have been achieved in the quality of teaching, assessment procedures and the development of schemes of work. The school has also been successful in involving its parents in the life and work of the school.
67. These improvements in the school have occurred at the same time as major changes in the school's population which has seen an increased proportion of pupils with special educational needs and increased numbers of pupils leaving and joining the school each year. These factors have resulted in a fall in standards in English, mathematics and science over the last three years, despite improvements in the curriculum and teaching. However, work seen during the inspection shows that standards in all of these subjects are rising and that standards in literacy and numeracy are rising as a result of the successful implementation of the new strategies for these subjects. The school has good capacity for further improvement but the absence of a designated deputy headteacher jeopardises continuity in leadership if the headteacher should decide to leave.
68. Curriculum co-ordinators carry out their roles very effectively and make a good contribution to the continuing improvements in the school. They play an active part in developing the curriculum, monitoring teachers' plans and evaluating the standards of work that pupils produce. The monitoring role is best developed in literacy and numeracy but there are plans for extension in the work of all co-ordinators. Provision for children in the early years is co-ordinated soundly. Much support has been provided, so far unsuccessfully, to improve the quality of provision in the Nursery. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is managed well, ensuring that pupils have up-to-date individual education plans that are regularly reviewed.
69. A particular strength of management is the monitoring of teaching and of pupils' written work. This rigorous process has identified strengths and weaknesses in provision and has enabled support to be given when necessary. These procedures have contributed strongly to the improvements in the quality of teaching in the school as a whole and even where teaching remains weak, considerable performance management work and staff development have been provided.
70. A further strength of management is the school development plan and the procedures used to identify the school's priorities. The plan effectively identifies relevant priorities for development and as a working document, helps to focus the school's resources and energies on their achievement.
71. The governing body of the school is very well led by the chair of governors and is highly supportive of the work of the school. The governors' interest in the school is shown by their frequent visits and regular involvement in meetings. An effective committee structure deals efficiently with a wide range of management issues, and governors are supplied with much, up-

to-date information by the headteacher to enable them to make well-informed decisions. Governors are fully involved in development and budget planning processes and show a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. For example, they are fully aware of the need to raise academic standards and take decisions to help bring this about. Almost all statutory requirements are met; the school is still in the process of implementing all aspects of the National Curriculum for information technology, following the very recent installation of new equipment. The annual governors' report to parents and prospectus do not contain all required information.

72. The quality of financial planning is good and the funds received by the school are used effectively to promote good learning and a good quality of education overall. The school's priorities are supported well by the provision of funds, for example class sizes are kept small to provide as much teacher support as possible for the high proportion of pupils with learning and language difficulties. The headteacher and governors monitor the school's spending closely against the planned budget and in most years, keep a reasonable surplus. When the surplus increased sharply in the financial year 1999/2000, it was because of good housekeeping rather than unsatisfactory planning. Through the diligent and effective work of the school administrator, the school purchases its goods and services at highly competitive rates and applies the principles of 'best value'. Office staff make a valuable contribution to the smooth day-to-day running of the school and the caretaker and cleaners ensure that the building is maintained well. The school makes good use of new technology.

Staffing

73. The school is staffed by sufficient hardworking and caring teachers who are appropriately qualified for this phase of education. With the exception of a few teachers, there is generally a lack of expertise in music to teach some aspects of the subject effectively. The arrangements the school has made in order to minimise the affects of maternity leave by many members of staff over the last three years have been effective. Classroom assistants are appropriately qualified and make a significant contribution to the good progress pupils make. However, there is an insufficient number of classroom assistants to adequately support pupils with special educational needs and this restricts the rate of progress these pupils make overall. All staff have clearly defined roles and responsibilities and both teaching and non-teaching staff work very well together as a team and all are fully committed to providing pupils with the best education possible.
74. The arrangements for both staff appraisal and staff development are very good and are strengths of the school. An appraisal cycle has been firmly established and this, and a well thought through programme of staff development, contribute significantly to the quality of teaching within the school. The school conscientiously recognises staff strengths and weaknesses, and uses this knowledge effectively to support the development of both the quality of teaching and the delivery of the curriculum. Staff development is securely based on and carefully balanced between the school's priorities for development and individual teacher's needs. The school induction policy for both new members of staff and newly qualified teachers is very good and the school makes a significant contribution to the training of teachers through established links with local colleges.

Accommodation

75. Overall, there is good accommodation for the school's needs. The main school building has good internal decoration and is well maintained by the premises staff. The classrooms are spacious and provide good accommodation for the number of pupils. There is good library space, a new computer suite and a number of spacious additional withdrawal areas adjacent to classrooms. The school is located on a steeply sloping site which means that the principal access to the main building is via a number of steps. The alternative rear entrance does not involve steps but necessitates a circuitous journey around the school. Convenient access is therefore difficult for the disabled or those with pushchairs. The outside areas are spacious but because of the sloping site, there is no playing field which is a major restriction on physical education. There are good sized, well-maintained playgrounds and the recently completed attractive outside teaching area provides an interesting and valuable alternative to conventional classroom accommodation.

Resources for learning

76. Resources for learning are good. Their good use in lessons makes a very positive contribution to pupils' achievements. The generally good level of resourcing at the time of the last inspection has been maintained and weaknesses corrected. In particular, the deficiencies in the availability of computers have been successfully addressed. A new computer suite provides efficient access to information technology facilities, though significant gaps in software remain. Inadequacies in resources for design and technology have been met and the school now has the basic essentials needed to cover topics adequately. Outdoor facilities and indoor climbing equipment now provide satisfactory support for the physical development of children who are under five.

77. In general, the available resources are at least adequate to the needs of the curriculum and the range of pupils in the school, though a few gaps remain. For example, there is a shortage of picture books, especially big books, in the Nursery. Literacy in the main school is well resourced. Library books have been overhauled, replenished and professionally catalogued. Subject reference books, previously distributed about the school, have been brought together to support pupils' literacy skills. Older pupils are beginning to use the library for independent research, though this trend requires further development. Numeracy resources have been supplemented to provide a sound basis for the development of pupils' mathematical skills and understanding. Resources for history and geography are good. Particularly good use is made of facilities and services in the local environment, video and CD-ROMs. Art resources are very good. Those for physical education are satisfactory with the reservation that some gym mats need replacement. Though music is supported by sound systems and a good range of percussion instruments, the absence of other types of musical instruments reduces the richness of pupils' musical experience. Resources in most subjects provide a multicultural dimension to pupils' learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In their work to further raise standards and improve the quality of education at the school, the governors and staff should now consider the following key issues, which relate to weaknesses identified in the report paragraphs shown:

Improve the quality of teaching and provision in the Nursery by:

- developing a detailed and comprehensive curriculum plan that is focused on the achievement of the early learning goals for all children;

- using initial and ongoing assessment information to plan the next steps in learning for children at differing stages of development;
- raising the level of expectation of what children are able to achieve;
- ensuring that the planning of the teacher identifies clear and precise learning objectives that specify what the children are expected to know, understand and be able to do as a result of the activities, before planning the activities that will take place in the classroom;
- identifying the key language development objectives of each session and ensure that all adults work with the children to develop their use of the language;
- rigorously monitoring the quality of provision and the standards achieved.

