

INSPECTION REPORT

PARK VIEW PRIMARY SCHOOL

HUYTON

LEA area: Knowsley

Unique reference number: 104421

Headteacher: Mr J. Roberts

Reporting inspector: Mrs J. Tracey
20270

Dates of inspection: 6th – 10th March 2000

Inspection number: 193138

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 – 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Twig Lane
Huyton
Merseyside

Postcode: L36 2 LL

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr I. Midwood

Date of previous inspection: 4th – 8th November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs J. Tracey	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology	What sort of school is it? How well is the school led and managed? How well are pupils taught? The school's results and achievements.
Mrs J. Beattie	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr J. Curley	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History	
Mrs M. Leah	Team inspector	English Equal opportunities	Pupils' attitudes, values, personal development
Mrs K. McArthur	Team inspector	Under fives Art Religious education	
Mrs J. Platt	Team inspector	Science Physical education	How good are the curricular opportunities offered to pupils?
Mrs P. Weston	Team inspector	Special educational needs Music	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Park View Primary School is a larger than average school providing education for 600 boys and girls in the age range 3 to 11 years. The proportion of pupils eligible for free meals (63%) is well above the national average. An above average proportion of pupils is on the register of special educational need – currently there are 152 pupils, twelve of whom have formal statements of need. The vast majority of pupils are white and none come from homes where English is not the first language. The school is situated in an area of social and economic need. Attainment on entry to the nursery is generally well below that found in many schools.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an improving school in which the right structures are now in place to achieve sustained progress over a period of time. There is evidence that changes since the previous inspection have begun to bring about an improvement in standards in English, mathematics and science in both key stages. Teaching is satisfactory and provides well for the needs of all pupils. Leadership of the school is strong and effective. The school manages its budget prudently and provides sound value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher provides strong leadership. Teachers and other staff are committed to providing a good learning environment in which pupils can develop academically and socially.
- The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Good pastoral care contributes to the pupils' personal development and the high expectations of behaviour and attendance are effective
- The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities and cultural experiences.
- The school makes good and successful efforts to involve parents in their children's education.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, particularly writing, and mathematics could be raised.
- Standards in information technology could be improved.
- The assessment policy could be extended to Key Stage 1 to enable progress to be checked continuously throughout the school.
- The curriculum in the early years and Key Stage 1 needs to be re-aligned to ensure that progression builds on previous learning without undue repetition.
- The good teaching strategies seen in some classes could profitably be extended to other groups.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in November 1996 and has made good progress in response to the Key Issues of that inspection.

- Requirements for collective worship have been met.
- The school development plan is businesslike and includes priorities linked to academic and pastoral provision.
- The roles and responsibilities of staff have been revised and a new management structure has improved links between the key stages
- Curriculum planning is monitored more closely
- The new behaviour policy is having a positive impact on behaviour, particularly in the playground and around the school.
- The governing body is more fully involved in preparation of the budget and evaluation of its impact.
- New monitoring procedures have been successful in improving pupils' attendance.

The previous inspection identified improvement in pupils' writing skills as an area for development. The school has devoted a considerable amount of its in-service training programme to this aspect and there is some evidence of improvement in results in national tests at Key Stage 1. In 1999, there was also a significant improvement in mathematics at Key Stage 1, and in science and mathematics at Key Stage 2. In addition to the above improvements the headteacher set a separate agenda based on improving the

ethos and environment for learning. This has been successful and the structures now in place provide fertile ground for further improvement in pupils' academic performance.

STANDARDS

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

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

In 1999, the pupils' results in national tests for eleven year olds were well below the national average in English and mathematics and below the average in science. Compared to schools of similar background, attainment was below average in mathematics and English and above average in science. Relatively few pupils achieved higher standards than expected for their age in English and mathematics but in science the proportion reaching this level was only just below the national average. The national test results have fluctuated considerably in Key Stage 2 over the past three years. The decline in all subjects in the period 1996/7 has been halted and reversed. Science has improved at a faster rate because pupils find it easier to express themselves through oral and practical work than in lengthy writing. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are being fully implemented and are beginning to have an impact but there is still much work to be done to raise overall standards in writing and mathematics. Evidence from the inspection shows standards of work to be below average in English and mathematics and average in science by the time pupils leave school. The school has set itself appropriate targets for raising the standards of those pupils who are not yet achieving as well as they can. Extra support is being provided in English and mathematics in Year 6 to assist those whose work is approaching the level expected for their age.

Attainment in personal and social development, language and mathematical skills on entry to the nursery is well below that found in most schools. In 1999, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level for their age in national tests for seven year olds was average in mathematics, below average in reading and well below average in writing. Compared to schools of similar background these results were average in writing and well above average in reading and mathematics. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics improved in 1999, in mathematics and writing at a faster rate than the national trend. These improvements should now provide a sound basis on which teachers can build in Key Stage 2.

Pupils' skills in information technology are below average compared to those of pupils of similar age.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are enthusiastic and generally keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Behaviour in lessons is generally good. There has been considerable improvement in behaviour outside lessons since the previous inspection. Pupils understand and respect the new policy.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is good. Relationships between staff and pupils are based on mutual respect and successfully support the pupils' growing confidence in themselves.
Attendance	Rigorous monitoring procedures have been introduced which have led to more regular attendance and pupils' increasing awareness of its benefit to their learning. However, attendance is still below the national average.

The school endeavours to set high expectations of behaviour and personal development. Most pupils

respond positively and show respect and sensitivity for the feelings of others.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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.

Overall, teaching is satisfactory and there is a significant amount of good teaching distributed evenly throughout the year groups and key stages. The consistent quality of the teaching makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning from their low starting point on entry. Teaching was satisfactory or better in 96% of the lessons observed and very good in 5% of them. Teaching is good in the nursery. It is satisfactory overall, in both key stages, in all subjects except information technology where it is unsatisfactory. This is because the appropriate technical skills are not being taught systematically throughout the school in order for pupils to build up confidence and expertise. Numeracy skills are being taught effectively with the support of the National Numeracy Strategy. Most elements of the Literacy Strategy are taught successfully but there are deficiencies in the way independent group work is organised in some lessons. The teaching of pupils with specific learning difficulties is good and contributes well to their increasing confidence and progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced with appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy skills. It is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities in which a significant number of pupils participate. It provides well for the needs of all pupils except in relation to the acquisition of information technology skills.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Work is specially planned for them and they are provided with good quality support.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' social and cultural development is good. Pupils are friendly and helpful; they learn the significance of belonging to a community. Provision for spiritual and moral development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a very good standard of care for its pupils. A safe and secure environment is created which promotes pupils' confidence. A new assessment system is being introduced to track pupils' academic progress and remedy identified areas of weakness. This is not yet effective in Key Stage 1.

The school makes satisfactory provision for the teaching of English, mathematics and science but greater emphasis on the development of writing skills is required. There is a good scheme of work for information technology but this is not yet effective because the school has only recently up-dated its computers. The school cares for its pupils well and does its best to foster a good community spirit. Teachers know the pupils well and respond quickly when alerted to particular needs or difficulties. Parents are encouraged to become involved in their children's education and some give valuable support with classroom activities.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The quality of leadership and management is very good. It is a significant factor in the improvement of provision since the previous inspection.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body understands and satisfactorily fulfils its responsibilities. The headteacher and chairman of governors work closely together. Other governors are less actively involved in school life on a regular basis and accountability for the school's performance is mainly channelled through the chairman's reports.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school satisfactorily evaluates its performance against national standards and those of similar schools. This information is beginning to be used well to set targets for improvement in Key Stage 2.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school makes optimum use of its funding ensuring that monies are spent prudently in support of priorities identified in the school development plan. However, there is a shortage of books for literacy lessons in Key Stage 2 which sometimes results in the sharing of resources and lessons taking place at times of day when pupils are not at their best for learning.

Overall, the staffing, accommodation and learning resources are adequate to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education.

The headteacher maintains a clear overview of the school and provides strong leadership. He and the staff are committed to providing a learning environment in which all pupils are valued and recognise the importance of their contribution to the community at large. The establishment of senior and pastoral management teams is proving effective in developing a whole school approach to educational and pastoral aspects of the school's work. The school and governors ensure that the best value is obtained from spending decisions.

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 school is well led and is very approachable. Children like school, are well taught and are helped to be responsible and mature. The support and guidance for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Parents are positively encouraged to be involved with school and contribute to pupils' learning. Good home links established prior to entry to the nursery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A few parents do not feel that they are sufficiently well informed about children's progress or that the school works closely enough with them.

Inspectors strongly agree with the parents' positive comments. They did not find justification for the concerns relating to exchange of information about children's progress as it was felt that Parents' meetings, written reports and the accessibility of staff throughout the year provided sufficient opportunities.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Attainment on entry to the nursery is well below that found in most schools. Children achieve well, particularly in the development of their personal and social skills, but progress slows somewhat in the reception classes because the overall curriculum plan for children under five lacks continuity at this stage. There are no formal assessment procedures for recording children's progress in the reception classes. Consequently teachers lack the appropriate means of targeting specific areas of improvement for individual children. Attainment in language and mathematical skills is still below average when children begin compulsory education. Standards of work are nearer the average for children of their age in physical and creative development.
2. In 1999, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level for their age in national tests for seven year olds was average in mathematics, below average in reading and well below average in writing. In comparison to schools of similar background these results were average in writing and well above average in reading and mathematics. The proportion of pupils reaching higher levels than expected for their age is below that found nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards of reading have remained fairly constant over recent years. In writing they showed an upturn in 1999 following a decline in the two previous years. There has been a steady improvement in mathematics since 1996 at a pace which mirrors the national trend. The pupils' results in national tests for eleven year olds in 1999 were below the national average in science and well below it in English and mathematics. Relatively few pupils achieved higher levels than expected for their age in English and mathematics but in science the proportion reaching this level was only just below the national average. Overall, compared to similar schools the pupils' results were above average in science and below average in English and mathematics. The national test results have fluctuated considerably in Key Stage 2 over the past three years. In English they have remained fairly constant, in mathematics the earlier decline has been halted and reversed, and in science there has been a consistent improvement. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Following the previous inspection the then recently appointed headteacher identified a number of whole school issues affecting pupils' performance. New structures and procedures have gradually been put in place and the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented. All of these are beginning to take effect and improvement is evident in both key stages, albeit that standards are still considerably below the national average in English and mathematics when pupils leave school. The more rapid improvement in science in Key Stage 2 is the result of teachers in Year 6 giving close attention to the science curriculum, good teaching and a strong commitment to raising standards. The improvements in Key Stage 1 are a result of very structured teaching in Year 2. The local education authority's analysis of performance shows a steady increase in the 'school improvement measure' since 1997.
3. Evidence from the inspection, including scrutiny of work, discussion with pupils and lesson observations, shows attainment to be well below average in English at the end of both key stages. This is mainly due to the low level of writing skills. In mathematics standards are close to average at Key Stage 1. They are below average at Key Stage 2 but improving as the better understanding of number work in the earlier key stage works its way upwards through the school. In science, standards of work are below average at Key Stage 1 and average at Key Stage 2. Better levels of attainment in science at Key Stage 2 reflect the pupils' ability to achieve well when the work is based on oral and practical skills as opposed to writing. The school is making some progress towards its targets.
4. Pupils' achievements have varied considerably in recent years, both within subjects and across key stages. In general, they achieved better when the work was based on practical rather than writing and numerical skills. They also achieved at a faster rate in classes at the

end of the key stages where there was a greater sense of urgency about meeting nationally accepted levels of attainment for the age groups. There is good evidence that pupils are progressing more consistently now in relation to their prior attainment due to new curriculum structures and assessment procedures which are beginning to take effect. However, there needs to be tighter monitoring of progression through the curriculum in reception and Year 1 classes to ensure that pupils constantly build on previous learning. In these two years there tends to be some repetition of work and lack of challenge to 'move on'. Standards of work in information technology are below those expected of pupils of similar age at both key stages. Pupils are not taught the operational skills at a sufficiently early stage in Key Stage 1 to build on their knowledge and put it to use in other areas of the curriculum. Consequently few pupils achieve well except in the small number of lessons in Key Stage 2 where there is very good teaching by the specialist teacher. This is not yet having sufficient impact because pupils do not have enough guided opportunities to follow the work through to practice in normal classroom situations. There has been little improvement in standards in this subject since the previous inspection, mainly due to lack of facilities. A computer suite has just been installed and plans are well in hand to fully implement a new scheme of work. Standards of work in religious education meet the targets set by the locally agreed syllabus in both key stage. Although other subjects are no longer statutory elements of the National Curriculum the school includes them as part of a broad and relevant curriculum. Standards in these subjects are broadly average but the quality of written work is not as good as seen in many schools. Pupils' acquisition of knowledge, and ability to discuss and apply it in a practical way, is satisfactory in both key stages. It is particularly good in design technology where the finished products are of a higher standard than found in many schools.

5. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to the targets set for them in individual education plans. In the nursery they make sound progress, particularly in personal and social development. In later years they make good progress in small groups where teaching is specifically targeted to their needs. The school makes very good provision for these pupils which is reflected in standards of work often not dissimilar to those of lower-attaining pupils of similar age.
6. The Literacy Hour has been phased into the school's work and is slowly beginning to have an impact on pupils' standards of work. Attainment in reading is below average at the end of Key Stage 1 but is close to average by the time pupils leave school. By this stage pupils are familiar with a wide range of literature and higher-attaining pupils compare different styles of writing to create particular effects. Many pupils, however, have difficulty in understanding meaning beyond the literal and in making inferences from text. Writing is the weakest element of pupils' work. It is well below average at both key stages. Written work often lacks imagination and pupils do not have a wide enough vocabulary to extend their ideas. Pupils' inability to express themselves well in writing is detrimental to their work in all subjects. It is an aspect of the school's work needing more attention. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are below those found in most schools at both key stages because limited vocabulary hinders the use, and hence understanding, of language for a large number of pupils. In Key Stage 1 many pupils have difficulty in articulating their own ideas. This improves in Key Stage 2 and pupils enjoy participating in group discussion. They are less confident when discussing books they have read and often wait for a small group of the more able pupils to answer questions.
7. Overall, pupils lack confidence with numeracy skills but there are signs of improvement. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy with its stress on mental agility is successfully reinforcing pupils' understanding of basic number concepts. Numerical skills are satisfactorily transferred to other areas of the curriculum, such as science and geography, but pupils often need adult support before they start work independently.
8. The school is clearly concentrating on raising standards. High expectations of behaviour and attendance, together with the reorganisation of staffing and the implementation of new curriculum and management procedures, are leading to improvement in standards of attainment. Evidence is in the rising national test results in writing and mathematics in Key

Stage 1, and in science and mathematics in Key Stage 2 in 1999. The school has good capacity for further improvement and recognises that improvement in writing skills is the key to raising standards in other subjects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. The pupils' attitudes to school are good. They are proud of their school and display a good sense of corporate loyalty. Almost all are enthusiastic and keen to be involved in class, in extra-curricular activities and in residential and other educational visits. Almost all parents who returned the questionnaire agreed that their children like school. The pupils' attitudes to learning have a beneficial effect on their progress. They settle quickly to work in groups and sustain concentration to complete tasks for instance, in the literacy and numeracy hours, often without direct intervention by the teacher.
10. Standards of behaviour are satisfactory overall; in lessons, behaviour is good. Pupils are respectful and attentive to their teachers. They respond quickly to praise and encouragement, and little time is wasted in class discipline. This enables teachers and pupils to concentrate on teaching and learning. Almost all pupils share resources and wait their turn, for instance, when playing numbers games or joining in musical activities. Standards of behaviour in the playground and around school have improved since the last inspection and particularly since the recent implementation of a thorough and consistent behaviour policy. Last year there were thirty-four exclusions involving five pupils. This year, as the policy has become established, there has been only one exclusion. Pupils appreciate the rules, rewards and sanctions and are trying hard to live up to the expected standards. Most pupils are beginning to consider the impact of their actions on others. They respond well to the high level of supervision in the playground and dining room. Whilst play is often boisterous and lively, and noise levels are high in the dining room, most pupils are co-operative and friendly with each other and happily join in informal activities such as football and skipping games. Any bullying or oppressive behaviour is dealt with quickly and efficiently. Pupils feel safe and know what to do should they feel threatened. The great majority of parents who returned the questionnaire agreed that behaviour in school is good.
11. There has been a significant improvement in attendance since the previous inspection. Overall attendance rates have improved steadily and are now in excess of 90%. This is due to the effective implementation of a new policy and teachers' persistence in encouraging pupils' to realise the importance of regular attendance. Year groups as a whole are keen to improve their levels - Years 2 and 3 have recently reached 94%.
12. The pupils' personal development is good. Relationships between staff and pupils are based on mutual respect, and successfully support effective learning. Most pupils get on well and are helpful and co-operative. Examples observed during the inspection included working with a partner to plan a sequence in physical education, and in groups to discuss issues in history. They are beginning to evaluate their own work and identify ways in which it can be improved. When listening to stories in class and assembly, they show concern for the dilemmas of fictional characters and empathy with real people. Almost all pupils are keen to take on responsibility for minor administrative tasks around school such as keeping the playground tidy or acting as librarians. Parents think that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible – a view shared by the inspectors.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. Overall, teaching is satisfactory and there is a significant amount of good teaching evenly distributed throughout year groups and key stages. Teaching was satisfactory in well over nine tenths of the lessons observed and was good, sometimes very good, in just over half of them. Teaching is good in the nursery. It is at least satisfactory in the reception classes, and in both key stages, in all subjects apart from information technology where it is

unsatisfactory. This is because the appropriate technical skills are not being taught systematically in order for pupils to build up confidence and expertise.