(paragraphs 1, 20, 57, 68, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 84, 86, 87, 90)

Raise standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Key Stage 2 by:

- using information from ongoing assessment more consistently to plan work that provides suitable challenges for pupils of all attainment levels, in particular, high attaining pupils;
- developing and implementing a whole-school strategy to develop and continuously assess the language skills of the pupils;
- increasing the pupils' confidence in tackling investigative, experimental and problem-solving type activities so that they develop flexibility in their learning and thinking.

(paragraphs 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 55, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 100, 101, 102, 111, 112)

Significantly improve the attendance rate and the punctuality of pupils by:

- following up absence promptly and rigorously on all occasions;
- setting targets for improved attendance and punctuality and monitoring these rigorously;
- providing more effective incentives for individual and whole-class attendance and punctuality;
- reinforcing with parents the need for good attendance and punctuality.

(paragraphs 9, 17, 52)

Improve the amount of support available for pupils with special educational needs by:

- ensuring that sufficient classroom assistants are available to meet the needs of the pupils.

(paragraphs 8, 29, 34, 73)

Improve standards attained in information technology by:

- fully implementing all aspects of the National Curriculum for information technology;
- planning the use of information technology across the subjects of the curriculum;
- ensuring that all staff have the expertise and confidence to teach all required parts of the curriculum for information technology;
- enhancing software resources to provide a good range of programs for all aspects of the curriculum.

(paragraphs 6, 23, 30, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 145, 146)

Other points to consider for inclusion in the governors' action plan:

- There is a shortage of picture books, especially big books, in the Nursery. (Paragraph 77)
- The absence of musical instruments other than percussion reduces the richness of pupils' musical experience. (Paragraphs 77, 150)
- Staff expertise in teaching music at Key Stage 2 is not sufficiently high. (Paragraphs 23, 150, 153)
- Access to the school is difficult for the disabled or those with pushchairs. (Paragraph 75)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	87
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	21	40	30	5	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	25	307
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		202

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	5	91

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	22
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.4
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	17	36	53

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	10	11
	Girls	26	30	29
	Total	36	40	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	68	75	75
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	11	9
	Girls	29	27	26
	Total	39	38	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74	72	66
	National	82	86	87

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	23	26	49

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	14	13
	Girls	12	8	6
	Total	25	22	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	51	45	39
	National	70	69	78

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	17	18
	Girls	11	13	11
	Total	23	30	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	47	61	59
	National	68	69	75

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	3
Black – other	2
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	300
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.4
Average class size	25.6

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	137

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25

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

Number of pupils per FTE adult	12.5
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	616187
Total expenditure	579615
Expenditure per pupil	1652
Balance brought forward from previous year	38410
Balance carried forward to next year	74982

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	332
Number of questionnaires returned	133

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	74	23	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	69	26	2	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	67	30	1	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	47	35	9	5	4
The teaching is good.	71	26	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	65	26	8	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	17	2	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	78	20	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	66	26	5	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	74	22	2	1	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	71	26	0	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	49	35	7	2	8

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

78. Children enter the Nursery after their third birthday, and they enter the Reception classes in the September of the year in which they will be five. Attendance in the Nursery is part-time with children attending in the morning or the afternoon. The majority of children entering the Reception class have attended the school Nursery and a smaller number have attended another local nursery. A small, but significant proportion of children have not had any pre-school experience.
79. The attainment of children on entry to the school is below that found in the previous inspection. Initial baseline testing of children on entry to the Reception shows that the majority of children have attainment that is well below the level expected for children of this age, especially in the areas of social skills, language and literacy and mathematics. Many of the children entering the Nursery are immature and have very poorly developed speech. Although the majority are well behaved, they have unsatisfactory social skills and lack the curiosity and initiative to enable them to make good progress without well-focused teaching support. The Reception classes provide children with good quality teaching and an appropriate and stimulating curriculum, based on the Desirable Learning Outcomes for children of this age, so that they make good progress and are well prepared for entry to the National Curriculum. However, the quality of teaching and overall provision in the Nursery is unsatisfactory and not sufficiently well-targeted to ensure that children are prepared for entry to the Reception classes.

Personal and social development

80. Children make good progress in the Reception classes because of the good teaching they receive but unsatisfactory teaching in the Nursery results in unsatisfactory progress in this aspect of the children's development. Nursery children settle well to the classroom routines, they choose activities independently and treat equipment well. They enjoy setting up simple role-play activities in the 'Baby Clinic'. However, many children do not have the social skills to interact with each other or with the class teachers or nursery assistant. A satisfactory variety of activities are provided in the Nursery but the learning opportunities provided by these activities are not developed effectively. There is an unsatisfactory level of productive interaction between the adults and the children so that children are not being encouraged to express feelings, to initiate ideas or speaking, or to give reasons for choices.
81. Children in the Reception class are developing independence and can concentrate well in sustained activities. They work well together, behave well and show respect for their teacher and each other. The personal and social development of children is consistently reinforced in the Reception classes. The teachers and helpers provide a calm and supportive atmosphere within an appropriate and stimulating environment. Children are encouraged to develop their confidence and a positive attitude to learning is constantly reinforced. A modified literacy and numeracy hour is preparing children for group activities and the teachers are training them effectively to organise themselves independently.

Language and literacy

82. Children in the Nursery make unsatisfactory progress in developing language and literacy skills because the quality of teaching they receive is unsatisfactory. They follow instructions effectively. However, children are reluctant to express themselves. Many lack the confidence to interact with their peers. They are beginning to learn to recognise their names and developing

pencil control in following patterns and colouring. A few of the older children are beginning to make marks and use some recognisable letters in their writing. In the Nursery, there is a lack of rigour in ensuring that the opportunities for children to develop their language and literacy skills are maximised. The adult intervention in the activities provided is not satisfactorily providing for models of correct speech and vocabulary or successfully prompting children to respond. This is because the learning objectives are not well defined with clearly identified opportunities for developing children's knowledge and skills. Materials to develop literacy in the Nursery are unsatisfactory. Picture sequencing activities, taped stories, puppets and toys for imaginative play are underused and the selection of books in the book area is poor.