14. A consistently good feature of teaching throughout the school is the good management of pupils which enables lessons to proceed purposefully without disruption. The school has worked hard to develop this culture for learning which is now paying dividends in raising standards of attainment. Where teaching is good, for example in the nursery, teachers and other helpers work well together and contribute to planning. There is a secure understanding of how children learn and assessments are well used to contribute to future planning. The absence of rigorous assessment procedures in reception classes and Key Stage 1 limits teachers' ability to match work closely enough to pupils' needs and consequently some of the work is repetitious and does not move pupils on fast enough. This is particularly so around the transition stage to Key Stage 1. Here closer links could be made between the lesson's learning objectives and experiences to provide clearer thought about the expected achievement for individual pupils. Most lessons include an element of class teaching which is particularly effective in encouraging pupils to share ideas and learn from each other. Teachers capitalise on pupils' input and sensibly develop the lesson by working through, and building on, pupils' own difficulties. The weakness in a few lessons, more evident in English, is inadequate provision for group activities. Pupils working in small groups with an adult achieve satisfactorily and make progress; others are sometimes engaged on tasks which fill the time but do not advance learning. It is significant to note that this does not apply to mathematics in Key Stage 2 because pupils are grouped in classes by ability and so work is more easily matched to the narrower range of abilities. Where teaching was very good, for example in an information technology lesson taken by the specialist teacher, the brisk pace and high expectations, coupled with good planning and well prepared resources, resulted in pupils surprising themselves with the productiveness of their work in the one lesson. In lessons where teaching was satisfactory rather than good the pace was directed more by the pupils than the teacher. Teachers sometimes pitch the introductory work in the lesson at a level which assumes that pupils have retained less of the previous work than is the case. Pupils then come to expect repetition and make less progress with new work.
15. Literacy skills are being taught in accordance with a good overall plan but this has not yet had a significant impact on standards. Phonics are taught in appropriate sequence in Key Stage 1 and are providing pupils with a better basis for the development of reading skills. In general, teachers should be clearer about what they want pupils to achieve, and the objectives need to be shared with pupils so that they know what is expected of them. Numeracy skills are being taught in a more structured manner and teachers are competently following the National Numeracy Project. They are now using a wider variety of stimulating resources and pupils are building up confidence and successfully learning to manipulate numbers and apply number skills to problems.
16. Teaching of pupils with specific learning difficulties is good, sometimes very good. It is highly focused and generates a positive attitude which results in steady gains in confidence and standards of work. The school is also responsive to the needs of exceptionally able pupils as is demonstrated by the good provision for a pupil with high mathematical ability in Key Stage 2. He is making satisfactory progress well in advance of his years.
17. Marking is satisfactorily used to assist pupils' understanding of their progress and how they can improve. In Key Stage 1, feedback is oral so that pupils can make a more immediate response. Good quality homework tasks are set to complement classwork and reinforce understanding. Not all pupils return this on a regular basis, but, where they do, it significantly enhances progress.
18. The headteacher is aware of the impact of the best teaching practices through his regular monitoring. Some of these now need to be shared more widely, for example in information technology and English, and linked to targets for improvement for individual pupils. Teaching is likely to improve still further when it is firmly underpinned by a fully implemented whole school assessment system.

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

19. As at the time of the previous inspection the curriculum provided by the school reflects the school's aims and meets all statutory requirements and those of religious education.
20. The curriculum for children in the nursery and those under five in the reception classes is satisfactory but continuity between the two areas could be improved. Overall the curriculum covers the currently recommended areas of learning for children of this age. Appropriate emphasis is placed on developing children's personal and social skills and in extending their language. Sufficient attention is not given however to the progression of work at the transitional stage from the early years to Key Stage 1. This results in some loss of momentum at a particularly important time in children's development.
21. The curriculum for Key Stages 1 and 2 is broad and the school has maintained a suitable balance of activities. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented and additional time is allocated to English. The curriculum is extended by 'booster' classes for English and the school has also successfully adopted the additional literacy support lessons. These sessions are structured well and provide good support for pupils identified as needing some extra help. The Literacy Hour is working well although some group activities lack a clear focus and this limits progress in this part of some lessons. The National Numeracy Strategy has been satisfactorily introduced this year. It is providing a clearer structure to the subject and teachers are pleased with the improvement they are already seeing in pupils' mental work and increasing confidence. Pupils are grouped by ability across each year group for mathematics in Key Stage 2. This contributed to the upturn in the results in national tests in 1999. All subjects have detailed schemes of work which have been suitably adapted to follow national guidance and the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus in religious education. Planning for English and mathematics is detailed but there are some inconsistencies in medium term planning in other subjects where newer schemes of work have only recently been adopted. In addition, some daily lesson plans do not include precise learning objectives or sufficient information based on assessment of pupils' prior achievement. Hence teachers have no formal means of measuring progress in the lesson. The curriculum for information technology is good but only partially implemented. It is very effective when taught to classes on a rota basis in Key Stage 2. Other than at these times its impact is negligible. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are missing out on opportunities to acquire the technical skills in word processing. This is detrimental to their work in literacy.
22. Provision for the above average number of pupils on the register of special educational needs is good. A considerable amount of the teaching, especially in language, takes place in small groups which provide good opportunities for more individual tuition. Pupils are then better prepared to join their classes for other lessons.
23. Provision for personal, social and health education is good and the school's scheme of work provides useful guidelines for teachers. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to discuss a range of important aspects including the dangers of drug misuse. Sex education is provided at an appropriate time and the school nurse makes a significant contribution to this aspect of the curriculum.
24. A good range of extra-curricular activities including sport, art, music, drama, technology and chess enrich the curriculum. Approximately 280 pupils are involved and at least ten members of staff. Parents and retired teachers also support these activities which include residential visits to Llanberis, Tawd vale and Ormeside where pupils take part in a range of adventurous pursuits. These visits are highlights of the year and provide valuable opportunities to promote pupils' understanding of the need for tolerance and understanding in community living. The many sporting activities are well attended and the school takes part in local competitions. The netball team has been particularly successful.

25. The school has established very good links with Knowsley Community College to provide a wide range of courses open to parents. The new community building adjacent to the school is due to open in September and will extend provision even further. Close links with St Bartholomew's church enhance pupils' spiritual and personal growth. All pupils benefit from visits to places of interest ranging from Formby beach for the nursery to places of historic, cultural and scientific interest for the main school. Visiting theatre and music groups give pupils' experience of the wider world and pupils benefit from good links with schools in Italy, Germany and Australia.
26. Links with local schools provide good opportunities for teachers to exchange information about the curriculum and pupils' progress at times of transfer. This assists smooth progression from one school to another and ensures that pupils build on current levels of attainment.
27. Overall, the school makes good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It now meets the requirement for a daily act of collective worship and this makes a very good contribution to the pupil's spiritual development. There are links with local churches of different denominations, and workers from Roby Church conduct regular assemblies which are much enjoyed by the pupils. They also reinforce the community link with the 'Kids' Club' which many pupils attend at the church on Saturday mornings. Overall, provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Pupils are given opportunities for thought and reflection, and to consider their personal response to issues and questions. In religious education lessons, they learn the meaning of sacrifice and make realistic choices about what they might give up for Lent.
28. Satisfactory provision is also made for moral development which is well promoted through all areas of school life. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to consider issues and values in a secure atmosphere. They recognise the importance of fair play and following rules. Differences between right and wrong are clearly explained and pupils know what is acceptable behaviour. They understand what it means to be honest and trustworthy.
29. Provision for social development is good. All staff teach and expect good manners, and set good examples as role models for their pupils. The 'parachute game' is used successfully to teach pupils to co-operate and they have good opportunities to develop social skills during annual residential visits. Pupils satisfactorily learn to share resources, and help each other when moving equipment and apparatus. They are polite, friendly and helpful to staff and visitors. Older pupils are given some responsibilities around the school and they show care and concern for the environment by clearing litter and caring for plants.
30. The school makes good provision for cultural development. For instance, the headteacher led fund-raising for a school in Namibia which subsequently led to staff from Park View visiting the school and establishing personal links. These have since been well used to enable pupils to appreciate the differences between education in the two countries. Studies in art, literature and music teach pupils to appreciate their heritage. Cross-curricular work frequently promotes consideration of other cultures. Pupils particularly enjoy practical aspects, such as when they design and make model artefacts from Greek civilisations or study Aboriginal and Egyptian art. Pupils gain a wider understanding of their own heritage from visits in the locality and from first hand experiences of outside speakers. .
31. The school has satisfactorily continued to build on the effective practices which were in place at the time of the previous inspection. It now satisfies the requirement for a daily act of collective worship.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

32. The school cares for its pupils well. Procedures for monitoring personal development and providing for pupils' well-being are very good. Provision for child protection is secure and

staff know what to do if any concerns arise.

33. Staff know the pupils well. The playgrounds are closely supervised and any incidents dealt with immediately, firmly and sympathetically. The frequent presence of the headteacher and pastoral care co-ordinator about the school has a significant impact on pupils' behaviour. Pupils know that bullying is not tolerated and they are happy and secure. The behaviour policy is used consistently and pupils respond well to the rewards. Sanctions are used appropriately, and are respected and effective.
34. The school has developed a highly effective system of pastoral care for its pupils overseen by a senior pastoral management team which meets weekly. This enables every pupil to be kept under review on a regular basis and difficulties to be resolved at an early stage. Staff know how to provide for pupils' medical needs, such as asthma, and the school receives good support from medical, psychological, educational welfare and social services. Teachers are well supported by classroom assistants in both academic and pastoral areas.
35. Since the previous inspection the school has worked hard to institute very good procedures for monitoring pupils' progress in Key Stage 2. Detailed analyses of pupils' work are provided for each class teacher enabling them to target areas of weakness in basic literacy and numeracy skills. As a result, progress in Key Stage 2 is improving, although standards of work do not yet match those found nationally for pupils of this age. The school's assessment system as a whole is unsatisfactory because there are no formal procedures for recording individual pupils' progress in Key Stage 1. Consequently, after good assessment at the end of the nursery, there is no overall measure of attainment until pupils take national tests at the end of the key stage. This inevitably slows progress, particularly in writing skills, because work is insufficiently focused to directly support planning to meet individual pupils' needs. In contrast, the assessment of pupils with special educational needs is very good throughout the school and contributes significantly to their learning. The good practice in this area and Key Stage 2 could profitably be extended to Key Stage 1.
36. The provision for pupils' with special educational needs is good. From the earliest years needs are quickly identified, carefully assessed and the information used to provide individual lesson plans where necessary. If any pupil has a statement of special need the school fully meets the stated requirements and provides support in class.
37. From the nursery onwards pupils learn about safety, family life and health and how to meet new experiences and challenges in a positive way. The curriculum for the older pupils includes community life and citizenship and is well designed to help them develop the attitudes and lifeskills which will prepare them for life after primary school.
38. Health and safety procedures are good. Staff are well informed about safety measures and are vigilant. The premises, playgrounds and school resources are checked regularly and systematically. Physical education equipment is safe but its annual check is overdue. Some window frames have so deteriorated that windows have had to be permanently closed for safety. These need replacement as soon as possible.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

39. The school works well with parents and tries to involve them in their children's education from an early stage. When children start in the nursery the staff visit families at home to discuss children's needs and development. Parents receive helpful information about ways in which they can help their children, and they can borrow books. Subsequently some parents join a group which meets weekly in the nursery - this is particularly effective in providing a forum through which ongoing experiences can be shared. A toddler group in the community wing is well used to give children early experience of playing together. The community aspect of the school's work is developing well. Interesting courses, sometimes with a crèche, provide parents with good opportunities to develop their own skills.
40. Parents say they are happy to approach the school with concerns or questions. They

appreciate the accessibility of the headteacher and class teachers. Parents receive information about topics and the curriculum and have good opportunities to discuss their children's progress individually with teachers every term. The home/school agreement is satisfactory and strengthens the partnership. A few parents expressed the view that the school does not work closely enough with them but the inspection team did not find significant evidence to support this. In addition to information about the school's activities and events parents receive a newspaper written by the pupils every term. This also provides good opportunities for pupils to share their achievements, both in respect to school work and out of school activities, with the local community. Parents recognise and are appreciative of the school's very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. They are kept well informed at regular intervals and have good opportunities to share in the preparation and evaluation of pupils' individual education plans. This is useful in enabling concerns to be dealt with before they become difficulties.