83. Children in the Reception classes make good progress in language, and literacy skills develop well due to good quality teaching. By the age of five, the majority of children listen well and respond well to stories and class discussions. They are encouraged to express themselves effectively and to develop their utterances beyond a one-word response. The majority are still in the early stages of developing reading and writing skills. Teachers in the Reception classes provide many good opportunities for children to express themselves in response to stories and experiments. For example, making jelly and, recently introduced, class discussion time. Where teachers are careful to prompt children to respond and to extend their vocabulary, this has a positive impact on developing children's speaking skills. The recent introduction of a modified literacy hour is ensuring children have a good understanding of story, plot and character. Children enjoy reading along with the teacher and are developing letter recognition and other phonic skills. Well-organised activities provide for effective writing tasks in which children learn to form letters correctly. They are able to provide captions to drawings and more able children communicate their ideas in two or three short sentences. Many are able to write their names unaided. The majority are developing reading skills with a small minority who are reading confidently and at a level better than that expected for their age.

Mathematics

84. Children in the Nursery make unsatisfactory progress in their mathematical knowledge because the quality of teaching they receive is unsatisfactory. They are able to sort and organise objects in different ways according to colour, and recreate simple colour patterns. The majority can count to five and are beginning to match number to the symbol and they are able to chorus numbers to ten. A small minority understand how to subtract and add one. Nursery children are developing their understanding of number through well-selected stories and number rhymes and songs. They enjoy singing number songs and hearing stories which involve counting, such as 'The Hungry Caterpillar'. The provision of water and sand play, the use of construction sets and sorting activities are helping to develop other mathematical concepts. However, the teachers and support staff do not effectively interact to ensure that the language and concepts are successfully taught in these more informal occasions.
85. The majority of children in the Reception are able to count confidently to 20 and can do simple subtractions. They are beginning to understand number bonds to five. They are developing an understanding of shape and size through sorting different objects and understand simple mathematical language such as 'bigger than' and 'smaller than' and can identify circles, squares and rectangles. The quality of teaching in the Reception classes is good. Children benefit from the well-planned opportunities to develop their understanding of number and other mathematical skills during the daily numeracy hour. Activities are well matched to the needs of the children and provide a good level of challenge and there is good support by the teachers and classroom assistants.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

86. Children in the Nursery are making satisfactory progress in this area of learning. They learn about themselves as babies and care for their babies in the role-play area which is set up as a baby clinic. They investigate and observe changes in materials such as paint, play dough and wet and dry sand. Children in the Reception class have learnt about themselves and their families. They visit the local park and learn about their environment. They label and classify materials, observe and record the growth of cress and observe what happens when they fly kites. Children in the Nursery and Reception are developing their computing skills satisfactorily and use the mouse effectively to control images on the screen. Reception children create graphic images and develop their mouse control to 'dress teddy'.
87. The Nursery and Reception provide a variety of appropriate experiences. Initial provision concentrates on the familiar aspects of home and school. Demonstration and experimentation are used effectively to stimulate and involve children. For example, the teacher in the Reception class set up an experiment to show that jelly dissolves in hot water, but not in cold. There was a good opportunity for Nursery children to observe how bread is changed by toasting it. However, the children's lack of response and teachers' lack of strategies to involve the children meant this was less successful in developing language and knowledge. The introduction of discussion time in the Reception classes is providing the opportunity for children to express their feelings, and religious education and assembly time in the Nursery and Reception classes provide a good occasion for children to think of others.

Physical development

88. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make good progress in developing co-ordination, handling pencils and crayons, paintbrushes and construction materials with increasing control. In the outside play area, Nursery children use wheeled vehicles with control and skill with a good awareness of space. Reception children develop a suitable range of physical skills. They respond to music with expression and move in imaginative ways. They understand the need to warm-up and how this makes your heart beat faster. They move in different ways showing good balance and co-ordination skills and develop their skills of throwing and catching effectively.
89. It was not possible to observe children in the Nursery class in physical development lessons, due to changes in the timetable, and generally the time allowed for these lessons is unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching in the Reception classes is very good and at times is excellent. Teachers provide very well planned activities, in which children develop confidence in a wide range of movements and develop appropriate skills. The need to listen carefully, follow instructions and work safely is constantly reinforced, and teachers and support staff are careful to demonstrate the required activity.

Creative development

90. Children in the Nursery make unsatisfactory progress in creative development because the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. Many opportunities are provided, but the lack of planned intervention by adults means that the opportunities taken to really stimulate and excite children are unsatisfactory. They explore different paint techniques and use paper and other material to make collage. They enjoy singing and participate in rhymes and action songs. Role-play is less well developed and only a minority of children effectively interact with each other to set up imaginative play. Reception children show good imagination and skills in producing animal masks from papier-mâché shells, using recycled material and paint effectively to decorate the masks. The quality of teaching for Reception class pupils is good. The teachers stimulate the children's interest with lively lessons that generate a high level of interest and involvement. The teaching and support staff value children's work by effectively displaying their pictures and producing attractively illustrated individual and class books.