41. Links with parents and the community have been extended since the previous inspection and provide a firm basis for co-operation between the school, home and the locality. During 'Exhibition Week', parents, governors, local people, colleagues from other schools and the local education authority are invited to see displays of good work from all classes. This is a very significant week in the school year, both in relation to celebration of the pupils' work and in raising the profile of the school in the community. The Friends of the School Association raises substantial funds for extra resources. A number of parents regularly provide valuable help in classrooms and with extra curricular activities. The former is particularly helpful in supporting small group activities, for instance in information technology. Some parents have attended courses provided by the school and have improved their own qualifications to become classroom and welfare assistants. Most parents help children with reading at home and some good work is done in supporting other activities. However, not all pupils complete the homework they are given.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

42. The quality of leadership and management is very good. It is a significant factor in the improvement of provision since the previous inspection. The headteacher is a strong and effective leader with a clear vision of the school's educational direction. He is well supported by a committed team of teachers and other staff and there is a good sense of loyalty and team spirit. The creation of senior management and pastoral teams has been particularly effective in promoting a secure and stable environment in which pupils learn without fear or distraction. The roles of subject co-ordinators and key staff are now clearly defined and they are closely involved in strategic planning. Time is allocated for them to monitor the impact of their work. However, as many of the school's structures and procedures are new, they are only just beginning to have a real impact on pupils' progress. This is limited where policies do not extend to the whole school, for example in assessment and the teaching of discrete information technology skills in Key Stage 1. The headteacher's document 'Raising Standards at Park View' is firmly underpinned by the need for a 'culture for learning'. This has been achieved in the classrooms and in the whole school environment by encouraging pupils to recognise for themselves that high standards of behaviour and attendance are beneficial to their own interests. Parents commented on the improvement in pupils' attitudes as a result of the higher expectations. The headteacher has a high profile in the school and is readily available to parents and staff. He knows the pupils well and maintains a good overview of their work by teaching himself in each class at least once each term. Pupils' results are analysed systematically in Key Stage 2 and are beginning to be used to set precise targets for improvement, for example in 'booster classes' in English and mathematics in Year 6. These practices are effective but need extending to all pupils – particularly in Key Stage 1.
43. The governing body understands its role and satisfactorily fulfils its statutory responsibilities. The headteacher and chairman of governors work closely together and have been effective in strategically managing the school through a period of change. Other

governors are less actively involved in school life on a regular basis and accountability for the school's performance is mainly channelled through the chairman's reports. However, governors are kept well informed to help them in their decision making. The school development plan has appropriate priorities. These are suitably modified on a regular basis to reflect changing needs and the success, or otherwise, of actions taken. Most recently the targets have embraced literacy and numeracy as a result of which there has been measurable, if small, progress in reading and mathematics. Greater and more highly focused attention now needs to be placed on writing. The promotion of information technology skills also falls into this category, particularly in Key Stage 1.

44. Effective management ensures the staffing of the school is adequate. Support staff are well deployed and teachers of pupils with special educational needs provide very good support for small groups of pupils withdrawn from class. Although the external appearance of the building is uninviting there is compensation inside in interesting displays and an array of healthy plants which enhance the long corridors. The playground area and internal gardens have been carefully landscaped into attractive quiet areas where pupils can relax in a peaceful environment. It is a credit to the maintenance staff that this large school is kept clean and free from litter and graffiti. Learning resources are generally adequate although a shortage of books for literacy in Key Stage 2 results in some awkward timetable arrangements. Pupils do not get as much benefit from these lessons when they occur late in the day. Resources for information technology are not yet used effectively to support learning in other subjects. Resources in the new nursery are good and significantly enhance the quality of pupils' experiences.
45. The school makes optimum use of its funding from various sources. Monies are spent prudently with thought for priorities in the development plan and for anticipated future changes. The current deficit is being managed satisfactorily and suitable plans are in place to minimise it in the next few years. The school and governors ensure that the best value is obtained from spending decisions. Staff training is well linked to current developments, particularly literacy and numeracy. Pupils' progress as a result of the latter is the most noticeable as teachers have more readily taken to the structured approach to the teaching of numerical skills.
46. There has been a significant improvement in the management of the school since the previous inspection which has provided a better ethos for learning. There is good capacity for further improvement, particularly in the raising of academic standards

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

47. To further improve the work of the school the headteacher, staff and governing body should:
 - (1) Raise standards in English by concentrating on the progressive development of pupils' writing skills.
(Paragraphs 4, 6, 61)
 - (2) Raise standards in mathematics by consolidating pupils' understanding and use of numeracy skills.
(Paragraphs 7, 69)
 - (3) Improve standards of attainment in information technology by:
 - *systematically teaching the technical skills from Year 1 upwards and providing regular opportunities for pupils to practise them to assist learning in a range of subjects.
 - *improving teachers' expertise.
(Paragraphs 4, 21, 98 to 101)

- (4) Implement a whole school assessment policy to enable pupils' progress to be checked continuously throughout the school so that areas of weakness can be targeted for improvement.
(Paragraphs 34, 66, 72, 78)
- (5) Develop a more continuous curriculum in the early years and Key Stage 1 to ensure that work builds on prior learning without undue repetition.
(Paragraphs 20, 48)
- (6) Share the good teaching practices more widely to promote use of those strategies which move pupils on faster.
(Paragraph18)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

84

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

40

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	4	43	34	3	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)	37	518
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		327

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		12
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	152

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	32
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	30

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.9
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.8
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	43	36	79

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	33	27	39
	Girls	29	31	33
	Total	62	58	72
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78(65)	73(65)	91(81)
	National	82(81)	83(85)	87(86)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	38	35
	Girls	29	31	29
	Total	57	69	64
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	72(65)	87(80)	81(72)
	National	82(81)	86(85)	87(86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	31	46	77

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	13	23
	Girls	19	19	32
	Total	32	32	55
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	42(51)	42(36)	71(61)
	National	70(65)	69(59)	78(69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	14	23
	Girls	22	24	30
	Total	36	38	53
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	47(42)	49(36)	69(45)
	National	68(65)	69(65)	75(71)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	450
Any other minority ethnic group	

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	34	
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)	26.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.5
Average class size	24.6

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	331

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	36

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	66

Number of pupils per FTE adult	12
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	1087809
Total expenditure	1140856
Expenditure per pupil	1964
Balance brought forward from previous year	13872
Balance carried forward to next year	-39175

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	450
Number of questionnaires returned	84

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	29	1	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	41	1	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	38	8	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	44	8	4	3
The teaching is good.	64	30	4	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	37	18	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	30	4	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	29	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	36	51	11	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	60	37	0	1	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	38	2	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	58	28	6	0	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

48. The aim of the nursery is to be a place of discovery. Children enter the nursery when they are three and move into one of the reception classes in the September before their fifth birthday. The nursery has just been completely refurbished and provides good accommodation. The staff have quickly made the rooms bright and stimulating, and developed a warm, welcoming atmosphere. On entry children's overall attainment is well below average compared to others of similar age. They achieve well, especially in personal and social skills, but progress slows a little in the reception classes because the scheme of work does not build progressively on earlier learning. The school has already identified this as an area for development. By the time pupils start Key Stage 1 attainment is still well below average in language skills and below average in mathematics. Children with special educational needs are well supported in their learning; they make satisfactory progress, and are enabled to participate fully in all activities.

Language and Literacy

49. Good emphasis is placed on the development of language skills. Every opportunity is taken to facilitate the acquisition of language through play and interaction with staff and other children. Staff spend time listening to the children, and encourage them to relate experiences. Discussion time is well used to promote speaking and listening skills but many children are hesitant when speaking aloud in a group. They successfully begin to learn and use letter sounds. The teacher satisfactorily prepares the children for the Literacy Hour when she uses a big book in story time and children are encouraged to retell the story and join in the rhymes. A good range of books is available. Children are expected to write their own name on their work, using their name cards, and soon realise that print has meaning. Speaking and listening skills progressively improve as children gain confidence. Overall, progress from the low starting point is satisfactory but the standard in language development remains well below average by the time they are five.