ENGLISH

91. Inspection findings indicate that standards of attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 are below national expectations. This is an improvement on the standards achieved by pupils in the 1999 National Curriculum tests when the performance of pupils was well below the national average in both reading and writing. In comparison with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, the performance of pupils in reading was above average and in writing it was close to the average.
92. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils' attainment was well below the national average but was close to the average when compared to similar schools. Over the last four years, the performance of pupils in the English tests has remained well below the national average. Inspection findings indicate that the successful implementation of the literacy hour has significantly improved the quality of teaching since the last inspection and this has enabled pupils to make better progress. As a result, standards of work are now below the national expectations by the end of the key stage.
93. Standards in English have fallen at both key stages since the last inspection when attainment was reported to be in line with national averages, with the exception of speaking and listening at Key Stage 2. This can be explained by the fact that since the last inspection, the school has experienced a substantial increase in pupil mobility which has resulted in a much higher percentage of pupils with special educational needs attending the school.
94. At both key stages, the pupils' attainment in listening is in line with national expectations. Pupils listen attentively to teachers and each other in many different situations and this contributes significantly to the good progress pupils make in their learning. Across the school, pupils' limited knowledge and understanding of vocabulary severely restricts their ability to express their opinions and ideas clearly, therefore by the end of both key stages, pupils' attainment in speaking is well below national expectations. Pupils respond confidently to simple, factual type questions but find it more difficult to respond to questions which require more complex thinking. The school is aware of this and teachers are beginning to provide more planned opportunities across the curriculum in order to develop pupils' speaking skills. For example, in Year 6, pupils work co-operatively in groups to talk about aspects for a debate on a local issue, and in Year 1, pupils are encouraged to retell a story using finger puppets. Good use is made of drama in Year 3, for example, when pupils are challenged to explore and express their feelings about violence through the story of Baleen the Whale.
95. Standards in reading are below national expectations by the end of both key stages, although standards in Key Stage 2 are only slightly below the national picture. The teaching of reading is well structured throughout the school, particularly during guided reading within the literacy hour, and this enables pupils to make good progress overall at both key stages. Teachers give very good levels of guidance and instruction to pupils during reading activities although sometimes there are some missed opportunities for pupils to practise their reading skills during shared reading within the literacy hour. Most pupils enjoy reading and they show good levels of perseverance when tackling unfamiliar words. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils have made good progress towards acquiring an appropriate range of reading strategies but standards remain below the expectations for their age. Pupils are sometimes hesitant when reading and they have not yet acquired sufficient fluency. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils have acquired a sound understanding of basic research skills and know how to use an index, glossary and index page well. Most pupils throughout the school use non-fiction books effectively to inform their learning across the curriculum. For example, in a Year 2 science lesson, pupils were asked to use non-fiction books in order to find out about forces.

96. Standards of attainment in writing are below national expectations at the end of both key stages. Across the school, pupils make slow progress in their understanding, knowledge and use of punctuation. Although teachers provide plenty of opportunities for pupils to write extended narrative and to write for different purposes and audiences across the curriculum, too little attention is given to the proper use of punctuation within different styles of writing. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils do not use basic punctuation such as full stops and capital letters consistently well and by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils do not punctuate long sentences well enough with appropriate punctuation. Few pupils readily write in paragraphs. Pupils' spelling is weak throughout the school. At Key Stage 1, pupils begin to acquire a good sense of story structure through sequencing activities and making storyboards. Throughout the school, pupils' limited knowledge and understanding of vocabulary restricts their ability to use specific vocabulary well for effect, as is evident in their creative, poetic and descriptive writing. There is evidence of good improvement made by pupils in handwriting, and by the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils' writing is fluent, joined and legible. High attaining pupils achieve standards in writing appropriate to their age across both key stages.
97. The pupils' good attitudes to learning and the quality of teaching they receive contribute significantly to the good progress made by pupils in English. Although pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall, in English, they generally make good progress. This is because the school has made good use of Additional Literacy Support materials in order to support both the least able and pupils with special educational needs. This support is effective because it provides pupils with tasks that are well matched to their abilities and ensures that pupils make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. A very effective school initiative, which has positively contributed to pupils' learning, is the Family Literacy Project, which encourages both parents and pupils to work together in various language activities both in school and at home.
98. The quality of teaching is good and it is often very good. The National Literacy Strategy has been securely implemented and it is well structured and delivered by all teachers. A strength of teaching in English is the very precise and challenging questioning used by teachers to develop the pupils' knowledge and understanding of both texts and specific vocabulary. A good range of resources and teaching methods are used very effectively to support learning. Good relationships with pupils ensure that activities such as drama and debates are well organised and managed. Teachers provide plenty of opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills for different purposes across the curriculum. For example, pupils organise their writing appropriately in science when writing about investigations, and in design and technology, pupils engage in instructional writing in order to explain how they make things.
99. The subject is well managed and co-ordinated. Priorities for development in the subject are appropriate and are based on careful analysis of both national and school test results. Procedures to assess and monitor the pupils' progress and attainment are very good and teachers use the information from such assessments effectively to set future learning targets for pupils. The resources for the subject are of good quality and range and these are used very effectively by teachers to support pupils' learning.

MATHEMATICS

100. The results of the national end of key stage tests in 1999 for pupils aged eleven at the end of Key Stage 2 indicate that pupils' attainment is well below average when compared with schools nationally. Compared with similar schools, results are better but still below the average.
101. The results achieved by the Year 2 pupils in the 1999 tests are well below when compared with the national average but are generally in line with those of similar schools.
102. The standards seen during the inspection were better than the 1999 results. The standards of attainment at the end of both key stages are below the national expectations but are not far below. Pupils in all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, generally make good progress in both key stages. Progress is best where teaching is consistently good or better, in particular in the Reception classes, in Year 2 and Year 6.
103. Pupils develop a very good understanding of number, and have a good facility working with numbers mentally. Year 2 pupils work confidently with numbers up to 100 and most understand the significance of the position of each digit in these numbers. They identify the key words in a sentence which explain why numbers should be added or subtracted and use this knowledge to solve problems in real life situations. In Year 3, pupils extend their understanding of numbers to work with thousands. Year 4 pupils multiply three-digit numbers and, importantly, can show clearly the methods they are using. They use fractions accurately and know, for example, that there are fraction 'families', so that $\frac{1}{3}$ is the same as $\frac{2}{6}$ or $\frac{3}{9}$. Pupils in Year 5 develop this understanding of fractions to link them with decimals and percentages, and most know that $\frac{1}{4}$ is the same as 0.25 or 25 per cent. They use this knowledge when looking at how shops often give discounts during 'sales', and understand, for example, that if they were offered ten per cent off an item which was £10 they would save £1. Pupils in Year 6 cover a wide range of mathematical topics and identify which numbers are 'prime numbers', and that no other number will divide into them without leaving a remainder. They extend their number skills well and can add and subtract numbers to two decimal places.
104. Pupils make sound progress in their knowledge and understanding of shape, space and measures. Pupils in Year 2 name a good range of shapes and accurately identify the number of corners and edges they have. Year 4 pupils draw the 'nets' which they can cut out and join to make cubes. They identify which nets will make cubes and which will not. In Year 6, pupils make good progress in this area of mathematics. They use their knowledge of co-ordinates to accurately place shapes on a grid. They then predict what the co-ordinates will be if the shape is moved up or down or to the side. High attaining pupils work accurately in the areas of the grid which contain negative numbers.
105. Pupils make satisfactory progress in handling data. Younger pupils make 'tally' charts to record information. They are developing the ability to produce block graphs to show information such as the colour of the eyes of the pupils in the class. Older pupils extend their skills. Year 6 pupils, for example, look at the likelihood of things happening. They are certain that some things will happen and some things will not, but recognise that some questions such as whether a teacher will eat meat for their evening meal will be a 'possible' or 'probable' answer. They are developing the ability to place an answer in a range from certain to impossible.
106. Pupils throughout the school are taught relevant vocabulary and have a sound understanding of appropriate mathematical language. In both key stages, pupils are developing their investigative skills but their limited language ability sometimes means that their mathematical skills are not effective. For example, pupils in Year 2 identify the 'key' words in a written problem which will tell them if they have to add or subtract numbers. When the written information is clear, most pupils easily identify the correct process but when the information requires pupils to 'think

around' the problem, even the high attaining pupils find it difficult to find the answer. In Year 6, teachers are effectively using appropriate language to develop pupils' understanding. For example, pupils know that when a shape is moved around a grid this is a 'translation'.