Mathematics

50. Most of the children can count to ten and some can count to twenty by the time they are five years of age. Teachers use quick questions, a 'show me' game and number rhymes to develop skills. Children satisfactorily gain experience of number through a wide range of activities. They compare shapes, size and capacity in the water and sand trays and recognise repeating patterns using bricks and counters. Simple understanding of weight and measure is promoted well through practical activities, such as when children made crispy cakes and pancakes. Children are encouraged to use mathematical vocabulary, and a significant number correctly make comparisons such as larger, smaller, thicker and lighter. Progress is satisfactory overall bearing in mind the low starting point but attainment is still below average at the start of Key Stage 1.

Creative Development

51. Good use is made of children's work in displays throughout the nursery and in reception classrooms. Children engage in a good range of creative activities. They paint, cut out, glue, and make models with tactile materials and successfully explore colour, texture, shape and space in two and three dimensions through the use of construction materials. Language development is well promoted through creative activities. Children enjoy singing and clapping to a rhythm and satisfactorily learn to compose simple tunes. Role play in the house corner is encouraged and stimulates imagination, for example when they dress up and act out the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears. Overall, children achieve well in this aspect of their development and it contributes to progression in literacy and number work. Their attainment is average for that of children of similar age.

Physical Education

52. Children are satisfactorily developing an awareness of space, of themselves and others. They learn to move in a controlled and safe way and enjoy physical activity. They particularly enjoy dancing, for example when they use the Chinese dragon costume. Children benefit from using large apparatus, such as the climbing frame and slide, and are well aware of safety issues. Fine motor skills are developed satisfactorily through the use of scissors, pencils, threading and small equipment. The children make satisfactory progress in this area of learning and their physical development is average for their age.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

53. Children enjoy learning about the world around them. They make sound progress. In the nursery they were building a bridge for the Three Billy Goats Gruff to cross. This provoked interesting discussion on rivers and how the bridge might be made higher. Children progressively become more aware of the world about them as they observe the fish in the tank, and help feed them. They watch with anticipation as beans, cress, carrot tops and potatoes burst into new life. In relation to the world at large, children are encouraged to think about national traditions and why they are maintained. Pancake Day proved to be the focus of attention during inspection week. Children know that the computer responds to instructions and they enjoy working on the simple programs provided for them. The computer facilities need to be updated.

Personal and Social Education

54. This is considered to be a vital area for development in the early years of school as many children have few social skills on entry. Staff give positive praise to children to help develop self esteem. Great emphasis is placed on sharing, for example when children set the tables and help to prepare and serve the snack at breaktime. They learn good routines, such as lining up and taking turns, and tidying away their own equipment. Children are taught good manners and set good examples by all staff. They learn to be sensitive to the needs of others and discuss emotions and feelings in a secure, positive atmosphere. Some children with severe physical problems attend school for several sessions each week. Other children are open, friendly and helpful towards them, and involve them fully in as many activities as possible. Religious education is promoted through simple stories and prayers, and spiritual development is encouraged, for example when the children are asked to 'give other people your smile to make them happy.' Achievement in this area of the curriculum is good and there is a noticeable gain in confidence by the time children start Key Stage 1.
55. Teaching is satisfactory overall in all areas of learning for children under five. It is particularly good in the nursery. The staff work well together, and all contribute to planning. They have a secure understanding of children's needs and the way they learn. A broad curriculum, firmly based on the above areas of learning, is designed to meet the developmental needs of the children but links between the nursery and reception classes are too tenuous. There also needs to be a closer match between learning objectives and experiences, to provide clearer connections between the former and anticipated progress. In the nursery, ongoing records and assessments are used carefully to inform future planning. The lack of such a recording system in the reception classes is disadvantageous and results in some pupils not moving on as quickly as they otherwise might. Good relationships between staff and children promote good behaviour and a happy learning environment.
56. The school is keen to involve parents in children's education at the earliest opportunity. A special project is run every week, open to parents of children in the nursery. This is very successful and through it some parents have become regular helpers in the classroom.

ENGLISH

57. In the national tests for seven-year-olds in 1999, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level for their age in reading was below the national average. In writing, results were well below the national average. When compared to schools of similar background these results were well above average in reading and average in writing. In the national tests for eleven-year-olds in 1999, attainment was well below average when compared to all schools and below average compared to similar schools. At Key Stage 1, attainment in reading has remained fairly constant over the last three years. Standards in writing showed some improvement last year after a decline in the previous two years. At Key Stage 2, attainment fell in 1997 and has since remained fairly constant. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.
58. Evidence gathered during the inspection confirms the results of national tests and indicates that, overall, attainment is well below that of most schools at the end of each key stage. There are, however, some signs of improvement. In Key Stage 1, increased emphasis on the systematic teaching of letters of the alphabet and their sounds is beginning to raise standards in reading and increase independence in spelling. Standards of work in writing have improved since 1998 in comparison to similar schools. In Key Stage 2, the recent implementation of a rigorous system of assessment is enabling the school to keep track of individual pupils' progress and to develop the curriculum to meet their needs. This is at an early stage, and measurable evidence of its positive effect on progress is not yet available. The pupils' enthusiasm and positive attitudes towards school have a beneficial effect on their learning. Nevertheless, standards are not as high as at the time of the previous inspection when they were reported to be around the national average.
59. Standards in speaking and listening are below those found in most schools at the end of each key stage. By the age of seven, many pupils still have difficulty in following instructions, answering questions accurately and in articulating their own ideas. Almost all of the pupils apply themselves well when listening in small and large groups in class and in assembly. They particularly enjoy stories. Their responses, however, often reveal a low level of understanding. The majority find it difficult to retell the end of a story in their own words. The higher-attaining pupils, however, make up their own ending and develop ideas sequentially. By the end of Key Stage 2, almost all pupils take part enthusiastically in group discussion. They show an understanding of the major points, for instance, when debating the ethics of education for boys only in Ancient Greece. When discussing books they have read, many pupils are less confident and wait for a small group of more able pupils to answer the teachers' questions. Limited vocabulary hinders both use of language and understanding for a high percentage of pupils. The majority of the pupils have a sound grasp of subject specific language, which supports their learning well in science and other subjects.
60. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils have a good understanding of letters and their sounds. They use this well, together with picture and context clues, to decode new words, although they do not always recognise or understand the meaning of the words. The more able pupils are confident and fluent readers. They talk lucidly about stories they have read and show good understanding of the text. Lower-attaining pupils lack confidence and are not independent in their reading. Although they recognise most letters and their sounds, they are not competent in using them when reading alone. Overall, attainment in reading is below average at the end of the key stage. By the age of eleven, pupils are familiar with a range of literature, from Shakespeare to Roald Dähl, and reading is close to the national average. Pupils respond well to the atmosphere in stories and enjoy humour in texts. The higher-attaining pupils compare contrasts in style and identify aspects of the writing, for instance, the use of short sentences, to create a particular effect. Many pupils, however, have difficulty in understanding meaning beyond the literal and in making deductions or inference from the text. The majority are reasonably competent in finding information in reference books, although higher order skills of skimming and scanning are not well developed.

61. Standards of writing are well below those found in most schools by the end of each key stage. The work of many pupils in all age groups lacks imagination and many do not have suitable vocabulary to fully extend their ideas. By the end of Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils write for a variety of purposes. The higher-attaining pupils begin to develop their ideas briefly in sentences. They attempt basic punctuation and occasionally speech marks, but are not always accurate in their use. The lowest-attaining pupils have difficulty in generating and ordering ideas. Their immature speech patterns often lead to incorrect grammar when structuring sentences. All pupils attempt spellings independently using the sounds they know. Most can spell simple three-letter words correctly. By the end of Key Stage 2 all pupils write reasonably for particular purposes such as letter writing, persuasive arguments, reporting, and composing biography. When writing a ghost story, the most able pupils develop and sustain their ideas to reach a conclusion and hold the readers' interest well. They choose words sensitively and use similes for effect. Sentences are extended and spelling of polysyllabic words such as 'photography' and 'suddenly' is correct. Less able pupils use short sentences and very basic vocabulary to develop their ideas briefly. They interpret the ghost story genre effectively. Spelling is phonetically justifiable, for example, 'captin' and 'traviling'. Handwriting in both key stages is well developed. By the end of Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils already write neatly in joined script although a significant minority have difficulty controlling the size and spacing of letters. By the end of Key Stage 2, almost all pupils write clearly and legibly in fluent joined script.
62. Whilst there is a range of attainment, a high percentage of pupils start school with very poorly developed language skills. Their immature speech, limited vocabulary and underdeveloped auditory skills affect their attainment in reading and writing. Given this low starting point, the majority of the pupils make satisfactory progress overall as they move through the school. Achievement in relation to prior attainment was satisfactory in the vast majority of lessons seen but the development of writing skills is inconsistent overall. The pupils with special educational needs are well supported and their achievement in respect of the targets in their individual education programmes is good. Good quality support provided through the Additional Language Support programme and Catch-up sessions in Years 3 and 4, enables particular groups of pupils to make sound progress.
63. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall in each of the key stages. It was satisfactory or better in 23 of the 26 lessons observed and good in 12 of them. The good teaching was distributed fairly evenly between the key stages in contrast to the previous inspection when teaching had been good overall in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. All teachers have secure understanding of the subject and are becoming confident in the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. Most elements of the literacy hour are taught successfully but there are deficiencies in the way independent group work is organised in some lessons. Group tasks are not always suitably matched to the pupils' prior attainment, and too much time is wasted in carrying out unchallenging activities which do not advance progress. Lesson objectives are not sufficiently focused on exactly what the pupils are to learn, and are often not shared with the pupils so that they know what is expected of them. Lessons sometimes proceed at too slow a pace and the pupils' enthusiasm is lost. All of the teachers establish good relationships with the pupils and use praise effectively to encourage the pupils to try hard. Management skills are good and little time is wasted on keeping pupils on task. The teachers organise plenary sessions efficiently in most classes to consolidate learning. Assessment is not used consistently in Key Stage 1 to plan appropriate work for pupils of all abilities in the class. This is a significant factor constraining the rate of learning in this key stage.
64. Interesting opportunities are provided across the curriculum for pupils to develop their literacy skills. For instance, a visit to the Tate Gallery provided an exciting stimulus for creative writing about works of art.
65. The subject co-ordinator monitors teaching and learning in class, teachers' plans and

samples of work, but the impact of monitoring has not yet led to an improvement of standards across the whole school. Careful analysis of test results in Key Stage 2 is supporting teachers in planning accurately to meet the pupils' needs as well as providing a clear picture of the school's performance over time. The siting and size of the library is not conducive to the development of independent learning skills. Whilst the school has made a good effort to provide attractive books to support teachers in the literacy hour, there is shortage of resources in Key Stage 2. In some year groups, where books have to be shared, this results in literacy sessions taking place at times of day when some pupils are not at their best for learning. More dictionaries and thesauruses are needed to support the curriculum. Teachers work hard to provide an attractive learning environment but insufficient prominence is given to the promotion of literacy skills through classroom display.

66. Since the previous inspection there has been a small improvement in attainment in some aspects of English. Sharper focus now needs to be directed towards the progressive development of individual pupils' writing skills and their assessment, particularly in Key Stage 1. There is good capacity for further improvement.

MATHEMATICS

67. In 1999, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level for their age in national tests for seven year olds was similar to the national average. It was well above average when compared to schools of similar background. Results were better than in 1998. Over the past three years results have shown a steady improvement. The results mirror the trend in national results. In the national tests for eleven year olds results were well below average compared to all schools and below average compared to similar schools. Between 1996 and 1998 there was a downward trend but this was reversed in 1999 when results improved, albeit that they are still not at the 1996 level. The rate of improvement in 1999 was similar to that found nationally. The proportions of pupils attaining the higher levels were below average for seven year olds and well below average for eleven year olds in 1999. In both instances this accurately reflected the ability spread of the cohorts. By the time the pupils leave school there is little difference in the performance of boys and girls.
68. Observation of lessons, examination of pupils' work and discussions with pupils and staff indicate that by the end of Key Stage 1 attainment is similar to that expected for seven year olds. Standards are improving due to the greater emphasis now given to the quick recall of number facts, the use of different strategies for calculating number problems and the daily practice of brisk mental mathematics. Bearing in mind the below average attainment in number skills on entry to Key Stage 1 and the current standards of work, pupils are achieving well. By the end of the key stage, pupils are familiar with number sequences and can work with numbers up to 100. For example, in one class, older pupils were counting on in 3's and 4's and could recognise the pattern of numbers as they went along. The more able pupils work independently on their own patterns of addition and subtraction facts whereas the middle-ability pupils use numbers arranged by the teacher. The less able pupils still work with simple numbers and achieve best when under the direct supervision of the teacher. Pupils can measure common objects using centimetres. They are familiar with simple two and three – dimensional shapes and interpret data imaginatively as demonstrated in classroom displays. Suitable emphasis is placed on the use of correct mathematical vocabulary.
69. Examination of pupils' work and observation of lessons confirm that by the end of Key Stage 2 attainment is below average, but improving. The grouping by ability across the whole year group is effective. The narrower range of ability in groups is successfully enabling teachers to set targets, measure progress and adapt work accordingly lesson by lesson. The introduction of the Numeracy Hour is also proving beneficial through its structured approach, emphasis on basic numeracy skills, and development of strategies for the manipulation of numbers. The mental mathematics at the beginning of each lesson not

only gives valuable practice in recalling and thinking about numbers but also motivates the pupils for the rest of the lesson. By the end of the key stage, the most able pupils multiply and divide by numbers up to 10. Others manage this with smaller numbers whilst the least able are still not sure about division. Many pupils are still insecure in their understanding of multiplication tables and so experience difficulty in deciding which operation is required in mathematical problems. Pupils are gaining confidence in their ability to cope with other aspects of mathematics, such as angular measure, areas of compound shapes and data handling. Below average attainment at the beginning of Key Stage 2 in previous years has constrained progress in Key Stage 2. Pupils still lack a secure understanding of basic number concepts but there are signs of improvement and overall pupils are achieving satisfactorily in relation to their starting point. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards targets set in their individual education plans due to well focused teaching specifically directed towards their needs. Good provision is also made in Key Stage 2 for a pupil who works at a level well beyond that of other pupils in the year group.

70. Mathematics is used satisfactorily to support other subjects. For example, after carrying out fieldwork in geography on Formby Beach, a variety of graphs was used to illustrate the number and type of shells found. Investigative work is encouraged. During the inspection pupils in Year 6 were engaged in estimating the cost of paving areas of a garden, producing graphs using information technology, and preparing shopping catalogues showing discounted prices. The whole activity was well planned and achieved its purpose in encouraging pupils to experience success in the practical application of mathematics in everyday situations. Pupils' growing confidence and mental agility in applying numerical skills is filtering into other subjects although in Key Stage 2 pupils' computational skills are still below those found in most schools. However, calculators are used competently when appropriate.
71. The teaching observed during the inspection was good in both key stages, mainly because teachers are finding the innovative National Numeracy Strategy is adding structure to the lessons and focusing attention on the progressive acquisition and use of mathematical skills. This is having a significant impact on pupils' learning and improving standards of work. The lively mental work at the beginning of the lesson gives it a brisk start and gears the pupils up to manipulate numbers. Consequently they are motivated throughout the rest of the lesson. Because most teachers have developed a good relationship with the pupils, and also due to their careful planning and organisation, a good educational atmosphere is created in the classroom. Pupils are thus well motivated to learn, give of their best and behave well. Teachers have a good knowledge of mathematics and use this to make lessons interesting so that the pupils enjoy their work; self-esteem is raised. The pupils rightly have confidence in their teachers and co-operate well with them. Teachers use appropriate methods that suit the requirements of the curriculum and the needs of the pupils. Consequently, pupils concentrate on their work and do not waste time.
72. The enthusiastic subject co-ordinator monitors the work in the classrooms, talks to the pupils and looks at their work to ensure that the teachers' planning is fruitful. There are effective assessment procedures in Key Stage 2 but these need to be extended to Key Stage 1 so that accurate targets can be set and progress tracked across the key stages. Attainment has fluctuated somewhat since the previous inspection, particularly in Key Stage 2. Current evidence shows steady improvement in Key Stage 1 over recent years and an upturn in Key Stage 2 in 1999. There is good capacity for further improvement. Resources are good but many opportunities are missed to use information technology.

SCIENCE

73. The 1999 teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 indicated that standards were below average. No pupils exceeded the national target. In the national tests for eleven year olds, the pupils' results overall were below the national average although there was considerable improvement from 1998. The percentage of pupils achieving a higher level

than expected for their age was only just below the national average. When compared to schools of similar background, the pupils' results are above average. Evidence from the inspection confirms that, overall the standard of work at the end of Key Stage 1 is below average. Standards of work are similar to those identified in the previous inspection but the absence of pupils working at higher levels makes overall standards below the national average. As at the time of the previous inspection pupils' narrow vocabulary adversely affects their progress. Standards of pupils' work seen at the end of Key Stage 2 are similar to those expected for their age and this reflects the judgement of the previous inspection. Analysis of results over the last three years shows a significant improvement in pupils' results at the end of Key Stage 2 and inspection evidence indicates continuing improvement. This is a result of teachers in Year 6 giving close attention to the science curriculum, good teaching and a strong determination to raise standards.

74. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils understand the difference between animals and plants and recognise their basic needs. Most understand the need for a healthy diet. They successfully carry out simple investigations, for instance when finding the distance cars will travel over different surfaces. In a Year 2 lesson pupils were discovering how clay and plasticine change when handled. Although the vast majority understood that to predict meant to guess what would happen, in practice only the higher attaining pupils recorded this and the vast majority simply described the appearance of the materials. When comparing the properties of wool and stone the language difficulty is more apparent. Pupils refer to stone as 'strong' and wool as 'smooth' although discussion indicated they have a clear understanding of the differing characteristics of the items. Some confusion was caused by the choice of resources and pupils related more to the purpose of the glass bowl than glass as a material. This restricted progress. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, learn at a satisfactory rate.
75. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are more confident with scientific vocabulary and discuss gravity and forces with increasing understanding. They engage in a good range of experimental activities and have a clear understanding of a 'fair test'. In one lesson pupils investigated the changing weight of an item as it was submerged in water. The lower-attaining pupils were ably supported by the teacher and were amazed to discover that the item weighed less. They identified a pattern in their results but needed considerable prompting to work out reasons for their results. Other pupils loosely related their findings to different forces whilst the higher-attaining pupils successfully applied prior knowledge and identified upthrust as the appropriate force. Effective questioning extended this understanding to most of the class by the end of the lesson and learning had proceeded at a good rate. By the end of the key stage pupils record their results using grids, diagrams and graphs although information technology is underused as a method to analyse and record evidence.
76. Considering pupils' level of understanding at the start of Key Stage 1 the vast majority learn at a satisfactory rate as they move through the key stage. The progress is slower in Year 1 as tasks do not closely match pupils' needs and scrutiny of work indicates that time is not always used well, for example when there is too much colouring in of work sheets. A wider variety of tasks is included in Year 2 and progress improves. However, the lack of a formal assessment system means higher-attaining pupils are not clearly identified and tasks set do not extend their learning to allow them to achieve levels that exceed the national average. The vast majority of pupils make good progress as they move through Key Stage 2. Higher-attaining pupils are set more challenging work towards the upper end of the key stage and teachers make effective use of assessment data to plan work suitably matched to all abilities.
77. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. It was satisfactory in all the lessons observed and good in half of them in Key Stage 2. The good teaching occurred in lessons at the end of the key stage where teachers have a good subject knowledge and share their enthusiasm for the subject with the pupils. Planning follows the detailed scheme of work and in the best lessons teachers explain the learning objectives at the beginning of the

lesson so that pupils have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. A good feature of many lessons is the discussion and the effective questioning which leads to prediction and evaluation. In Key Stage 2, teachers set tasks more closely matched to ability and demanding thought and analysis. However, currently, investigative work is not generated by the pupils themselves, and does not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to decide what evidence should be gathered, apparatus used or how data should be presented. This restricts the rate of learning of higher-attaining pupils. Lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in most lessons but learning is inhibited when insufficient adult help is available to clarify tasks and vocabulary. Teaching in science is effective due to the positive management of lessons, pupils' good behaviour and their eagerness to learn.