107. Pupils have very good attitudes to mathematics and they usually respond very well in lessons. This has a positive impact on their learning. They are enthusiastic learners and a great sense of enjoyment of the subject was observed when teaching was good or better. Pupils answer questions confidently during class mental mathematics sessions and listen carefully to their teacher's instructions. They move sensibly from one activity to another without wasting any time. Pupils work very well in groups and they collaborate well. For example, very good collaboration was seen in Year 6 where groups working on moving shapes around a grid, shared the cut-out shapes without argument and also shared ideas about the way they should tackle the tasks. Their behaviour is very good and they are motivated and confident. They take a pride in presenting their work well and accurately.
108. The quality of teaching is good overall. Some very good teaching was observed in both key stages. Consistently good teaching in the classes at the end of each key stage has a positive effect on the improved standards now seen in school. In these lessons, teachers make their high expectations clear to their pupils and explain, at the beginning of the lesson, what pupils are going to learn. This motivates and challenges pupils very effectively and has a positive effect on their learning and the standards they achieve. There are some common strengths in the teaching throughout the school. Teachers' understanding of mathematics is good and this enables them to give clear explanations and to extend and challenge pupils' mathematical thinking. They plan lessons well, following the structure of the National Numeracy Strategy and meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum. Teachers have excellent relationships with pupils and maintain good discipline. Consequently, they are able to concentrate their efforts on moving their pupils on in their learning. Lessons generally proceed at a good pace. Teachers use day-to-day assessment very well and adapt future lessons as necessary in the light of their assessments of pupils' learning. The quality of marking of pupils' work is generally good. Teachers indicate what pupils need to do to improve and how to learn from their mistakes.
109. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject leaders have been active in supporting teachers as the National Numeracy Strategy has been put into place. They have a good awareness of the levels of attainment throughout the school and of the quality of teaching. There are very good procedures to assess pupils' progress and the standards they achieve. Numeracy is promoted satisfactorily in other subjects, for example in science where the graphs are used to display data collected.
110. The accommodation includes shared areas between class bases and these are used effectively by groups working with support staff or independently. Considerable additional resources have been acquired to support the introduction of the numeracy strategy and these have had a positive effect on the progress pupils make.

SCIENCE

111. Attainment in science for eleven-year-olds in the 1999 National Curriculum tests was very low compared to the national average and well below when compared with similar schools. Standards over time show that results in science have not kept up with the national average, and the 1999 results show a significant drop. The results of National Curriculum teacher assessment for seven-year-olds in 1999 show that the percentage of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 was well below the national average and well below for the higher Level 3. Standards in science achieved at the time of the previous inspection were said to be below the

national average at Key Stage 2 and broadly in line at Key Stage 1, although no pupils at either key stage reached the higher levels.

112. The attainment of pupils who are currently aged eleven is below the level expected nationally. It was not possible to see any science lessons in Year 6 during the course of the inspection as they have completed the curriculum for the term, and evidence of standards is taken from pupils' books and discussion with teachers and pupils. From this evidence, it is clear that standards have improved this year. This has been brought about by focusing on the gaps in the pupils' learning, and by significantly increasing the amount of practical work throughout the school to develop pupils' experimental, investigative and thinking skills. However, while a good proportion of pupils are achieving standards broadly in line with those expected at Level 4, weaknesses in literacy skills make it more difficult for pupils to achieve the higher Level 5. Attainment of pupils by the time they reach the age of seven is below the expected level for broadly the same reason. There are an insufficient number of pupils with the literacy skills to achieve the higher Level 3.
113. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a sound knowledge of science and the teachers provide for a good development of knowledge and skills as well as ensuring that key vocabulary is taught. There is plenty of practical work so that pupils' interest is captured. Pupils are very clear about their tasks and know that their ideas and predictions are valued. They understand the importance of keeping all the elements in an experiment the same. They test the distance cars can travel over carpet and concrete and suggest factors that affect the performance. Younger pupils make sensible predictions about whether toys move with a pushing or pulling motion and begin to understand that predictions need to be tested. Pupils' work shows that they are taught a good range of scientific ideas. They learn about electricity and make simple circuits, understand what conditions are needed for healthy plant growth and begin to understand how materials can be changed, for example by cooking eggs or melting ice. They make simple recordings of their experiments and use drawings, charts and labelling effectively.
114. Teachers in Key Stage 2 provide pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum in which there is a strong emphasis on direct experience and experimentation. By the time they are eleven, pupils show good understanding of how to construct a 'fair test' and know why it is necessary. There are good, supportive and challenging opportunities in which pupils can make informed suggestions, ask perceptive questions and share their predictions. Pupils in Year 6 conduct experiments and record their results to find out what conditions are needed by seeds and plants to grow healthily. They set up tests to check the effect of friction on the speed of a vehicle travelling on a ramp, organise and produce their own charts to record their predictions and assess the results and how the experiment can be improved. Pupils are encouraged to work independently. Older pupils are given basic material to construct a tuned instrument and use it to investigate pitch. They work well and methodically and are guided by a common framework to record the investigation and results. Younger pupils are supported to work independently, for example, to test the forces operating on a spring. There is a structured approach to a build-up of skills so that pupils apply previously learnt knowledge and skills when they tackle new learning. In this way, they develop their understanding about healthy living and their bodies and understand the significance of food chains. They construct electrical circuits and represent these through accurate diagrams, and as they get older, learn to change the components.
115. The behaviour of pupils and their attitude to their work are good. Younger pupils work together well to conduct experiments, and share their observations with their classmates and teachers. The majority of older pupils respond well to the opportunities to carry out investigations and observations, work well together and use equipment carefully and safely. In discussion, they were able to recall with enthusiasm what they had learnt in their science lessons using correct

terminology. Finished work is presented neatly and labelled correctly, with spellings mainly accurate. Pupils of all ages enjoy their science lessons and work hard at their tasks.