78. The co-ordinator has implemented a detailed scheme of work which ensures skills are taught in an appropriate sequence. She has a good knowledge of standards in Key Stage 2 but less so of those in Key Stage 1 due to lack of time to monitor lessons or review planning. Assessment at the end of units is now a regular feature of planning in Key Stage 2 although these tests are often designed by teachers and vary between classes. At present insufficient attention is given to assessing to National Curriculum levels and this is planned as the next stage in development. Teachers make good use of the local environment to extend the curriculum and make science exciting for pupils.

ART

79. Displays of work, observation of lessons and scrutiny of sketch books indicate that standards of work in both key stages are similar to those found in most schools. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve to their potential in the acquisition of new skills and techniques, and in their ability to express their own ideas. Pupils are taught to use a variety of different materials and tools carefully and safely. The art clubs meet every week after school and provide good opportunities for pupils to be creative.
80. Pupils respond well and enjoy their lessons. They show interest and work confidently. Art is often used to support literacy studies, such as in Year 1 when pupils draw a spider. Observational drawing is good, for example when pupils make drawings of natural objects around the school. In Key Stage 2 techniques are more highly developed. Pupils learn to draw with a variety of pencils to show hard, soft, rough and smooth textures. Art lessons provide good opportunities for links with other areas of the curriculum, for example, in Year 6 pupils make clay models to complement their study of the Egyptians. In Year 4 pupils make realistic models of Tudor houses. Art contributes significantly to pupils' language development as they seek words to describe their observations. Interesting poems were written after a visit to the Tate Gallery during which pupils in Year 5 observed the geometric style of Victor Passmore. Colourful representations in this mode were created by pupils when they returned to school.
81. The pupils clearly enjoy their experiences of art. This is reflected in the quality of work, the lively displays around the school, and in enthusiasm in lessons and at the art clubs. Pupils sustain concentration for increasingly longer periods as they move upward through the year groups and behaviour is good in lessons.
82. During the inspection, two art lessons were observed. The teaching was good on both occasions. Teachers show good knowledge of the subject and set high expectations. The importance of developing good techniques and skills is emphasised. Teachers plan effectively, with suitable content for the age and ability of pupils. Praise and encouragement give pupils confidence to experiment and try out their own ideas. Teachers share their expertise and inspire each other and the pupils.
83. The previous inspection report found that the teaching was good; pupils responded well in lessons and attainment was similar to that expected nationally. Standards have been

maintained and the good work in art makes a very positive contribution to pupils' learning, and to the environment and ethos of the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

84. No whole design and technology lessons were observed during the inspection as this aspect of the curriculum tends to be integrated into other facets of the school's work. The quality of the finished articles seen indicates that the standard of practical work in both key stages is better than found in many schools. Little written evidence of the planning processes was seen but discussion with pupils clearly indicated a good awareness of various construction techniques. Most pupils knew that the design process included an evaluation of the effectiveness of their work and could make sensible suggestions for its improvement. Overall, pupils achieve well throughout the school, constantly building on previous knowledge and progressively learning to apply new skills
85. The subject is taught effectively through good linkage with topic areas. For example, in Year 2, pupils are approaching the study of the rain forest through literature, art and science. To support this they use card engineering to make pop-up cards which feature imaginative use of hinge mechanisms. In Key Stage 2, pupils successfully demonstrate their ability to choose materials and assemble products using an increasingly wide range of skills. By Year 6, they understand how to make moving mechanical models incorporating cogs and gears. Pupils from all year groups were eager to talk about their work which included complex working models built from construction kits, Tudor houses, and trains which ran on fixed rails. The latter were particularly good in their detail for example, they carried first, second and third carriages which identified with the appropriate period in history. Evidence from the inspection indicates that pupils work well together and are quick to spot weaknesses in their designs which they modify during construction. They gain satisfaction and enjoyment from their success. This overrides the difficulties some pupils find with the more academic work in other subjects.
86. The standard of pupils' practical work and their self-analysis of it implies that teaching is at least satisfactory. Teachers capitalise on opportunities to incorporate design opportunities in other studies and this helps to build up pupils' independence and confidence to see a task through to its conclusion. Consequently, pupils progressively develop skills to produce and evaluate the quality of products of increasing complexity. Additionally, enthusiasm is harnessed to good effect in the work of the popular technology club.
87. The high profile of the subject has been maintained despite a reduction of time due to other pressures on the curriculum. A very good range of resources is available and pupils benefit from the high level of success they achieve in the practical aspect of the work.

GEOGRAPHY

88. The previous report indicated that progress in both key stages was satisfactory. This has been maintained. The standard of work seen throughout the school is similar to that of pupils in most primary schools and achievement is satisfactory in relation to pupils' earlier work. Pupils with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress.
89. In Key Stage 1 geography is studied through the local area. Pupils are familiar with maps, symbols and plans. For example, younger pupils draw bird's eye views of common objects such as shoes and birthday cakes to reinforce the concept of a map being an aerial view. In one class pupils satisfactorily extended this to drawings of their own bedroom and the classroom. Pupils know where the school is situated and where their home is on the map. Older pupils know how to interpret symbols on maps in an attempt to describe the area. Some pupils made good use of a computer program to investigate characteristics and places in the countries making up the United Kingdom.

90. In Key Stage 2 pupils work in greater depth and extend their studies to human and physical geography. They look at people's need for shops, medical centres, schools and leisure facilities and check whether these are available in the locality. Others confidently used an atlas to find out where the main cities and rivers are in relation to Huyton. Pupils are encouraged to be aware of the need to safeguard the environment such as when a group investigated the appalling state of the local River Alt which is filled with rubbish. As a consequence several pupils wrote letters of complaint to the local council. Worthwhile field studies are made to provide pupils with valuable first-hand geographical experiences. These sometimes relate to cross-curricular work such as when pupils realised that not only is the River Nile the longest in the world but also of significant importance to the Egyptian economy. Another interesting and valuable aspect of geography is the connection the school has with a town in Italy. Exchange of letters and views enables pupils to gain first hand information about life there.
91. Teaching is satisfactory overall in both key stages as was evident from the lessons observed. Teachers have a good knowledge of geography and their interest is a significant factor in motivating pupils. As a result pupils concentrate well and work enthusiastically. Where the teaching was good, pupils were encouraged to use their acquired literacy skills to write about their findings. Teachers have a good relationship with the pupils and through this create an effective educational atmosphere in their classrooms where the pupils behave well and give of their best. This, coupled with effective planning and suitable teaching methods, leads to worthwhile and interesting lessons.
92. A comprehensive scheme of work is currently being introduced which gives valuable support to the teaching of geography. As yet, there are no formal assessment procedures to assess pupils' progress in geography. Resources are good but it is unsatisfactory that the selection of software available in information technology is not used consistently. Geography makes a worthwhile contribution to the social and cultural development of the pupils through the study of localities at home and abroad.

HISTORY

93. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment and standards of work in both key stages are similar to those found in most schools.
94. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have a clear understanding of the difference between events happening in the past and in the present. For example, the youngest pupils look at families and recognise that grandparents are older and have lived longer than younger members of the family. Interesting childhood photographs of adults known to them are used to explain that time passes and that all adults were small children in the past. Older pupils study past events and link them to those of the present, for instance they understand the connection between Guy Fawkes and the gunpowder plot with Bonfire Night. The progression of toys through the ages is used to stimulate discussion with parents about favourite toys for different generations. As part of the school's emphasis on living history the pupils play with toys of the past such as whips and tops, and make models of a ball and cup toy. They are also provided with good opportunities to handle domestic artefacts such as flat irons and stone hot water bottles.
95. In Key Stage 2 pupils build on their knowledge of the past through the study of people, civilisations and important events within living memory. They enjoy work on the Anglo-Saxons, Romans and Vikings and can describe the marks left on our society. The work is made more relevant through visits to Liverpool Museum workshops. Recently some pupils invaded classrooms as Roman soldiers. Older pupils study the Victorians and history is brought alive through a visit to Wigan Pier. From a more theoretical viewpoint pupils studying the Ancient Greeks engage in lively debate on learning that only boys went to school in that society. Interest is also stimulated through a simulated archaeological dig

where pupils handle pieces of broken artefacts and predict their use. Towards the end of the key stage pupils are introduced to more recent history through the study of life during the Second World War. This becomes even more relevant when some older people are invited into school to talk about their experiences in war time. Following this pupils in one class wrote sensitive imaginary letters to fathers who were absent because of the war. The displays in school are of good quality and make a worthwhile contribution to the educational environment in the school.

96. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection, both in Key Stage 2. The teaching was good and the teachers' enthusiasm stimulated pupils' interest. Teachers successfully aim to make history 'come alive'. They motivate the pupils well so that they sustain interest in the topics over a period of time. The good relationships established with the pupils creates an educational atmosphere in which the pupils develop confidence, work with enthusiasm and behave well. The teachers' knowledge of history and how to teach it is good. The contribution of the subject to the development of literacy skills is an integral part of teachers' planning.
97. There is a clear overall curriculum plan so that teachers know which area to cover and when. As yet there is no formal assessment of pupils' progress in the subject but this is being developed. The school has a good supply of interesting artefacts that are well used. Although less time is devoted to history than at the previous inspection it continues to make a valuable contribution to pupils' social and cultural development.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

98. Pupils do not have sufficient experience of information technology and standards of work are below those expected of pupils of similar age at the end of both key stages. However, pupils do sometimes use computer programs successfully to support work in literacy and numeracy, for example when using the 'catch up' programme in Year 3 to develop a story plan. The school has recently adopted a good scheme of work which, when fully implemented, will progressively build up the technical skills required to meet the needs of all programmes of study in the National Curriculum. As yet these are only being taught effectively in highly focused lessons taught by the subject co-ordinator on a rota basis in Key Stage 2. The follow up to these lessons is often limited because many teachers lack the expertise and confidence to continue the work in the normal classroom situation. At present, the emphasis is rightly placed on developing word processing skills. In Key Stage 1 there is no structured teaching of the basic principles of information technology or of simple operational techniques. In general, pupils are not being provided with enough opportunities to use controlling and monitoring equipment, nor are they competent enough with word processing to use the computers independently to advance their writing skills. They are also missing out on opportunities to use computers for independent research and to understand the scope of the Internet.
99. The school has been restricted in the development of information technology by lack of facilities. A computer suite has just been fitted but will not be fully operational until the machines are networked. When given the opportunity the pupils are very keen to use the computers. They are not afraid to experiment in seeking out information for themselves, for example when pupils in Year 5 chose their own font and added clip-art to the lay out of a document. In another lesson pupils satisfactorily entered data they had collected, produced a line graph and correctly interpreted the findings. Within such lessons pupils achieve well and make good progress. The fact that these opportunities are so limited, and that there is insufficient practice afterwards, negates some of the learning. Consequently, overall, pupils' progress over time is not good enough to enable them to use their skills to complement other studies. Pupils with special educational needs also miss out on opportunities which could be of particular benefit to their learning.
100. Teaching is unsatisfactory overall because the basic operational skills are not being taught

systematically. Where classes are taught in turn by the subject co-ordinator the teaching is very good and an exemplar of good practice. In these lessons the pace was brisk, expectations were high and the strategy of a 'step by step' approach worked well. Small groups of pupils were well supported by other adults. A typical example of what could be achieved in a short time was the production of imaginative coloured posters incorporating varied font, graphics, and number. The pupils demonstrated that they had satisfactorily mastered the use of the tool bar, files and dialogue boxes.

101. The school recognises that there is much work to be done in the subject, not least in promoting the progressive teaching of skills from the beginning of Key Stage 1. Regular assessment needs to be built into short term lesson plans so that pupils' standards and progress can be monitored. The pupils' attainment in information technology has not advanced since the previous inspection – mainly due to lack of up-to-date equipment. Now that this situation has been rectified the school is in a good position to raise standards but further training is needed to raise the level of teachers' expertise.

MUSIC

102. Standards of pupils' work in both key stages are similar to those found in most schools.

103. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils sing simple songs from memory. When singing unaccompanied, and without teacher direction, they pitch their voices to follow the contour of the melody and are aware when they sing too quickly and alter the tempo. Their singing is clear and controlled and because of the good example set by teachers, has a sense of phrase and expression. Pupils experiment successfully on tuned and untuned instruments, remembering and repeating simple patterns. They all enjoy composing their own music.

104. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils make simple compositions using the correct musical notation of crotchet, quavers and minims and add the musical notes available from the chime bars. The least able pupils concentrate hard on the task and, with intermittent support, complete work of a similar standard to many of their peers. Pupils work sensitively, listen intently to each others' work, evaluate it, and satisfactorily identify ways in which it can be improved. They sing tunefully, with confidence, over a comfortable range when taking part in hymn practice.

105. Pupils with special educational needs participate fully in the lessons. The practical nature of much of the work is of great benefit to the development of confidence and self-worth. Good opportunities are provided for musically inclined pupils to take up instrumental playing in Key Stage 2.

106. Pupils achieve well in music throughout the school. In Key Stage 1 they progress from recognising the difference between one and two beats to demonstrating a good understanding of long/short notes in the music that they play. They perform individually and concentrate for longer periods of time when listening to music. For example, when listening to Dvorak they 'hear' words in the music. In Key Stage 2, pupils practise and enjoy recording their compositions. They respect the need for silence when recording and strive for perfection in the outcome. When composing their own fanfare they talk with expression about the way the music conveys character and mood, for example the pomp and ceremony surrounding Tutankhamun's entry to the great chamber.

107. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Of the four lessons observed half were good, one in Key Stage 2 being very good. Where teaching is good, activities and content are clearly indicated and well matched to learning intentions. Resources are well organised and accessible. Lessons move at a lively pace and teachers use their voice well to interact with the whole group and individuals. They utilise pupils' ideas and develop them well, in particular encouraging older boys and girls to join in with, for example, whole key stage singing sessions. Where teaching has weaknesses resources are not fully utilised,

opportunities are missed to allow pupils to listen to/record their work or simply to just sit quietly and appreciate a piece of music.

108. The school provides a good musical experience for its pupils because the scheme of work is carefully structured and staff are well briefed in its implementation. Resources are readily available and music is seen as an important part of the school curriculum. The previous report found that improvement in the music curriculum had been considerable. This has continued and there is good capacity for it to be sustained.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

109. During the inspection it was only possible to see gymnastics, games and swimming and the majority of these lessons were in Key Stage 2. Overall standards are similar to those found in most schools except in swimming where standards are very high. The standards identified in the previous inspection have been maintained.

110. Only one lesson was seen in Key Stage 1 the focus of which was co-operation and working together. The teacher provided a range of different tasks using the large parachute. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed the session as well as appreciating the need to help each other and follow instructions closely if they were to succeed in the tasks. This lesson made a significant contribution to pupils' social development.

111. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils skilfully balance and control their movements when jumping and landing from the large apparatus. The vast majority combine actions to make short sequences and a few perform more advanced gymnastic skills with great agility. The pupils' ability to critically review their own work was restricted in some lessons when the teaching was over directed and insufficient time was allocated to pupils' planning and performing of their own movements. In other lessons these skills were more apparent and pupils enjoyed working with a partner. In games, by the end of the key stage, pupils have confidence in the basic skills of ball control. In full team games, such as netball, they make good use of space and understand the need to work together to attack and defend. As at the time of the previous inspection standards in swimming are very good. The school benefits from a swimming pool and this is used well for lessons and club activities. In the lesson seen in Year 3 approximately three-quarters of the pupils were competent swimmers in one stroke and were striving to master the skills of other strokes. These skills are well above those normally seen at this age. A weakness in the previous inspection was pupils' lack of knowledge of the effect of exercise on the body. Pupils now have a much clearer understanding of the beneficial effects of exercise. By Year 6 they understand that it makes the heart beat faster to pump blood round the body.

112. The development of pupils' gymnastic and games skills is satisfactory. The school has maintained a balanced curriculum that allows pupils to experience a wide range of physical activities. Achievement in swimming is very good because of the additional teaching support from a swimming instructor. This ensures pupils are taught in small groups and teachers have expert advice available when planning swimming activities.

113. The overall quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and often good. Teachers provide good role models and join in energetically with the lessons. This leads to pupils enjoying lessons and working hard to improve their movements. Most lessons are carried out at a brisk pace although sometimes too many demonstrations or instructions use up valuable activity time. Pupils watch closely and appreciate the efforts of other pupils. Those with special educational needs are well supported by teachers and other pupils so they are fully involved in lessons. They learn at a satisfactory rate relative to their prior attainment. A strength in the best lessons was the range of activities and apparatus that allowed pupils to experiment with their own ideas. Teachers are confident in the teaching of the different aspects of the curriculum and share these skills with others. This is particularly so in swimming where teachers have detailed guidelines to reinforce their good knowledge of

skills and techniques. Management and attention to pupils' safety is good and results in good behaviour and pupils' awareness of the needs of others.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

114. Standards of work at both key stages meet the targets set by the locally agreed syllabus. Religious education makes a significant contribution to the pupils' spiritual and personal development. A range of questions and issues are carefully considered and pupils are given many opportunities for reflection and thought. In Key Stage 2, pupils were studying Lent and learning about the concept of sacrifice. They made realistic suggestions about what they might give up for Lent, and knew that they would probably not be able to sacrifice chocolate!
115. Overall, all pupils, including those with special educational need, achieve satisfactorily in relation to their earlier attainment. In lessons, pupils respond well. They listen carefully to teachers and are keen to share their viewpoints with others. As they become older they become more discerning and show a willingness to modify their opinions in the light of convincing argument.
116. The teaching of religious education is satisfactory. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject and in lessons use a mixture of teaching, discussion and questioning to draw out pupils' ideas and responses. Lessons are well planned and paced so that pupils use their time profitably. Behaviour is well managed. Planning across year groups is helpful and ensures good cross-fertilisation of ideas.
117. Samples of pupils' work are regularly monitored and findings are used effectively to check progress and inform subsequent planning. The subject is well resourced, with a range of interesting artefacts which are used to stimulate interest and provoke thoughtful discussion. Links with local churches help to further the pupil's knowledge and understanding of religion.
118. At the time of the previous inspection there were variations in the standards of teaching, and in progress and attainment across the key stages. The quality of provision has improved resulting in satisfactory attainment and progress throughout the school.