116. The quality of teaching and learning is never less than satisfactory and is mainly good with some very good teaching observed at both key stages. This represents an improvement in teaching since the previous inspection when some unsatisfactory teaching was seen at Key Stage 2, and teaching was mainly judged to be sound. Lessons are well planned with a clear structure and learning objectives which are shared with the pupils. Teachers are also very careful to use and emphasise the correct scientific terminology, being fully aware that this is an area for development with all pupils. Resources are thoughtfully prepared to enable pupils to work independently. The scheme of work provides a clear structure for lessons in which, following the initial introduction, group activities are planned so that two groups can work independently while the teacher supports one group. There are advantages in this in that teachers and pupils can develop their confidence in the more investigative elements of science, but in supportive situations. Pupils of different abilities are grouped together to give support to each other and classroom assistants, where available, provide good support, especially for younger pupils. However, written tasks are not satisfactorily adapted to assist children with special educational needs or those who have difficulties with recording, nor does it always provide sufficient challenge to the more able pupils to extend their knowledge. At both key stages, there is little evidence of teachers encouraging the use of information technology for the recording and processing of data. This has been identified by the co-ordinator as an aspect of work in need of development.
117. The management of science is good. The school is now using the guidance of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority to provide a basis for a science scheme of work and this ensures that there are clear learning objectives and that the pupils build their scientific knowledge, understanding and skills in a continuous and progressive way. The co-ordinator correctly identified the need to strengthen teachers' knowledge and understanding of the experimental and investigative side of science, and has worked hard to provide training and support to teachers so that they are now confident in this aspect. The co-ordinator monitors planning and pupils' work and has had some opportunities to observe teaching and learning. The subject is well supported by a programme of visits for pupils in all year groups. Resources are good. However, there is insufficient information technology software to provide for a range of data handling experiences.

ART

118. Pupils' standards in art are appropriate for their age and they make good progress in both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, as do pupils with English as an additional language. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection and the curriculum remains broad and balanced so that pupils are introduced to a good variety of artistic forms and mediums. Finished pieces of work are very well displayed to show the range of techniques used and to value the efforts made by the pupils. These displays add considerably to the bright and attractive environment of the school.
119. Pupils achieve much through the study of the work of major artists. Younger pupils in Year 2 are stimulated by the work of Van Gogh, initially through sharing the book 'Camille's Sunflowers'. They are provided with a good range of resources and work hard to match shades and colours to the paintings they are interpreting, and select and cut paper for collage. Pupils take great care to find the right colours and to add different substances to experiment with texture. Older pupils in Year 6 are asked to consider the way in which art makes an impact. The teacher introduces them to the idea that a painting can represent what is felt as well as what is seen, and illustrates this by showing Picasso's painting 'Guernica'. This stimulates pupils to make a quick sketch of their own interpretation of a mining accident which they later begin to

work into a representational or interpretive drawing, using pastels and chalks. This lesson demonstrates how teachers link art with other curricular areas, in this case the history of mining.

120. Teachers provide pupils with good opportunities for drawings and sketches based on close observation. There are some satisfactory drawings from nature displayed in classrooms and corridors. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils sketched statues and architectural features observed during a city walk. Year 3 pupils had the opportunity to study Egyptian artefacts that were brought to school by a visiting archaeologist from Liverpool University. They produced their own designs for wristbands which they later made from felt, decorated with pieces of fabric and sequins; and clay tablets, patterned and painted. There is satisfactory evidence of the computer being used to generate designs, for example in Year 4, where repeated patterns are used to simulate William Morris wallpaper. Patterns found in the environment provide the stimulus for printing using string on cardboard. The teacher effectively draws pupils' attention to how the environment can be used to stimulate creative work.
121. From the evidence of work observed in and around the school, it is clear that art remains a significant part of the school's curriculum and retains the importance seen in the previous inspection. Teaching is mainly good and is never less than satisfactory. Teachers use the subject to motivate and stimulate pupils to discuss their feelings, reactions and emotions, and pupils' response shows that they enjoy and respond to this element as well as to the creative element. A significant impact is made by the Africa Week in which artists from the Ocean Arts Foundation work within the school to help pupils produce paintings, ceramic masks and batik. The week culminates in a production of a creation myth in which the work made is displayed. Pupils enjoy their art lessons, work with enthusiasm and persevere to achieve good results. Resources are very good and used well to give pupils a wide range of experiences and to build up their skills.
122. The subject is managed well and the art policy and scheme of work provides sound guidance for what is to be taught in each age group. This is in the process of review to bring it in line with new curriculum arrangements but will continue to reflect the strengths of the current curriculum.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

123. Pupils make satisfactory progress and, by the end of both key stages, their work is of a typical standard for their age. Standards have improved since the last inspection.
124. Pupils develop sound design skills. In Key Stage 1, they draw pictures of how they want their models to look before making them. Older pupils develop their ideas by making and evaluating preliminary models. By the time they reach Year 6, they use planning booklets effectively to organise their ideas about the slippers they are going to make. They make notes about the methods and materials they intend to use and, in their drawings, clearly identify the materials they are going to use for different parts of the product. Through this process, literacy skills are promoted well.
125. Pupils' ability to make products develops satisfactorily. They undertake a suitable range of work, including sewing, three-dimensional constructions with commercially produced kits and making models with moving parts. They learn to measure, cut, shape and join a range of materials. Pupils in the Reception class make animal masks from papier-mâché shells they have produced by sticking paper onto balloons. They use tape and glue to effectively form features such as teeth and ears and then paint them carefully. Pupils in Year 3 cut and joined paper together carefully to make three-dimensional picture books for their work on 'The Lion,

the Witch and the Wardrobe'. Pupils in Year 5 use saws and drills safely and accurately when they cut and drill the wood they need to make their moving models.

126. Throughout the school, pupils are taught to evaluate their work. Older pupils are beginning to identify what is good about their work and how they think it could be improved. By the end of Key Stage 2, good attention is paid to the appearance of the products they make and, throughout the school, pupils decorate and finish their models to a good standard for their age.
127. Some of the tasks pupils undertake in design and technology are linked effectively to work in other subjects. For example, when pupils in Year 2 are testing how far cars travel down a ramp in a science lesson, they use their design skills to make the cars they use.
128. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work in design and technology. They listen very sensibly to instructions from their teachers. They work well in groups, co-operating and sharing resources sensibly. Their positive attitudes and good behaviour in lessons contribute well to the progress they make.
129. Most classes had completed their half term block of work before the week of inspection, therefore there were few lessons to see during this week. However, from observation of these lessons and scrutiny of work, the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. The in-service training which teachers have received since the last inspection has improved their confidence in teaching the subject and therefore their effectiveness. They plan lessons well ensuring that tasks are appropriate for all their pupils.
130. The subject is managed well and the co-ordinator informally supports her colleagues with advice and help with resources. Numeracy skills are developed as pupils measure accurately, for example, the wooden dowels they use in Year 5 as cams for their models, and literacy skills are developed during the planning and evaluation stages. There are sufficient resources available to cover the topics which are to be done each term.

GEOGRAPHY

131. Pupils bring limited knowledge and understanding to their study of geography but their progress is broadly sound during Key Stage 1 and the achievement of the great majority of pupils matches expectations for the age group as they reach the end of Key Stage 2. Particularly good progress is achieved during Year 6. The main focus in Key Stage 1 is the local environment. Pupils learn to use large-scale maps and photographs, including aerial ones, to locate key features in the environment which they also learn to evaluate. Mapping skills are advanced in Year 3 to include recognition of symbols and keys on Ordnance Survey maps. Geographical vocabulary and understanding are developed through the study of the island of St Lucia, river systems and weather. Such skills come together by the end of Key Stage 2, enabling pupils to compare historical maps of Liverpool and to carry out fieldwork on changes to the city.
132. Pupils at all stages show an interest in geography and apply themselves well in lessons. They like working with maps and are enthusiastic about fieldwork. Year 6 pupils, in particular, demonstrated thoughtfulness in relation to study of their city.

133. Teaching is at least sound and is sometimes good, especially towards the end of Key Stage 2, where it is sometimes excellent. This quality of teaching is marked by very good subject knowledge, enthusiasm for it and high expectations of the pupils. This enthuses the pupils who almost invariably show interest in the topics studied. Questioning is probing and stimulates pupils' thinking. All teachers have a sound knowledge of mapping skills and teach them effectively. Lesson planning is generally good and learning objectives are clear. A good range of resources is provided with appropriate levels of challenge set for pupils with different levels of prior achievement.
134. Leadership of the subject has changed only recently but the new co-ordinator is enthusiastic and is already involved in forward planning to meet new curriculum requirements for the subject. A draft scheme of work to support pupils' progress in geographical skills and understanding provides a good foundation for future planning. Resources for learning are good. Priorities for future development of the subject are appropriate. They include the strengthening of fieldwork and of links with literacy and numeracy. A sound foundation for further development is already in place in both cases.

HISTORY

135. At the end of Key Stage 2, the achievements of pupils in history are good, although their rate of progress across the years varies. Key Stage 1 pupils start from a low base of knowledge, skills and understanding but make sound progress as they move towards Key Stage 2. For example, Year 2 pupils learn how to sequence photographs chronologically, to draw up a questionnaire and to interpret artefacts in a study of leisure differences between the 1960s and the present day. Pupils' progress quickens in the early years of Key Stage 2 and gathers further momentum in their final year in the school. Along the way, they develop a sound understanding of aspects of life in Ancient Greece and Rome and of that in Tudor and Victorian times.
136. Pupils' attitudes towards history are invariably positive. Though they always show good levels of interest and concentration, it is clear that pupils respond more enthusiastically in lessons that include substantial use of tasks that require them to investigate historical evidence. Pupils work well together and take turns to examine any evidence provided. Discussions develop amongst older pupils especially, as they seek to interpret evidence and to come to conclusions about what it says about the past. On one occasion, Year 3 pupils were handling genuine artefacts from Ancient Egypt. Guided by the visiting archaeologist, they did so wearing cotton gloves and showing a high level of care and respect for the priceless items available to them. Year 4 pupils became highly involved in a paper-based simulation of an archaeological dig for evidence about children's lives in Tudor times.
137. The quality of teaching is variable in both key stages but almost always it is at least sound and sometimes it is very good in Key Stage 2. The less satisfactory lessons are over-reliant on secondary sources of evidence without alerting pupils to the potential weaknesses in such evidence. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject, lesson objectives are generally clear and lessons are well resourced. Very good use is made of artefacts, videos, CD-ROM and of contacts and facilities in the locality of the school. Slower learners are sometimes given extra support by the teacher or grouped with higher attaining pupils who can provide assistance. The management of the pupils themselves is invariably very good. The teaching of history is strengthened by its links with subjects such as art and geography. Opportunities to support literacy through writing, reading and speaking skills are also taken, for example, in a Year 6 fieldwork study of Liverpool.
138. Developments in the subject are very well managed by a co-ordinator with contagious enthusiasm and specialist expertise. Forward thinking towards re-planning of the curriculum to

accommodate the reduction in the teaching time now available to it are well underway. Key priorities are already defined and the need for planning to enhance pupils' progress clearly recognised. A subject development plan is in place. This includes an appropriate emphasis on the development of assessment strategies to chart pupils' progress and to indicate where changes in the curriculum and its teaching might be advisable.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

139. Pupils' standards of attainment fall below national expectations by the end of both key stages. This is because the school does not teach all the topics outlined in the National Curriculum. Only Years 5 and 6 tackle the data handling tasks and then at levels at least a year below what they should be. Throughout the school, there are few opportunities for pupils to control machines and direct their movement with the computers. Only pupils from Year 2 and Year 3 have the chance to use programs which put them in situations in which they have to make choices and answer questions of the 'What will happen if?' type.
140. However, the future development of the subject looks to be more positive. The school priorities for the past two years have been in implementing the literacy and numeracy strategies. This has meant that the development of other subjects, like information technology, has had to be delayed. Now the school includes information technology in its priorities for the coming year. There is sound evidence that the pupils reach required levels of attainment in the aspects of the curriculum that are covered and, most importantly, the very recently established computer suite is already showing evidence that standards can be raised in all areas of the subject.
141. Pupils' progress is sound in the areas which they cover. Those pupils working in the computer suite are making good progress in all areas covered and very good progress, from a low base, in new aspects such as the use of the Internet.
142. Year 2 pupils in the last year of Key Stage 1 do not reach the national expectations for pupils of their age. However, they do reach the expected level in some areas. For example, they link their work on the computer with their work in art. They have looked at the paintings of Mondrian and many pupils use an art program well to produce good quality pictures in his style. They save or delete their work independently. Pupils in Year 4 have developed their skills in this area well and work on a program which gives them the opportunity to produce a good quality picture of a church stained glass window. Year 6 pupils incorporate a computer-generated picture into their typewritten work when they produce posters for their 'Millennium Concert'. The way the school uses the computers to create pictures is a strength and starts in the youngest classes. A child in the Reception class, for example, has created a colourful and interesting picture of 'A caterpillar thinking about something!'
143. Pupils also meet the expected level in the work they do in word processing. Year 1 pupils write about themselves and, with help from their teacher, save this information on a disk. Year 2 pupils have typed their names using different styles and have used a publishing program to make interesting Easter cards for their parents. Year 6 pupils have produced good quality written work in a variety of fonts and sizes. With help, they have produced a school magazine with boxes for text, illustrations and graphs.
144. Pupils have very positive attitudes to the subject, especially when they are working in the computer suite. They work sensibly on the computers, often with little direct supervision, and share tasks when more than one is working on a machine. They are more than willing to share their knowledge with their classmates and this has a positive effect on the progress many pupils make.

145. The new curriculum plans cover all of the required areas of learning. The lack of links with other subject areas has been recognised and there are plans to remedy this in the future. Information technology does not, at the present time, support work effectively in other subjects, including literacy and numeracy.
146. In the small number of lessons seen during inspection, teaching was often good. However, other observations of work in the computer suite showed that some teachers need additional support to increase their confidence. When this subject is taught in the classroom with only one computer available, it is difficult to keep all pupils on task and making progress.
147. The arrangements for assessing pupils' progress give a clear picture of what pupils have achieved. The subject is well led and the co-ordinator is aware of the areas which need to be developed. The newly established computer suite is an important addition to the school, not only for the pupils, but also for the wider community as the school is providing training for parents.

MUSIC

148. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 are achieving standards that are expected for their age. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are in line with age-related expectations in singing but are below standards expected for their age in other aspects of the subject. At the time of the last inspection, attainment was reported to be in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages.
149. At both key stages pupils make good progress in singing and they can sing songs well, including rounds in two parts. They sing sweetly and confidently and respond well to changes in pitch, tempo, dynamics and texture. Their phrasing and diction is clear and they can sustain a melody confidently while singing a range of songs.
150. Overall, pupils make good progress in all aspects of the subject at Key Stage 1. However, at Key Stage 2, although satisfactory progress is made overall, most pupils make slower and generally insufficient progress in the performing and composing elements of the subject, and pupils' attainment in this aspect of the subject is below age-related expectations. This is because most teachers have insufficient subject expertise to be able to challenge pupils sufficiently in order for them to reach an expected level of attainment for their age by the end of the key stage. For example, opportunities for pupils to compose their own music and perform using tuned and non-tuned instruments are limited. Pupils' experience of playing musical patterns from ear and from notation is also limited. However, pupils at Key Stage 1 and younger Key Stage 2 pupils make satisfactory progress in understanding how to control sound when playing instruments. For example, Key Stage 1 pupils show they can follow simple signals from the teacher in order to create loud and soft sounds while playing a range of percussion instruments and in Year 3, pupils appropriately compose a range of sounds from a variety of percussion instruments in order to depict different moods and emotions.
151. At both key stages, pupils make good progress in the listening and appraising aspects of the subject. This is because the school provides plenty of opportunities for pupils to experience music from different traditions. The music curriculum is greatly enriched through visiting musicians to the school which effectively supports pupils' learning in the listening and appraising element of the subject. For example, visits from African musicians and from the police brass band successfully enable pupils to listen to and appreciate music from a range of different musical traditions and in Year 6, pupils understand well the difference in tempo and rhythm when comparing a traditional Scottish reel with the Tango.

152. Pupils' attitudes to music are generally good and they take part in musical activities such as singing in the school choir with enjoyment and enthusiasm. However, very few pupils take the opportunity to learn how to play a musical instrument.
153. The school has implemented an appropriate scheme of work for the non-specialist teacher which effectively supports the quality of teaching. Although the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, the lack of teachers' subject knowledge and expertise does restrict the rate of progress that pupils make, particularly at Key Stage 2.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

154. Few lessons were observed during the inspection, therefore, no overall judgements can be made about standards, progress or teaching.
155. Pupils in the Reception classes attain standards commensurate with their age. They run, hop, skip and jump showing appropriate levels of control and balance. A large majority throw and catch a ball with reasonable accuracy over a short distance, and high attainers move to anticipate the ball when it is thrown inaccurately. In the two lessons seen in the Reception classes, teaching was very good or excellent. Lively, active warm-up activities motivated the pupils well, and other tasks gave good levels of challenge for pupils of all attainment levels. The development of good techniques is taught well and the pupils are consistently encouraged to attain as well as they can. As a result of this very effective teaching, the pupils sustained a high work rate, maintained interest throughout and were motivated to improve their performance. Individual coaching enabled almost all to make good progress in developing their skills.
156. The lesson for Year 3 pupils linked their work in history and physical education very well. The theme of the 'Pyramids' was used effectively by the teacher to help pupils explore the vocabulary and actions associated with their building. Word cards, such as 'heaving', 'hauling', 'pushing' and 'dragging' were used very well as a stimulus for pupils to develop movements and gave them a 'taste' of the efforts needed to construct the monuments. All pupils responded well to the tasks they were set and produced imaginative sequences of movement. Behaviour and concentration were good throughout, and as a result, much was accomplished in the lesson.
157. In swimming, the school reports that it is rare for a pupil to leave the school without being able to swim 25 metres unaided, competently and safely, and meet the other requirements of the National Curriculum.
158. The standards shown by pupils in extra-curricular football are generally above those expected, with some pupils showing good levels of skill and awareness of other team members.
159. The breadth and balance of the curriculum is satisfactory. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' social development through the many opportunities for them to work collaboratively and competitively. Assessment procedures, other than in swimming, are underdeveloped. Extra-curricular activities have reduced in recent years, partly due to changes in staffing and partly due to increasing demands on teachers' time to implement literacy and numeracy strategies. Currently, pupils have opportunities to take part in football, netball, tag rugby and judo. Access is open to all. The co-ordinator is supporting the work of other staff well. Resources are generally plentiful but some gymnastics mats are in need of replacement. Indoor accommodation is good but outdoors is restricted to hard play areas because the school has no field.